

Hobart and William Smith Colleges Teacher Education Program
Alternative Model Plan for Clinical Experiences in response to school closures
during the Spring 2020 COVID-19 pandemic

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HWS Certification Programs	HEGIS Code*	Number of Students Affected – Spring 2020	
		Early Field Placements	Student Teachers
Adolescent Education - Biology	0401		
Adolescent Education - Chemistry	1905		
Adolescent Education - Earth Science	1917	1	
Adolescent Education - English	1501	4	
Adolescent Education - French	1102		
Adolescent Education - Latin	1109		
Adolescent Education - Mathematics	1701	1	
Adolescent Education - Physics	1902		
Adolescent Education - Social Studies	2201	10	
Adolescent Education - Spanish	1105		
Art Education	0831	2	
Childhood Education	0802	2	1
Childhood Education and Students with Disabilities (Dual)	0802 0808	12	5
Music Education	0832	1	1
Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages	1508	1	
Graduate - Childhood Education	0802		
Graduate - Special Education	0802 0808		
Graduate - Adolescent Education	0803		

* HEGIS Code Sources: <http://www.nysed.gov/college-university-evaluation/new-york-state-taxonomy-academic-programs-hegis-codes> and <http://www.nysed.gov/coms/rp090/IRPSL1>

Early Field Placements

The Teacher Education Program (TEP) at Hobart and William Smith Colleges is unique in its commitment of requiring students to complete 160 clock hours of classroom experience prior to student teaching (in excess of the 100 minimum hours required by NYSED). During the four semesters of early field placements (representing 40 hours/semester), students work in a variety of classrooms, increasing their responsibilities each semester in preparation for full-time student teaching. These teaching placements (Education 091-094) ensure that students work in diverse classroom environments at multiple grade levels, in urban, suburban and rural districts, benefitting from the extensive collective experience of our region's teacher leaders. During these early field placements, students work in conjunction not only with cooperating teachers, but also with multiple members of the HWS Education Department who supervise their practicums and provide seminar opportunities for students to reflect on their experiences with other teacher education students. For students seeking dual certification in Childhood Education and Teaching Students with Disabilities (Grades 1-6), two of the four placements are in classrooms with students with disabilities. Students seeking certification in Music, Art, or TESOL certification (Grades prek-12) work in both elementary and secondary placements during their early field experiences, and students seeking Adolescent certification complete both middle school and high school placements (grades 7-12). Additionally, all TEP students complete at least one semester in a Geneva City School District classroom, serving the students in our own urban community, as well as at least one semester working closely with students with disabilities.

As the global COVID-19 pandemic began to spread throughout the US in mid-March, 2020, the Education Department systematically assessed the situation and discussed options for students in early field placements. Education faculty supervisors had recently completed mid-semester check-ins with cooperating teachers and determined that most students had completed just under half of their required 40 hours. Given the growing calls for social distancing and school closures, the Education Department made the decision to suspend early field placements until further notice and sent an email notification about the decision to our TEP students on March 12, 2020. Most local school districts switched to a remote instruction model as of March 16, 2020, and HWS Colleges made the switch after their spring break on March 23, 2020.

In our assessment, given that the early field students exceed the NYSED minimum requirements of 100 clock hours prior to student teaching, we could safely cancel the remaining clinical hours this semester and not jeopardize student progress towards completing their early field experience requirements. As part of suspending the remaining clinical hours, we asked cooperating teachers to submit a time log of completed clinical hours and a final assessment of student learning outcomes through our Tk20 data management system.

Student Teaching Placements

Student teachers at HWS complete full-time student teaching experiences in one of 10 school districts throughout the Northern Finger Lakes region. Student teachers complete a full semester (14 weeks, 60+ days) in classrooms with various teaching models and work with students who possess a broad range of academic talents, interests and needs. Student teachers quickly

become responsible for full-time lesson planning, instruction and assessment under the mentorship of their cooperating teachers. Students are required to submit lesson plans and formal reflections to college supervisors throughout the semester. These HWS Education Department faculty supervisors observe student teachers **weekly**, and also meet with them to reflect on their instructional practices and student learning. Student teachers also participate with their cooperating teachers in school and district level professional development opportunities, faculty meetings, parent-teacher conferences and Committee for Special Education meetings throughout the semester. Additionally, student teachers often work closely with special education teachers, ESOL teachers, and/or other specialists who work in their classrooms to provide lessons, instruction and assessment that meet the needs of all learners. For students in the dual Childhood and Students with Disabilities certification program, student teachers typically switch at the midway point in the semester from working with a general education teacher to a special education teacher; and students in Art, Music, and TESOL certification programs switch grade levels across elementary and secondary education classrooms.

We have seven student teachers enrolled during the Spring 2020 semester. Five students are in the dual Childhood Education & Students with Disabilities certification programs and are enrolled in the Education 404, 405, 407, and 410 sequence; one student is in the Childhood Education certification program and is enrolled in Education 404, 405, 406, and 410 sequence; and one student is in the Music certification program and is enrolled in the Education 403, 405, 410, and 412 sequence. Each student was able to complete at least 30 days of in-class instruction in their initial classroom placements and were observed weekly by HWS Education faculty members prior to school closures. Because local districts began to plan for potential closure in early March, our students were able to discuss alternative instructional plans with their cooperating teachers as they entered into this unprecedented period of teaching and learning.

Like districts all across the state, schools in the Northern Finger Lakes region responded to closures with a broad spectrum of measures meant to meet the needs of their specific student populations. At that point in the semester, our student teachers had developed strong relationships with their cooperating teachers, school staff, and students in their classrooms, therefore they were in a position to actively plan with their teachers for the transition to remote learning. For example, some students helped prepare packets for students to use at home, discussed technologies available to teachers and students, and assisted in preparing students for potential changes.

The Education Department communicated revised student teaching requirements to student teachers via email on April 10, 2020 after receiving the *NYSED Guidance for Education Preparation Programs on Clinical Experiences and Certifications Impacted by COVID-19 Public Health Emergency* (March 30, updated April 2, 2020). After careful reflection and analysis, we made a determination that since student teachers had completed 30 days of placements prior to school closures, our alternative model for completing the remaining clinical experience would include ongoing work with current cooperating teachers where possible, continued submission of weekly lesson plans and reflections to faculty supervisors, the development of instructional materials for remote learning that would be turned in to their faculty instructor, and the completion of supplemental online modules related to teaching students with autism (see details below). Furthermore, a decision was made to not require that student teachers in the dual certification and music education programs switch to new cooperating teachers since the switch was due to take place after schools had moved to remote

instruction. All teacher education students are required to have varied clinical experiences in grade levels throughout their certification range as well as extensive experiences working with students with disabilities prior to student teaching; therefore we decided that staying with a classroom where they had already built a relationship with the teacher and students outweighed the potential disruption that would have been caused to the cooperating teachers and student teachers by requiring that they switch teachers. Furthermore, not all teachers in the second placements were in a position to accommodate taking on a new student teacher after they switched to remote learning.

While student teachers have had to be as flexible, innovative and experimental as their teaching colleagues throughout the region, Hobart and William Smith student teachers are employing a diverse array of instructional methods, tools and technologies to meet the needs of their students. Student teachers are actively creating and modifying lessons to be used during remote instruction in collaboration with their cooperating teachers and HWS Education faculty. For example, student teachers are creating online content to stay connected with their students and continue both the academic and social-emotional work that is so essential for students during this time. Student teachers are staying abreast of the continually evolving nature of school and district plans and are working with their cooperating teachers to ensure that all students have access to continued modes of learning during school closures. Student teachers are making phone calls, creating video messages through YouTube and FlipGrid, designing Smore newsletters, co-leading synchronous and asynchronous class meetings using Zoom and Google Hangouts, and producing lessons for home instruction. Most importantly perhaps, student teachers are thinking critically about how their instructional design, methodologies and assessment have had to continually shift with the changing nature of schooling given the COVID-19 Health Emergency.

Our student teachers continue to meet weekly with their college instructor via Zoom as part of their required coursework for the TEP program. During these class sessions, student teachers are able to both continue the work that provides the foundational backbone to their clinical experiences as well as reflect collectively on the singular circumstances they find themselves adapting to in their now virtual classrooms. They are conducting research on remote learning platforms, analyzing instructional methodologies via video and continuing to host virtual guest speakers. Student teachers also recently completed an online professional development module on Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) through the IRIS Center at Vanderbilt University's Peabody School of Education.

As a part of their coursework, students have been asked to design and submit lessons that could be used during remote instruction. These lessons are reviewed by faculty supervisors and are a part of the continued relationship supervisors have had with student teachers as they help them reflect on their teaching during this time. In this role, faculty supervisors are serving as an additional resource for our student teachers in thinking creatively about how to adjust and modify their lessons for remote instruction.

Written mid-term assessments by the student teacher, cooperating teacher, and faculty supervisor are filed in each student teacher's online portfolio in the tk20 data management software that is used by the Education Department. End of year reflections will also be submitted by each student teacher, along with copies of weekly lesson plans, reflection prompts, teaching philosophy statements, and classroom management plans.

Conclusion

As the Spring 2020 semester wraps up, the Education Department at Hobart and William Smith Colleges continues to support our teacher education students in their next steps in accordance with New York State Education Department guidelines. We continue to advise our seniors and graduate students on their path towards certification, including providing updates on certification exam policies and testing center closures as new information is released. Our faculty continue to serve as references and write recommendation letters as our Spring 2020 graduates enter the profession and apply for positions in the field; and, if past practice is any indication, will continue to be a resource for many of our alum long after they have graduated.

In terms of next steps, we are in the process of securing fall partnerships for our early field placement students, and will continue to support our upcoming cohort of student teachers in connecting with their assigned cooperating teachers. We are also exploring virtual learning options, in the event that local schools and/or HWS Colleges continue to offer instruction via a remote learning model during the fall 2020 semester. The Education Department at HWS is confident that our students will continue to grow their practice through our commitment to experiential learning and service to the profession even amid these challenging times.