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### Behind the Scenes: Directors' Perspectives of Designing and Implementing New Online Degree Programs

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## Behind the Scenes: Directors' Perspectives of Designing and Implementing New Online Degree Programs

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**Beyond Problem-Based Learning:  
How a Residency Model Improves the  
Education of Pre-Service Teachers**

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**ABSTRACT**

In 2010, the state of Tennessee embraced the call to overhaul teacher education and required programs to adopt a residency model within K-12 schools. This paper provides a description of how two methods courses have shifted from simulation-style projects to projects that involve working with actual K-6 students throughout the semester. We present an overview of the new residency style methods courses, along with how major assignments shifted to utilize the residency placement in the K-6 classroom.

After the implementation of Ready2Teach, simulation assignments in the Language Arts methods course were adapted to occur in the residency placement. Two specific assignments were modified to fit the residency model. Lesson planning moved from planning for a fictional class to planning for real students in conjunction with their mentor teacher and professor. In doing so, pre-service teachers were able to consider real life modifications and make data driven decisions in their planning. Additionally, pre-service teachers were given the opportunity to carry out a close reading lesson plan in their field placement, leading to more opportunities for engagement and reflection.

Similarly, in the mathematics methods course, simulation assignments shifted from being major course assignments into residency-based assignments used to model what the pre-service teachers would do in the K-6 classroom. Specifically, the analysis of student work and remediation planning became a meaningful activity with actual K-6 students and the potential to improve their mathematical proficiency. Additionally, an assessment project shifted into an actual assessment used in the residency placement within the K-6 classroom. We demonstrate successful transition of two methods courses from traditional college coursework into residency-based activity that meets the needs of both the university as well as the school district partners. Our pre-service teachers gain meaningful experience in the K-6 classroom and are able to make appropriate connections to research-based literature.