



### **Service Learning/Field Experience Model of Success**

Normandale Community College  
Bloomington, MN  
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In partnership with  
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### **Models of Success: Teacher Education Training Academy**

Normandale Community College (Normandale), located in a suburb of the Minneapolis/St. Paul metropolitan area, enrolls over 15,000 students, with an FYE of nearly 7500.

[Education Training Academy](#) (EdTrAc) was established in 2005 with support of a National Science Foundation grant. The grant enabled Normandale to build on and strengthen a partnership with Minnesota State University, Mankato (Mankato) that had been forged in 1999. Normandale offers an [Associate of Science in Elementary Education Foundations](#) and an [Associate of Science in Special Education Foundations](#). Each degree is supported by an articulation agreement with Mankato. After completing required courses at Normandale, students can complete a [Bachelor's degree through Mankato](#) either on Normandale's campus or at a nearby location. Normandale and Mankato cooperate to enhance students' experiences and to foster seamless transfer. (Note: the Special Education program is in transition due to recent licensure changes. It will be resumed next year after a short hiatus.)

### **Service Learning and Field Experiences in EdTrAc**

Serving learning is a rich tradition at Normandale. In 2011/2012, 955 Normandale students completed over 30,000 hours of service in the community. Service learning is coordinated by the college's [Center for Experiential Education](#) (CEE). CEE ensures that Service learning includes both a *service* to a community partner and *learning* that connects the service to a course. Normandale CEE is a five-time recipient of the [President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll](#), an award launched in 2006.

Service learning is a mandatory component of several courses that are required for our education associate degrees and is an optional component in others.

- [\*EDUC 1101 Introduction to Education\*](#): this course partners with the [Bloomington School District](#) (BSD) through the district's [Volunteer Connection](#). Students spend 25 hours during the semester observing in classrooms. Classroom discussions, reflection papers, and assessments from the cooperating teacher focus on professional disposition using the Charlotte Danielson model<sup>[1]</sup>.
- [\*MATH 1050 and MATH 1060 Mathematical Foundations I and II\*](#). Students may complete 15-20 hours in the America Counts program through the BSD or the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program through the [Richfield School District](#). Selected classrooms are models of standards-based instruction; these standards are embedded in the course content.
  - [America Counts](#) is an elementary and middle school mathematics tutoring program.
  - [AVID](#) is a 7-12 grade program whose mission is to close the achievement gap.
- [\*PHYS 1050 Survey of Classical Physics\*](#): students may complete 15-20 hours of service, choosing from among three community partners.
  - [The Works](#) is designed for ages 5-12 and uses participatory activities that make learning about science and technology fun.
  - [Leonardo's Basement](#) provides an imaginative learning environment for ages 6 to 16 to design and build their creative ideas, mixing art, science, and technology.
  - Students can be paired with a K-9 BSD science class or a middle school [Project Lead the Way](#) class.

(Note: PHYS 1050 was not part of the education curriculum during 2011/2012, but will be included again next semester.)
- [\*EDUC 2330 Professional Practice and the Design of IEPs\*](#): this is a newly re-named and re-designed course that will partner with the BSD to provide a field experience in grades K-12.
- [\*EDUC 2101 Educational Technology\*](#): this newly-developed course is in the process of being approved. It will also partner with the BSD to provide a field experience in grades K-12.

### **Field Experiences - Minnesota State University, Mankato**

Lower division service learning experiences at Normandale prepare education students well for upper division field experiences. Like Normandale, Mankato has a strong commitment to field experiences for education students. Classroom experiences increase each semester.

- Semester 1: half days for four weeks.
- Semester 2: entire days for four weeks.
- Semester 3: entire days for four weeks plus weekly iPad tutoring sessions. To foster a longer term perspective, students are placed in the same school for Semesters 3 and 4.
- Semester 4: (student teaching) full days for 16 weeks. Options include:
  - Sixteen weeks in a local school.
  - Ten weeks in a local school and six weeks in either Aldine, Texas; Queensland, Australia; Costa Rica or the United Arab Emirates

Implementation dates: 2005 – Present

### **How the Model is Innovative and/or Unique**

- Students have a significant classroom exposure very early in their course work. EDUC 1101 has helped many students decide whether teaching was a good career for them.
- Students receive structured feedback from cooperating teachers.

- Students can experience a variety of grade levels and disciplines, multiple school districts, all disability categories, and non-institutional educational settings, thus expanding their backgrounds and networks.
- We have a symbiotic relationship with BSD's Volunteer Connection through which students are matched with cooperating teachers. The Volunteer Connection provides students with a free background check.
- Students observe a wide variety of teaching styles and settings by the time they graduate with a bachelor's degree.
- The support of Normandale's CEE ensures quality, keeps track of student hours, and provides students with a service learning "transcript" and, if appropriate, a letter of recommendation.
- Mankato's upper division cohort model enables Mankato to suspend regular classes, thus freeing students to spend entire school days in the classroom prior to student teaching.
- Students have the opportunity for national and international experience.

### **How the Model is Replicable**

Many components of Normandale's program are easily replicable. They do not require special funding or special relationships. The support of Normandale's CEE and BSD's Volunteer Connection are very valuable, but many colleges have similar supports available.

### **Indications of Success**

Students' reflections tell us that their service learning experiences are meaningful. Students have changed their major and/or focus based on their experiences. Graduates overwhelmingly agree that service learning and field experiences impacted their formation as a teacher. Perhaps the best indication of overall success comes in the placement statistics for last year's graduates. Of the 21 students who graduated from Mankato's Elementary Education program at Normandale in May 2012, 11 students found full-time teaching positions, three were hired for long-term sub positions, and three were hired as either resource teachers or as early childhood teachers.

Links are embedded in the narrative.

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<sup>[1]</sup> [Pathwise: Introduction to the PATHWISE Framework Induction Program, Educational Testing Service, 2005.](#)