CCSU ASSESSMENT INTERIM REPORT: DIVISION OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION
Fall 2013

USE OF ASSESSMENTS TO IMPROVE PROGRAM

Candidates in the elementary education program undergo rigorous training and preparation for initial certification in the state of Connecticut. Analysis of 2009-2012 data from eight key assessments demonstrate the high level of preparedness of all our candidates, specifically in content knowledge, pedagogical and professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions, and student learning.

CONTENT KNOWLEDGE

Data show that our baccalaureate and postbaccalaureate candidates demonstrate a solid foundation in content knowledge that directly influences their ability to plan, organize, and assess the efficacy of instruction for all students with diverse backgrounds. A high percentage of candidates received an overall high scores on items related to content knowledge in their methods courses, and on the final student teaching evaluation.

While this may be the case, data also reveal gaps that have to be filled in order to accommodate the changes in state regulations as well as school needs. For example, in response to the changes in content areas on the PRAXIS II tests, the Division proposed additional credits to the social studies and elementary education methods courses, which was approved by the University Curriculum Committee and will be implemented in 2014.

Finally, data from the Midpoint Planning & Differentiation Lessons Plan reveal that all candidates have areas of improvement. The Division determined that all candidates would benefit from completing the Midpoint Growth Plan. In 2012 all candidates in EDTE 420-Effective Elementary Teaching were required to identify two areas from sections of *planning and instruction for active learning*, and *assessment for learning* in the Midpoint Growth Plan Rubric; they reflect on their areas of improvement, and describe a plan of action.

CANDIDATE PROFESSIONAL AND PEDAGOGICAL KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND DISPOSITIONS

Data show that our baccalaureate and postbaccalaureate candidates demonstrate a strong professional and pedagogical knowledge, skills, and dispositions that prepare them to become effective classroom teachers. A high percentage of candidates receive an overall high scores on items related to pedagogical knowledge, skills, and dispositions, especially in their elementary methods courses, field experiences, and student teaching evaluations.

Data also reveal that candidates lack preparation in teaching English learners. In reviewing candidates' core courses the Division noted that strategies and methods for English learners are introduced in methods courses through the study of differentiation, accommodations, and modifications. To provide further support for candidates' pedagogical knowledge and skills in working with English learners, various interventions and strategies specific to meeting the needs of English learners are now integrated into teacher candidates' lesson and unit planning, which are then transferred to field experiences in classroom placements with a high percentage of English learners.

STUDENT LEARNING

Data show that our baccalaureate and postbaccalaureate candidates demonstrate strong content knowledge, and pedagogical knowledge, skills, and dispositions to ensure a positive impact on student learning. A high percentage of candidates receive an overall high scores on items related to impact on student learning, especially in their field experiences and student teaching evaluations.

Nevertheless, data suggest that our candidates would benefit from additional emphasis on content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge and skills related to teaching English learners, especially in planning differentiated instruction for this group of students.

As a result, the Division faculty implemented several changes that would further enrich candidates' performance and enhance the program. Examples of these changes include: 1) the Understanding by Design (UbD) protocol in EDTE 320 and EDTE 420 methods courses that includes two sequenced lessons taught in the field classroom to collect and analyze data on student achievement; 2) revised candidates' lesson plan format to include written plans and reflections on practice related to research based differentiation strategies (specifically those for English learners, classroom environment and culturally responsive teaching strategies); and 3) in-depth course experiences and assignments with more emphasis on data driven instructional practices and reflection utilizing technology.

Finally, while data from the Student Teaching Exit Portfolio demonstrate that a high percentage of candidates have strong ability to accurately record and examine data; interpret and prepare responses to effect student learning through thoughtful connections; utilize knowledge about learning and teaching behaviors; and prioritize learning for all students with logical analysis and writing - the Division recognizes the need to build on candidates' abilities to positively impact the learning of students with diverse backgrounds. Consequently, the Division developed and is currently piloting a *CCSU School Apprenticeship Program* (S.A.P.), which is offered by the elementary education program in partnership with the departments of reading and language arts and special education. This program was designed to offer candidates over 200 hours of field experience in schools. Candidates work on school and community-based issues exploring critical themes with children, university faculty, artists, scientists and teacher/community teams in an apprenticeship model. Curriculum and assignments are assessed for effectiveness every semester, and changes are made, as needed by the cohort Division instructor.

The Division is determined and committed to continue exploring various approaches and resources to further increase candidates' preparation in positively impacting learning for all students of diverse backgrounds.

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