A LABORATORY CLASSROOM
The Result of a Professional Development Middle School Partnership

A CLOSER LOOK
The Professional Development School (PDS) partnership between Towson University’s Middle School Education Program and Middle River Middle School (MRMS) in Baltimore County, has been in place since 2012. Using Reading & Writing in the Middle School is the first of two required reading courses and is taught at MRMS.

MRMS reading specialist, Katie Gjoni, and Towson University’s Pamela Segal created a laboratory classroom, where teacher candidates work with middle school students on content area reading and writing strategies (i.e., underlining, context clues, analyzing) and skills (i.e., one-on-one, small groups) throughout the semester. The teacher candidates are able to take the theory, strategies, and skills they learn in class lectures and apply them.

Teacher candidates often do not have the opportunity to use their knowledge of content area reading and writing strategies in an actual classroom until their intern year. This course allows teacher candidates to grow and learn from the middle school students and their experiences in the classroom. The teacher candidates noted that working with the students make them better teachers and the students, in turn, receive extra attention, time, and support with their reading and literacy skills.

SERVICES/SOLUTIONS/OUTCOMES
• Preparing middle school teachers to work with a diverse student population
• Enhancing and continuing a relationship between the Baltimore County Schools and the Towson University Middle School Program
• Applying literacy theory and skills in a real world middle school classroom

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