

West Liberty University Teacher Education
Graduate
CAEP Measure Four
Case Study/ Focus Group Protocol
Reading Specialist

As part of our continuous improvement efforts, the purpose of this study was to determine the impact of West Liberty University’s graduates on PreK-12 student learning and development, application of professional knowledge and skills, dispositions in the classroom, and satisfaction of completers. West Liberty University School of Education students who graduated between the years of 2018-2022 were contacted via email to participate in the study. Participation in the focus groups was conducted in an online, real-time setting with the virtual platform Zoom. During the focus groups, the West Liberty University graduates were guided through a discussion that was centered on completer satisfaction and effectiveness and WV Professional Teaching Standards.

In addition, focus group participants were asked to voluntarily provide their West Virginia Teacher Evaluation ratings and Student Learning Outcome data required as part of West Virginia Department of Education Policy 5310. These data were used to determine the teacher’s impact on student learning and development is distinguished, accomplished, emerging, or unsatisfactory. The ratings are broken down into the four domains of the Danielson Framework. These domains are (1) curriculum and planning, (2) the learner and the learning environment, (3) teaching, (4) professional responsibilities for self-reflection. and (5) Professional responsibilities for School and Community.

Teachers are placed in progressions, a designation earned based on the years of teaching experience through employment. Progressions include initial; teachers in their first, second or third year of teaching, intermediate teachers in their fourth or fifth year of experience; and advanced: teachers with six or more years of teaching experience.

Participants

In an effort to ensure our data reflected the range of content areas and developmental levels in which we license teachers, we selected and invited potential participants based on proximity, content area, and developmental level. Case Study Participants

Graduates of the M.A.Ed Reading Specialists

Evaluation Data Collection

Standard/ Element	Distinguished	Accomplished	Emerging	Unsatisfactory
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1.1		4		
1.2		4		
1.3		3	1	
2.1		4		
2.2		4		
2.3		4		
3.1		4		
3.2		4		
3.3		3	1	
4.1		4		
4.2		4		
5.1		4		
5.2		4		
5.3		4		

A semi-structured interview protocol was used to collect data on completers' perceived impact on PreK-12 student learning and development, application of professional knowledge and skills, dispositions in the classroom, and satisfaction of completers. Participants reflected on ...

Student learning Goal accomplishment data

Participant 1

Reading

All students increase overall reading levels by at least one level on the PALS end-of-the-year assessment.

Math

All students increase math scores on the Countywide math assessment by at least 14%

Participant 2

Participant 3

Participant 4

Informed Consent

___ I consent to participate in this study concerning the impact of West Liberty University's graduates in the reading specialist masters program on PreK-12 student learning, and development understand that I will be expected to provide a copy of my most recent teacher evaluation report, as well as participate in a one-hour structured focus group interview

___ I understand that I may stop my involvement in the study for any reason without penalty.

___ I understand that I may decline to answer any question asked of me, and that by doing so I will not be required to terminate my involvement in the study.

___ I understand that the researcher is willing to answer any questions I might have after I have participated in the study.

___ I understand that no individual data will be reported and that the researcher will not share my individual results with me either during or after the project.

___ I permit publication of the results of the study with the agreement that appropriate steps are taken to maintain participant confidentiality.

___ I understand that data may be collected in written or digital form and the data will be stored under password protection.

___ I understand that data collected in this study belong to the researcher.

___ I understand I may request to review the interview transcript and offer additional comments after the interview is complete.

Recording

___ I understand that the researcher will be utilizing (audio and/or video) to record the session(s). The recordings will only be used for (purpose). Only (researcher & other assistants names) will have access to the recordings. The recordings will be kept for (time range) in accordance with the study's Data Management agreement.

Compensation

___ I understand there will be no compensation for participation in this study. OR I understand that if I withdraw for any reason, I will not lose compensation for my participation.

Contact Information

___ I understand that matters relating to this study can be directed to (researcher) at (phone and email), or the faculty advisor at (phone and email). If I have additional questions or concerns about this study, I can contact The Evergreen State College Human Subjects Research Committee at irb@evergreen.edu

Age to Consent

___ I acknowledge that I am eighteen years of age or older and that I have read and understand the above explanations.

Voluntary

___ Again, I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary and that I have the ability to withdraw at any point without penalty or loss of compensation

Participant's Name (Print)

Participant's Signature

Date

I have presented this information to the participant and obtained his/her voluntary consent.

Researcher's Signature

Date

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using qualitative methodology. The researcher read the entire interview transcript over once without applying any codes. Then, open and axial coding was used to analyze the data. During the first stage of analysis, the open coding phase, the researcher denoted a major theme (i.e., code) to each sentence or line of the interview transcript. In the axial phase of analysis, these interview codes were reviewed to find common themes across participant responses and lines of the focus group interview. The sub themes within the individual lines of the focus group interview were combined into larger themes across participant responses.

Results

Four themes emerged from data analysis related to program impact on P-12 student learning and development, application of professional knowledge and skills, dispositions in the classroom, and satisfaction of completers. The four major themes that emerged were collaboration, differentiation, data-informed instruction, and suggestions for program improvement. Within the theme of collaboration, two sub themes emerged: 1) comfort in sharing

ideas with colleagues and administration and seeking out advice and 2) collaborating and building a long-term relationship with the mentor teacher. In the focus group participants shared that specific course assignments required seeking feedback and advice from principals and other colleagues at their school prior to implementing the assignments. In addition, participants described that consistent class presentations and in class discussion allowed them to gain experience and comfort in sharing their ideas. Participants also described having a positive, strong and long-standing relationship with their cooperating teacher, and that this relationship served as a valuable resource to seek advice.

Three sub themes emerged for the theme of differentiation: universal design for learning, repetition of course content and experience in the field, and knowledge of development and cultural differences. Multiple participants emphasized the importance of learning about the concepts of universal design for learning and described being able to implement the concepts in universal design for learning to differentiate to all of their students in their classroom.

Participants also described the role that repetition played in their learning. Differentiation and strategies for differentiation were taught at multiple points in the program and students were expected to differentiate in each of their lessons/projects. Finally, participants emphasized that their coursework taught them about development and cultural differences and they had multiple opportunities to utilize this knowledge to differentiate their instruction to students in the field.

Within the category of data-informed instruction, two sub themes emerged: efficacy in finding evidence-based instructional practices and efficacy in analyzing classroom assessment data and utilizing assessment data to inform instruction. Students described multiple opportunities to practice finding evidence-based instruction practices within their courses through collaboration, while also practicing this process independently through

projects/assignments for class and in their field placement. Participants also described that throughout the program they have become much more comfortable in analyzing and interpreting assessment data and making instructional decisions from that assessment data, with some participants even stating they have come to enjoy this process.

Two themes emerged for suggestions for program improvement: earlier and more frequent mentorship and field observation experiences and experience creating and implementing school and community-wide programming. Some of the participants had little experience with the field of education, coming into the program from other fields; therefore, these participants stated that having observational experiences in the field as early as possible would be beneficial to supplement their learning in early coursework. Finally, multiple participants mentioned that they had little experience in designing and implementing school-wide or community-wide programs for their content area, and that incorporating this type of experience into a course would be beneficial.