

Advancing Innovations to Support Aspiring Teachers

Over the past 18 months, NIET has been designing new resources to support higher education leaders during the pandemic and beyond. Even as we transition back to “normal,” there are lessons and strategies that NIET is continuing to utilize, such as the importance of widening aspiring teachers’ access to high-quality digital resources and expanding their ability to observe more lessons than they may otherwise be able to watch.

This spring, NIET expanded on its online platform to launch a new portal specifically for higher education, NIET PREP (Portal for Raising Educator Preparation), which is home to a wide array of resources for aspiring teachers and the educators who support them. These resources can

help fill in the pandemic-caused gaps in a new teacher’s preparation and strengthen support for future candidates. NIET PREP also includes NIET’s *Aspiring Teacher Rubric*, which is a foundational tool for aspiring teachers and their faculty and is rooted in NIET’s research-based *Teaching and Learning Standards Rubric*. The *Aspiring Teacher Rubric* includes a streamlined set of indicators to target the strategies that aspiring teachers most need to utilize, and it is complemented by NIET PREP resources, which bring those strategies to life.

Here are some key features and resources in NIET PREP and how we are seeing higher education institutions utilize them.

Videos of High-Quality Lessons

Aspiring teachers can learn a lot by observing teachers and seeing various instructional strategies in practice. NIET PREP’s video library houses hours of professionally filmed classroom lessons, along with pre- and post-conferences between the teacher and their coach. These videos illustrate instructional and classroom management practices across a range of skill levels, grades, and content areas. For some lessons, NIET has provided ideas for related activities and discussion questions for faculty members and site coordinators to utilize.

Training Modules on Instructional Skills

Making strong connections between theory and how it transforms to authentic practice has been challenging due to school closures and limits on visits, but this is often an area where aspiring teachers can be limited due to geography or the makeup of the school to which they are assigned.

The modules on NIET PREP not only support aspiring teachers, but NIET’s partners also use the training modules as a learning tool for the faculty and mentors responsible for observing and providing feedback. By using the modules, observers refine and calibrate their understanding of rubric language and what evidence looks like. This stronger understanding leads to more meaningful coaching conversations.

Expanding NIET’s Support for Higher Education with NIET PREP

Not only does NIET PREP house a resource library of videos, certification resources, and documents, but it also supports the *NIET Aspiring Teacher Rubric* and provides crosswalks with edTPA and the InTASC standards. The online platform also serves as an additional resource for faculty to support aspiring teachers in their coursework. One example of this is Northern Arizona University, where university leadership and faculty opened the portal to students in

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Resources Available in NIET PREP

the college of education. With the expansion of access, mentors and university staff now assign students videos, presentations, or other resources on a specific content area for review and practice. We have seen a similar approach among other higher education partnerships, including Arizona State University, Marian University (Indiana), Southeastern Louisiana University, Texas Tech University, and Cumberland University in Tennessee.

NIET PREP is one of the many new ways that NIET is supporting higher education. We are continuing to focus on future innovations, such as helping with course mapping and induction, that will continue to make a meaningful difference in aspiring teacher preparation. Look for more in 2022.