

Component R4.1 Completer Effectiveness

The case study (Evidence 30), as noted above, was delayed because of the COVID-19 pandemic. It was completed in the spring of 2021 and focused on three key areas: diversity, particularly as it pertains to *Montana's Indian Education for All* requirement; opportunity to work with English language learners; and, the impact of COVID on teaching and learning in K-12 classrooms. The three areas were selected in response to the previous NCATE accreditation area for improvement in providing opportunities for candidates to work with diverse P-12 students, the most recent employer and completer surveys results, and the current education situation related to COVID.

Eleven completers in two cohort groups participated in the case study, and the completers' licensure areas span K-8 elementary education, K-8 elementary education with an additional endorsement in reading or special education, secondary math education, secondary English education, secondary social studies education, and K-12 music education with representatives from the undergraduate and the graduate levels. Participants completed their programs between 2017 and 2019. For the case study, completers were asked to participate in a focus group, an individual interview, provide observational data of themselves teaching, and provide evidence of their effectiveness as teachers. Eight of the eleven completers participated in all of these elements.

One of the reasons for conducting a case study of completers is to evaluate their effectiveness as in-service teachers. In this study, completers shared materials that evidence their effectiveness as teachers, and they reflected on their practice. The materials completers shared ranged from a tour of their courses via their schools' learning management systems (LMS) to classroom assessment data to live or recorded videos of their teaching. Completers were able to demonstrate how they designed instruction, assessments, and opportunities for differentiation through their LMS instantiations and teaching videos. Completers' student assessment data, which included pre-post assessments on writing, homework, and reading as well as standardized STAR-360 results offered snapshots into K-12 student learning. Completers' reflections in focus groups and individual interviews prompted completers to consider what was working in their practice, what they have learned, and what they will change as a result. The case study authors also evaluated the live and recorded videos of completers teaching using the Danielson framework. Using this framework, the case study authors found that each of the completers who participated in this element demonstrated effective teaching.

The findings of the case study suggest clear areas of strength in the teacher education programs at the University of Montana, in addition to challenges that merit consideration. Case study participants identified five primary areas of strength, including: 1) the value of clinical education in their preparation as teachers, 2) the value of Universal Design for Learning in providing tools teachers can use to differentiate instruction for students, 3) a strong sense of humility and compassion as teachers, 4) knowing where to find information on evidence-based

teaching and learning practices, and 5) building strong collegial relationships with other teachers. Because the licensure programs are designed with explicit attention to clinical education, evidence-based practices, and Universal Design for Learning, it is not surprising that participants identified these as areas of strength. What is more unexpected and assuring, though, are strengths in what might be described as dispositional—humility, compassion, and collegiality. These findings are indeed encouraging.

With the areas of strength, participants also identified seven areas for further consideration. These include: 1) a specific course on *Indian Education for All*, 2) more coursework on assessment and how it can inform instructional decision-making and design, 3) more coursework on and clinical education in families and community, 4) more exposure to and experimentation with technology tools such as video production and learning management systems, 5) working toward a consistent volume of feedback from field partners and mentors, 6) a tighter integration between coursework and clinical education, and 7) more practice with classroom management. These areas are, in part, consistent with EPP findings from around the state and mirror findings in the exit, employer, and completer surveys —new teachers typically request more practice with classroom management, a deeper understanding of Indian Education for All and how they might effectively teach this in their classrooms, how to work effectively with families and communities, and more practice with designing assessments to inform and refine instructional practices. COVID prompted a host of questions related to technology and student engagement from educators around the world. We expect that many of the adaptations schools and teachers have made will persist in the coming years, and those can inform how we prepare teachers.

The next case study will occur during the 2022-2023 academic year and include those areas previously reviewed while also specifically targeting areas not covered in the first cycle, including early childhood education and secondary science.