# Community Collaboration in Teacher Preparation

## Supplemental Material II: Evidence from Qualitative Data

## Impact on ECSE Teacher Candidates\* & EC Community

*\*In this document ECSE Teacher Candidates is used interchangeably with project scholars & students.*

### [1] Impact on ECSE Teacher Candidates

#### 1. Having an eye-opening experience

* **Being able to value community involvement** 
  + Each spring, the University of New Hampshire Department of Education offers graduate students studying early childhood education a class on socio-cultural perspectives on teaching and learning. Students participate in 50 hours of field experience enhancing their abilities to support diverse families. The course expands students' knowledge base by considering culture, community and family. Personal reflections and exploration of several socio-cultural perspectives on development are applied during 25 hours of field experience at a local Early Head Start. Students engage with parents, infants and toddlers, and home visitors to build their professional capacities through field-based research. Currently, 8 students are paired with Early Head Start home visitors in Rochester and Dover, New Hampshire from February through May. Each student is participating in parent meetings, play time, meals and home visits. (EC-SEAT blog, “Early Head Start and socio-cultural teacher preparation”, March 5, 2014)
* *I found this field experience to be very eye-opening and beneficial. … At first, I was dreading what seemed like so much extra work, but actually felt sad when it came to an end. I know I will continue to support my current community through involvement and interactions. I will definitely remember the importance of community involvement in child development and carry it with me whenever I end up.*  (Reflection paper of a project scholar, Sociocultural class assignment, May 2014)
* **Able to see communication with everyone involved as a natural action**
* There are so many specialists with each student I don’t know how you would ever meet the students’ needs. I don’t even know if they had a certain goal in speech how would you know what to incorporate in your PT time or classroom time if you didn’t collaborate. So I think being in the preschool for my fieldwork, and all the specialists worked in the classroom all the time you had to communicate or else it was pure chaos, so I think that prepared me even though my job now I am not next to those specialists every second of the day but I am used to that communication because of the preschool so now it feels strange not to communicate that much. (Post-graduation interview with scholar, September 22, 2014)
* Students’ classwork intertwined with trainings at Early Head Start during the semester and opened students’ eyes. (Meeting minutes, Early Head Start Partnership Meeting, June 16, 2014)

#### 2. Gaining confidence in foundational knowledge and skills

* **Feeling more confident in collaborating with other professionals**
* *I have really tried to open those lines of communication because I want all the interventions I am doing with something they are doing in their classroom. Like even though the model now is pull out, one-on-one, that is a little out of my control, but if that is the model they are using right now that’s going to be the model I have to use, I want as much of what I do to link to what they are doing in the classroom. And so I have started a lot of two-way communication sheets with anecdotal notes. I write down what my lesson focus was with the student and some quick observations about them. I send that back to the classroom with them. Some teachers write comments to me and send them back and some teachers told me they preferred at the end of the week they prefer a photocopy of what I did for the week and then they read it over the weekend and try to like fill in different gaps and such throughout the week. … I think by opening that line of communication and asking for their feedback that they can do the same for and give me suggestions or ask me questions too. So it’s becoming more of a collaboration and less of hmm she’s new… let me ask her mentor.* (Post-graduation interview with a scholar, September 22, 2014)
* **Starting with a strong foundation**
* *In the fieldwork actually being able to touch some of the assistive technology and use it so that when I come across a student who might need something, I have already at least touched looked at and explored at least five things that could help that student. So then I’m not just starting from ground zero. Hmm ‘well this is a problem they’re having’ or this is not something they’re not able to access… ‘where do I even start to pick out things to try with them? Where do I even start to assess what they need?’ Now I feel like at least I know a direction to go. ‘Here’s five apps I learned about. Here’s a pencil grip I learned about. Here’s a sensory activity I learned about.’ I can at least have a stepping-stone of a couple things to try, and if those work great. I use what I already new, and if it didn’t work at least I had a place to start to kind of see what other things they might need* (Post-graduation interview with a scholar, September 22, 2014)

#### 3. Growing leadership and teaching skills

* **Seeing themselves as a community leader**
* *As a University of New Hampshire ECSEAT Scholar (Early Childhood Special Education and Assistive Technology)* ***I have the unique opportunity and responsibility of sharing my training with colleagues [EC practitioners] by providing a professional development workshop****. … After each section was described the team got a chance to explore the apps hands-on. With the help from Therese Willkomm and the University of New Hampshire’s Institute on Disability* ***I was able to use fifteen iPads in the training so that the participants could really explore the apps and see which ones might benefit the children they work with directly****. …* ***When the workshop concluded several of my colleagues were asking the director how to borrow the two iPads in the program and what the process was to purchase an app.***  *I saw this presentation as a door opening;* ***new strategies for fostering skills, engaging and motivating children, and providing access for children with disabilities****. …The conversation is far from over, but* ***I am excited to help begin the conversation*** *and to think about the rewards and limitations of using technology with young children.* (Journal reflection of a project scholar, February 26, 2014)
* *I am walking away with some new strategies to working with families as well as fostering diversity in the classroom*  (Reflection paper of a project scholar, Sociocultural class assignment to participate in community events, May 2014)

#### 4. Growing as a Professional

* **Self-motivation for professional development**
* *I myself have so many questions about those programs and apps, I wouldn’t be able to answer the families’ questions about it. Right now it is the occupational therapist. Her office is connected to my office so we get to collaborate a lot and that’s a good thing I am hoping because then I can learn those things and be another contact person for families and for classroom teachers.* (Post-graduation interview with a scholar, September 22, 2014)
* **Recognition from EC community partners**
* Home visitors had positive things to say about the students – professionalism with families and home visitors (Meeting minutes, Early Head Start Partnership Meeting, June 16, 2014)

#### 5. ***Having a sustainable partnership and early linkage to EC community and career pathways***

* **New insights on various career opportunities**
* Students thought about home-based models and home visiting as a career options in early intervention that they may not have realized before (Meeting minutes, Early Head Start Partnership Meeting, June 16, 2014)
* **Sustainable partnerships and networking**
* Scholars being connected with mentors through group and individual mentorship more than once – sustainable partnerships and networking during EC-SEAT and beyond (PAC meeting minutes, October 27, 2014)

### [2] Impact on EC Community

#### 1. Gaining access to volunteers, in-kind contributions, and recent policy developments

* **Structured and steady flow of volunteers**
* Head Start/Early Head Start is a comprehensive child development program that promotes school readiness and family engagement for low-income and at risk children (prenatal- 5yr.). Administered locally, Head Start is an active member of the community, dependent upon community support, typically through volunteers, in-kind contributions and collaborations. Head Start has the additional priority of workforce preparation of parents and teacher development. Through this collaboration Head Start will gain the support of volunteers, in-kind contributions, and professional development for teachers. (MOU with Early Head Start)
* **Access to recent policy development and related resources (for partner sites)**
* *She brought in “Learn the Signs. Act Early.” CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) materials for the Home Visitor at Early Head Start and planned to share the materials with parents during the parent meeting. She was able to order the materials online as a free resource to share. She learned about the materials in the assessment class (part of the EC Program at UNH). The home visitor said she planned to introduce the parents to the materials during home visits and thanked the student for the resources. The student planned to walk the home visitor through materials and show her Home visitor the website.* (Field observation note, Sociocultural class, February 19, 2015)

#### ***2. Professional development opportunities***

* [EC-SEAT Project will] Provide one professional development experience for Head Start staff (e.g., workshop, teacher mentor session, webinar, technical assistance etc.) focused on using assistive technology to support young children at a mutually agreeable time. In-kind contribution of this professional development will be documented. (Memorandum of Understanding with Early Head Start)
* *Appy Hours (similar to Happy Hour, but its focus is on using Apps)*: To promote community collaboration, engagement with assistive technology, and disseminate the work of the project, we will facilitate *Appy Hours* with community groups. This is an opportunity for parents and teachers to come together to play with iPads in an informal environment. EC-SEAT brings experts with knowledge of Apps, the community group secures the site and brings people together with their mobile devices as a way to share knowledge and gain skill with technology, and allow opportunities to network and socialize in an informal workshop. The first Appy Hour was held with the Dover City Schools’ parent group of special needs students and the faculty/administration in November 2012. The Program Advisory Committee had their own short Appy Hour led by Leigh Rohde where we were able to try out Apps on the iPad. (PAC meeting minutes, March 1, 2014)
* The goal of Appy Hours is to establish “an infrastructure for sustainability in communities related to AT.” (PAC meeting minutes, October 27, 2014)

#### 3. Voices of community partners

* One of the essential components for effectively supporting children’s development and learning is interdisciplinary partnerships. Every month, we will feature dedicated scholars and professionals engaged in supporting young children with special needs and their families using assistive technology (AT), embedded instruction, and universal design for learning (UDL), among other practices. (EC-SEAT blog, “Dr. Therese Willkomm brings AT into the News in NH”, February 12, 2014)
* As a speech-language pathologist (SLP) and teacher of the deaf (TOD) in a K-8 school in New Hampshire, AT plays a pivotal role in therapy I provide to the wide variety of students I work with daily.  When I think about my caseload, the majority of students who use AT struggle with literacy skills, such as reading and writing.  Luckily, I work alongside many qualified professionals (other SLPs, occupational therapists, special and regular educators, and physical therapists - just to name a few).  We work as a team to evaluate and identify appropriate AT for our students, with the goal of fostering the highest level of academic inclusion and independence specific to the needs and desires of each student at the forefront of our therapy. (EC-SEAT blog, “Assistive Technology in Schools”, posted by a Speech and Language Pathologist, August 17, 2014)