

Teacher Leadership for School Improvement Program
University of Florida
M.Ed. and Ed.S. Degree

The Teacher Leadership for School Improvement Program (TLSI), job-embedded Masters and Specialist program was developed by faculty in the School of Teaching and Learning at the University of Florida to address the unique needs of the practicing teacher scholar. The overarching goal of the program is help practicing teachers develop as leaders, learners, change agents, and advocates for all children as well as the teaching profession within their school building and larger community. Hence, the program was designed to be job-embedded, meaning that coursework and experiences relate to the everyday work of the practicing professional and require students to link theory to practice.

The TLSI Student

All TLSI students are current practicing professionals. Today, TLSI services two audiences: cohorts of students from our university partner schools in four Florida school districts as well as individual online students from across the nation. Both audiences take online courses with university instructors, but the partner school cohorts experience some coursework in a blended format, meaning that face-to-face course meetings supplement the online content. Blended courses are facilitated by Professors-in-Residence, full-time University of Florida faculty, who are based on site at their school and/or districts as part of whole school reform initiatives that focus on retention, recruitment, and development of highly qualified teachers. As of Fall 2009, we have had over 250 students enrolled in the program with a total of 39 graduates since the program began in 2005. We expect to graduate 50 students and admit approximately 100 more students in the upcoming year.

Program Goals

Once admitted to the program, TLSI students strive to achieve three main goals throughout the duration of their program: (1) develop as a master teacher, (2) develop as a teacher leader, and (3) develop as a teacher researcher. Students pursue these goals by progressing through a series of TLSI core courses, selecting an area of specialization, and creating a culminating portfolio that represents their learning and growth in relationship to each TLSI goal.

Core Courses

Students progress through a series of six core courses beginning with EDE 6325: Guided Teacher Inquiry and culminating with EDG 6047 Teacher Leadership for School Change. In addition, a three credit practicum helps students translate their course-based learning in core courses into their practice as well as assists them in developing a portfolio, the culminating activity for the entire program. A brief description of each core course and major readings and assignments can be found in the Course Summary Chart.

Specialization Area

In addition to the completion of the TLSI core curriculum, students also select a specialization area to develop expertise in one content area. Current specializations include: Reading Endorsement which meets all state requirements,

Educational Technology, Media Literacy, and Interdisciplinary Specialization. The Course Summary Document describes available course options within each specialization area.

TLSI Portfolio

The culmination for all TLSI students is the development and presentation of a portfolio that gives students the opportunity to demonstrate growth in the three program goals areas. Students are required to show evidence that new strategies learned in the program were implemented, evaluated, and adapted based on student outcomes and that new educational ideas have helped to shape their growth as a professional. Specialist students defend this portfolio orally to their committee and their peers. Masters students submit their portfolios to their advisors after a peer review process.