

Initial Certification (B.S. and ALTMA) 2019-2020 EPP Case Study (Measure 4)

Measure 2 – 4.2 – Indicators of Teaching Effectiveness

Initial Case Study: The EPP, during the Academic Year 2018-2019 designed a plan for an Initial Case Study. The Case Study was implemented during the 2019-2020 academic year. The main focus of the Case Study is to provide data to the Unit regarding how completers apply their professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions learned through their preparation experiences in a P-12 setting to impact student learning and development. A secondary focus of the Case Study was to determine the opinion of the completers regarding the experiences they received from the EPP.

The Case Study consisted of one completer each from: Elementary and Early Childhood Education, Secondary Education, Physical Education, Special Education, and Music Education. Completers for the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 academic years were identified for participation. Each of the completers will be second year teachers (2017-2018), unless there is a shortage and year three teachers (2016-2017) will be approached.

Upon approval by the University's Institutional Review Board, the Case Study began by meeting with all participants (completers and principals) and obtaining proper consent for participation. Initial interviews were held with the five completers. One observation was conducted with the five completers before COVID caused the closure of school building. The observations were conducted using the Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool™ (eleot™) tool developed by Cognia (formerly AdvancedEd). The data from the observations was compiled to allow for comparison of each component of student learning by the Unit's Assessment Staff (Appendix B). The data indicates that the learners are actively engaged in their lessons and are supported in the learning activities by their teacher and peers. The data also indicates that the learners are able to identify the lesson targets and goals and participate in an environment of high expectations to reach the targets and goals set for the lesson. The area the data indicates needed improvement is in the digital learning environment (technology). The information provided by the completers will be examined by the EPP for ways in which improvements can be made to address this deficit in the future. It must be noted that music and physical education, due to the nature of the classes, cited the difficulties of using technology in its learning environment.

After the closure of the school building due to COVID, a modification was made to the Case Study and IRB approval was received to focus on virtual instruction/learning. The nature of the school closures resulted in the second observation not being conducted. In place of a second observation, interviews were conducted with each of the participants regarding their preparedness for carrying out digital learning. Anecdotal data (Appendix B) provided by the completers will allow the EPP to examine how the completers handled the situation and how the EPP can adjust to help such situations for future completers.

The final interview with the participant and the interview with their principal were held in a digital format through the Zoom. Anecdotal data from these interviews will be included in the self-study report.

Advanced Case Study: The EPP, during the Academic Year 2019-2020 designed a plan for an Advanced Case Study. The Advanced Case Study is to be implemented during the 2020-2021 academic year. The main focus of the Case Study is to provide data to the Unit regarding how completers apply their professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions learned through their preparation experiences in a P-12 setting to impact student learning and development. Participants in this study will have completed their advanced program in Academic Year 2018-2019. One completer will be sought from each of the following: Counseling, Education Leadership, Education Psychology, Elementary and Early Childhood Education, Kinesiology, Secondary Education and Special Education. A secondary focus of the Case Study was to determine the opinion of the completers regarding the experiences they received from the EPP in the completion of their advanced program.

Initial Certification (B.S. and ALTMA) Anecdotal Data from the Completers

In analyzing the qualitative data through the lenses of strengths and weakness of the EPP, we found the following. The qualitative data was gathered through interviews with completers and their principals.

The eleot™ data indicated two areas of strength for the completers, Supportive Learning Environment and Well-Managed Learning Environment. Improvements are always warranted in every aspect, but the data indicates that the Digital Learning Environment is an area of improvement for the EPP.

The item descriptors of the creating supportive learning environment and well-management learning environments align with the interview questions pertaining to instructional practice, including preparing for instruction, facilitating classroom instruction, and assessment. In analyzing the anecdotal data relating to these areas, we found:

- **Preparedness for planning instruction (developing lesson plans)** - All participants in the case study indicated that they felt well-prepared by their programs for writing lesson plans and creating engaging lessons for their students. One participant stated, *“We went through a lot of different ways to lesson plan and create activities to engage our students. We went through a lot of different ways on how to plan for the academic growth of a program (i.e. classroom instruction over time).”*
- **Preparedness for carrying out instructional practices** - All participants indicated they felt prepared, but they also indicated that. *“you can never be fully prepared for the realities of the classroom.”* Each completer stated the importance that their practicums held in allowing them to develop their practices while under the guidance of mentor teachers.
- **Preparedness for conducting assessments** - Four of the five participants felt they were well prepared for conducting assessment. Each participant cited the importance of the assessment class required by the EPP. One participant stated, *“I definitely feel like I was giving a lot of tools to assess my students. I also think thinking through the entire edTPA process helped me find more ways. I make sure to give them feedback on what specifically they should improve on. I also want them to self-assess. In this content area is mostly about formative assessment on the go. It’s immediate when I hear something wrong and stop to help the students make the corrections.”*

The one participant who dissented to this question stated, *“I don’t feel like we dug deep enough into assessment. I mean we learned about assessments and data, but there is only so much you can learn about in the EPP setting. When you are actually in your own classroom there is so much more you will learn about...that can’t really be dissected in the assessment class.”*

The demands placed upon the schools and the completers by COVID has forced them to teach digitally, either in a blended format or completely virtually, at some point in time over the past year. This was not something that they or the EPP could have foreshadowed and many were not

prepared. Outside of these requirements, the Digital Learning Environment remained an area of improvement for the EPP as identified by the eleot™ and the qualitative responses from the completers. In discussing the findings with the completers and how the EPP could improve, two of the five indicated that the EPP should offer more instruction on *how* to teach using technology rather than offering digital tools (apps and websites) that can be used to engage students in instruction. One completer summed up the thoughts of both by directly stating that the EPP should offer more instruction focused on “digital literacy,” either as a direct course, seminar, or embedding it in other courses. The completer stated, “*we received great instruction on how to teach inquiry-based lessons and student-centered lessons, but engaging students with technology should be more prevalent in what we learned in the College of Education.*”