

TLSI/Lastinger Professor-in-Residence: A Unique Feature of the University of Florida Job-Embedded Graduate Program

One of the elements that make the University of Florida job-embedded graduate program different from other traditional graduate programs is a position known as the *Professor-in-Residence (P-in-R)*. This university faculty member is physically located in the partner school district in order to more directly influence and support the merging of graduate program coursework into on-going school reform initiatives. This is what makes the UF Teacher Leadership for School Improvement Program (TLSI) truly job-embedded.

In this program, the *P-in-R* has primary responsibility for working with a cohort of TLSI graduate students who are all educators (teachers, principals, or academic coaches) in that school district. The *P-in-R* is the local advisor and mentor for the graduate students as they earn their degrees. As is true for all UF faculty the duties and responsibilities of a *P-in-R* fall into three broad categories: teaching, service, and research.

Teaching: In a blended format (online and face to face), the *P-in-R* teaches the five core TLSI courses and also serves as a liaison between the members of the cohort and the on-campus faculty who teach the students their specialization and elective courses. The *P-in-R* works with regular faculty to ensure that the assignments and other coursework for the cohort members are job-embedded and responsive to the specific context of the school district. As an example, if a course assignment requires students to write a grant to demonstrate advocacy for students, the *P-in-R* might contact a local foundation partner to assist teachers in actually submitting those grants and finding funding for projects that support school improvement initiatives. This makes the assignment authentic and provides the school with resources to achieve their goals.

The *P-in-R* coordinates the onsite graduate program, recruits new students, facilitates collaboration among cohort members both within and between schools, coaches teachers in the implementation of new strategies, and generally helps TLSI students make connections between the theory they are learning in their classes, the research they are conducting in their schools, and their professional practice. For example, the *P-in-R* might have graduate students conduct inquiry/action research as a part of a course, and then assist them in translating that research into a presentation at a district-wide inquiry showcase for all teachers in the partner schools. In this way, learning is shared across teachers in a district -- multiplying the learning of the graduate students themselves who are asked to make their practice public and have expanded opportunity to learn from other teacher inquirers.

Service: The TLSI program is organized to promote the development of students as researchers, leaders, and master teachers. Because the *P-in-R* understands the issues and initiatives specific to the district, he/she works directly with principals, regional superintendents and district supervisors to identify and facilitate opportunities for graduate students to demonstrate their emerging expertise in the TLSI areas. The *P-in-R* also supports teacher learning by developing relationships with school principals to encourage the use of structures that allow for distributed leadership roles in the schools; by working with the school leadership teams and grade level teams to build capacity and support for job-embedded learning; and by working with administrators in the district to provide support for inquiry-based teacher professional development. In these ways, the *P-in-R* extends support beyond simply working with graduate students to working with whole faculties in the partner schools. As an example, the *P-in-R* is a nationally-trained Learning Communities coach who provides training in summer

institutes and academies as well as other professional development for partner schools and districts.

Research: To be a productive faculty member at the University of Florida, the *P-in-R* is also expected to participate in research to assess the impact of partnership work within communities. These faculty members are part of a large research team within the Laster Center to conduct and share research on our practices. Each *P-in-R* coordinates the collection of formative data such as the Instructional Practices Inventory and the School Culture Survey in project schools in his/her district. He/she interprets the results of this research with school leadership teams to help guide school reform efforts. In addition, the *P-in-R* participates in ongoing research, publishes papers, makes presentations at conferences on teacher learning and professional development, and helps to coordinate the program evaluation efforts by nationally-recognized external researchers (SRI, International).

Following is a bulleted summary of the role of the Professor-in-Residence:

TEACHING

- Teach 5 TLSI core courses a year
- Coordinate onsite graduate program
- Conduct face to face meetings/class sessions
- Recruit new students all the way through admission
- Advise cohort members (assigned as they come in to program)
- Mentor and coach students in the use of new strategies learned in TLSI (in classroom support for teachers as needed)
- Act as a liaison between TLSI students and UF professors to help them make assignments job-embedded and responsive to context
- Encourage and facilitate collaboration within and across schools in the district

SERVICE

- Understand issues specific to the district
- Conduct Learning Communities facilitator training (for larger audience than TLSI students)
- Summer institutes and PD training for whole schools
- To have powerful collaboration, the *P-in-R* makes connections and internal supports explicit in order to build internal capacity
- Students are learning about inquiry, but the *P-in-R* supports them on the ground
- *P-in-R* support the district in related initiatives (inquiry-based reform; Ready Schools)
- Work directly with principals and regional superintendents
- Assist TLSI students and graduates with increased leadership roles in school and district
- Make TLSI work (and benefits of the program) visible in the district and beyond (PR role)
- Work on reculturing and restructuring the contexts to support job-embedded teacher learning:
 - Develop relationships with the Principals of each school to get school structures in place
 - Work with the school leadership teams and grade level teams to build capacity and support for job-embedded learning

- Work with layers of people in the districts to support job-embedded structures and smooth the way for all this work to succeed.

RESEARCH

- Formative data collection/analysis to guide school reform efforts
- Ongoing research on TLSI program
- Presentations at conferences on teacher learning, professional development, TLSI program
- Helping to coordinate the SRI evaluation efforts
- Publish papers on teacher learning and professional development
- Self-study of effectiveness of Lastinger/TLSI efforts