



The HM Graduate School: An Operational Innovation Lab

The transformation of American education, and in particular the ongoing national quest to prepare students for the rapid societal changes currently underway, relies heavily on the preparation of teachers. Yet the institutions that prepare teachers—schools of education and, increasingly, alternative providers—have been largely bound by industrial-era of teacher preparation. This industrial-era model schools of education, which require a set number of courses and credit hours, focus on readiness to teach in terms of time, rather than demonstrated ability. In addition, many of these programs ignore the key competencies that the next generation of students will need to succeed in a time of rapid societal change.

The High Meadows Graduate School of Teaching & Learning (HM Graduate School) is transforming the existing model of teacher education by instituting a competency-based program that shifts the current focus of education from how long candidates must be taught to what they have learned and can do. It changes the emphasis in education from establishing uniform, time-fixed processes—credits that must be accumulated, courses that must be completed, and lengths of time students must spend in college classes—to achieving common, time-independent outcomes: the skills and knowledge necessary to be a successful teacher or school leader from day one. The HM Graduate School is preparing educators both to succeed in today's classrooms and to move those classrooms into the future. It also seeks to provide a model for teacher preparation providers nationwide.

The HM Graduate School has an ambitious goal for diffusing the model that ultimately includes both pre-service and in-service education. We seek to engage schools of education to adopt some or all of our competency-based approach within their existing educator preparation programs. Envisioning a set of stackable credentials that will enable teachers to progress and improve their professional practice, our pre-service teacher preparation program can also support the professional development or in-service needs of teachers in middle and secondary schools. Areas of our curriculum targeted for professional development include the use of design thinking, integration of the science of learning and development, and knowledge of issues of equity and culturally responsive pedagogy.

The HM Graduate School is at an inflection point after its first five years building the infrastructure and launching the program. Our team of research scientists, learning designers, faculty and staff have developed an innovative teacher prep program that has gained praise

and attention from state officials, policymakers, other education schools and national
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organizations. We have developed a powerful prototype that includes a platform to access curricula and assessments and are ready to begin scaling and distribution of our program. Our model of an Operational Innovation Lab offers a unique opportunity to both develop and design innovations for the field while also deploying the innovations to test and refine ideas under development. An Operational Innovation Lab serves two functions simultaneously. First, it designs concepts, programs and ideas from within and outside the host institution. Second, and equally important, it operates programming where testing can occur. The Operational Innovation Lab offers a new model for higher education institutions seeking to gain flexibility and pursue innovation.