

## A Celebration of Best Practices

High Quality Teachers:  
A Symposium on Middle Level Teacher Preparation  
Hyatt on Capital Square – Columbus, Ohio  
February 4, 2005

### COVER PAGE

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Which NMSA/NCATE approved Middle Level Teacher Preparation Standard does your submission address? (check all that apply)

- Standard 1 Young Adolescent Development*
- Standard 2 Middle Level Philosophy and School Organization*
- Standard 3 Middle Level Curriculum and Assessment*
- Standard 4 Middle Level Teaching Fields*
- Standard 5 Middle Level Instruction and Assessment*
- Standard 6 Family and Community Involvement*
- Standard 7 Middle Level Professional Roles*

Descriptive Title of Best Practice:

### **ESOL “Rounds”: A Best Practice in Middle Level Teacher Preparation**

#### **ABSTRACT**

In 2004 I developed an inquiry project for pre-service teachers guided by two central questions:

- *What is daily school life like for an English language learner (ELL) in middle school?*
- *What are appropriate instructional modifications for ELLs in middle level social studies?*

Four University of South Carolina social studies candidates and I “shadowed” a group of middle level ELLs as they went from social studies to an assembly, then to ESOL class. The next day we held a debriefing session with the ESOL teacher, which was inspired by the rounds model for pre-service teachers that has been implemented in schools throughout our PDS network

(<http://tqc.ed.sc.edu/year4rounds/rounds.html>). Through this experience, the interns were able to witness how some ESOL middle school students navigate the multilayered transitions that define their daily lives in school. They saw how students who seemed to lack motivation and confidence in a content area classroom could exude these qualities in a safe ESOL learning community. This project will be developed to further integrate ethnographic observation with pre-service field experiences in order to help student-teachers see beneath the surface of daily life in schools so as to better meet the needs of ALL students in their classrooms.

## **ESOL “Rounds”: A Best Practice in Middle Level Teacher Preparation A Day in the Life of an ESOL Student**

According to its mission statement, a central commitment of the University of South Carolina College of Education is to “*Prepar(e) educators to have a sincere understanding and appreciation of diversity as we challenge ourselves and others to work for social justice.*” The student population in South Carolina is becoming increasingly diverse along many dimensions, including language and culture. Students come from homes where Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, and myriad other languages are spoken. Consistent with the mission of the College, an inquiry project was developed through which a group of preservice social studies teachers got a glimpse into a typical school day-in-the-life of an ESOL student.

This inquiry project was inspired by the idea for holding a middle school shadow day as promoted by the National Middle School Association. A group of USC social studies interns “shadowed” a group of ESOL middle school students during part of the school day. They observed the ESOL students, their peers, and their teachers in class and between class sessions.

Some guiding questions for the inquiry project were:

- *What is daily school life like for an English language learner?*
- *What are appropriate instructional modifications for ESOL students in middle level social studies?*

Following the shadowing experience the four interns, university faculty, and the ESOL teacher involved met for a debriefing period according to the ‘Rounds’ model implemented by the Teacher Quality Collaborative (see attached).

Through this experience, the interns were able to witness how some ESOL middle school students navigate the multilayered transitions that define their daily lives in school. They saw how students who seemed to lack motivation and confidence in a content area classroom could exude these qualities in a safe ESOL learning community. This project will be developed to further integrate ethnographic observation with preservice field experiences in order to help student-teachers see beneath the surface of daily life in schools so as to better meet the needs of ALL students in their classrooms.

Please direct comments, suggestions, or questions to Dr David C. Virtue at [virtue@gwm.sc.edu](mailto:virtue@gwm.sc.edu).

# USC "Rounds": Enhancing the Clinical Experience

## Fall 2002 - Spring 2003

**Jane F. Zenger, Ph.D.**

Student Teacher comments:

"...The idea of 'Rounds' is more useful than any USC class that I have taken before... Being involved and having hands-on experience has been great!"

"Rounds offer a more personal experience with a smaller group of people."

"The medical concept of rounds is a brilliant, if not obvious, way to let prospective doctors view all aspects of their field. Maybe not quite so obvious is the same idea for educators."

The "Rounds" model for pre-service and induction year teachers is being implemented in a select number of k-12 Professional Development schools in Columbia SC. Rounds are a type of extended classroom observations where new teachers and student interns have an opportunity to observe master teachers at work. The rounds model is being launched under the direction of Dr. Jane Zenger, director of the University of South Carolina Teacher Quality Collaborative and consultant Dr. David Keiser of Montclair State University in New Jersey. The Rounds Model of Professional Development was initially described by Del Prete in an article about the use of rounds as an excellent strategy for pre-service teachers interested in expanding their vision of classroom management and pedagogy through visiting multiple classrooms. He reported that...

The concept of 'rounds' is borrowed from the training model used in teaching hospitals, in which interns and teaching doctor together visit patients to review, discuss, and do research relevant to each case. We have adapted this concept as part of our overall effort to engage university and school teachers and prospective teachers in reflective and productive dialogue on children's learning and corresponding teaching practice. 1

The "rounds" are different from other student teaching experiences and professional development activities in that the intern observations are not restricted to visiting established coaching teachers. Other experienced teachers in a school are invited to host a group of interns (or induction year) teachers for a one-time visit and discussion. Participating in the rounds encourages reflection and self-evaluation from both interns and the experienced teachers who host the visit. One student from USC commented, " I think that during student teaching, the student teachers have been just hanging on and trying to learn the basics. A true development comes with experience and being open to different types of styles. The rounds provided this experience and I was able to take small, yet valuable, parts from the experience and use them in my own way."

Just prior to the "rounds", the interns meet with a university supervisor to receive instructions and a reflection survey that will be used to help them focus on specific classroom management techniques and/or classroom routines. During the

observation, the interns and the supervisor sit quietly or walk around the room. The interns do not participate in the instruction or interrupt the teacher with questions. After the observation, the teacher, interns and university supervisor will adjourn to a debriefing session where they discuss the experience, ask questions and draw conclusions about effective teaching techniques.

In the USC model, Arts and Sciences faculty are often involved in the rounds to provide additional insight about strategies for teaching content such as life science or poetry. Such a tripartite may include faculty from the College of Education, the Arts and Sciences and classroom teachers. A rounds session usually lasts from 45-60 minutes for the observation and approximately 30 minutes for a debriefing session. This debriefing occurs immediately after the observation, usually in a conference area or empty classroom. Teachers who are observed may be asked to give up a planning session or related arts period when their students move to classes such as art or music.

It is important for all parties to participate in the debriefing since the conversation may involve practical questions about routines and school procedures or more research-based questions related to "best practices". Over 100 interns have been involved in the USC rounds and the data response sheets reveal that the interns have a wide range of interests in almost every aspect of the classroom including the curriculum standards that drive the lesson, teaching and assessment strategies, management styles, and methods for adjusting instruction to meet the needs of all students. It is interesting to note that many of the experienced teachers have also asked the pre-service interns what they might do to improve their teaching. The interns indicated that it was helpful for them to see that the experienced teachers were still learning and interested in finding fresh new ideas to enhance their classroom skills.

The data compiled from the intern reflection sheets and surveys indicate that the interns appreciate the opportunity to meet more teachers and experience a number of classroom environments. A majority of the interns praised the model as a means for enhancing their clinical experience and opening up new ideas for finding their personal style. Another positive facet of the rounds is that through the rounds, the College of Education is identifying a new cadre of mentor teachers in PDS schools who are willing to work with pre-service teachers become more involved in Professional Development School activities. This data has been shared with USC faculty and coaching teachers in the PDS schools and is being recommended as a potential model to strengthen the internships in all 17 PDS schools.

1. "The Rounds Model of Professional Development" by Thomas Del Prete appeared in From the Inside, Fall 1997, Number 1