

4.5: Interview Analysis of Completers in their School of Employment

Two cohorts of completers were analyzed using a pilot instrument that was tested on a small sample in 2019-20 and again in 2020-21; those working in 2019-2020 and those working in 2020-2021. Tests on validity and reliability will be conducted and the survey revised prior to the 2021-22 administration using standardly accepted statistical methods (4.5 Interview Analysis of Completers at Their School of Employment). The majority of completers are employed in local school systems such as Baltimore City and County, with smaller percentages throughout the state (4.7. Status of Completer Employment), and the EPP continues as the largest private provider of certified teachers in Maryland.

For 2019-2020, 10 former interns completed the initial survey and sat for interviews (n=10). These former interns worked in a variety of school systems across the state of Maryland. These school systems include Anne Arundel County Public Schools, Baltimore County Public Schools and Montgomery County Public Schools. In addition, 80% of respondents taught in grades K-5, 10% taught in grades 6-8 and 10% taught in grades 9-12. For 2021, 10 former interns completed the initial survey and sat for interviews (n=10). These former interns worked in a variety of school systems across the state of Maryland. These school systems include Anne Arundel County Public Schools (3), Baltimore County Public Schools (4) and Montgomery County Public Schools (3). Seven out of the ten respondents teach in elementary schools while three respondents teach in a middle school.

Process for the interviews was a streamlined structured question method in both 2020 and 2021. First, the PI read the initial survey and identified the data for things that stood out. This process also helped the PI familiarize himself with the data. Next, the PI looked for commonalities within the answers to the predetermined questions on the survey and interviews. From these commonalities, the PI built out themes. This process was iterative and the PI read and reread the themes a number of times to see which themes could stand on their own, and which could be consolidated. In addition, the PI looked at the survey and all individual interviews. For example, one prominent theme that emerged was outside measurement (e.g. how were our former interns measured by outside yardsticks such as principals observations and their students standardized test scores?). From these common themes, the PI developed a thematic listing. For this thematic listing, the PI cut and pasted the respondents words from the survey and interviews. Once the thematic chart was complete, the PI then used this to create a narrative. During the drafting of the narrative, the PI also added relevant qualitative data to further illuminate qualitative answers.

The following table summarizes results. Qualitative analysis and narrative is presented after the table.

Interview Item	Theme	2019-2020 (N=10)					2020-2021 (N=10)				
		Consistently	Not Consistently	Minimally	Not At All	N/A	Consistently	Not Consistently	Minimally	Not At All	NA
I have shown that I understand the diverse learning needs of my students.	Differentiation	80%	20%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
I have shown that I plan for the diverse needs of my students.	Scaffolding, differing modalities, learning styles, methods and assessments	80%	10%	10%	0%	0%	80%	0%	0%	0%	20%
I have shown that I know the required content.	Clear explanations, scaffolding, pre-teaching	50%	40%	0%	10%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
I have shown that I effectively teach the required content.	External performance measures	50%	50%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
I have shown that I create a respectful environment that supports learning for all my students	Relationships, rapport and safety	70%	30%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
I have shown that I have implemented effective instruction that engages my student's learning.	Reflection on teaching, engaging learners	70%	30%	0%	0%	0%	10%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Interview Item	Theme	Consistently	Not Consistently	Infrequently	Not At All	N/A	Consistently	Not Consistently	Infrequently	Not At All	NA
I have shown that I implement a range of assessments to ensure progress of my learners and improve instruction	Varied assessments (informal, formal, self) and student choice of assessments, goal-setting with students, UDL	90%	10%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
I have shown that I demonstrate professionalism with stakeholders	Being responsive and active in the school community	70%	30%	0%	0%	0%	90%	0%	0%	0%	10%
I have shown that I use technology in ways that improve teaching	Utilizing different technologies	80%	20%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Analysis of Results:

Generally speaking a vast majority of the respondents did well on these outside measures. Specifically, eight out of ten respondents noted that they were rated effective on their classroom observations. Most respondents noted how their students were successful on various standardized measurements such as WIDA tests, DIBELS testing, Kindergarten Readiness Exams, County Assessments, quarterly assessments and benchmarks, F & P assessments and MAP tests. Of course, some former interns did note how they or their students struggled. The quantitative data is telling here as well: 90% of respondents noted how they use a range of assessments to measure learner's progress, 70% believe that they implement a range of effective strategies to engage students, and 50% believe they teach the required content. So, while there is room for improvement, we believe the ultimately, NDMU interns have a positive impact on their students and schools.

While standardized tests tell part of the story, there are other more qualitative ways to measure our intern's progress and the impact on their students. One intern spoke of their greatest success in helping students learn to read and write. Another spoke of one to one zoom sessions for reluctant learners. Another former intern spoke of their establishing a connection with a particularly difficult student by saying hi, the trouble stopped.

A crucial component to teaching is the affective portion of teaching. All former interns employed strategies and means to connect with their students, to build relationships and rapport with their students. Many of the former interns noted how they built positive relationships, used games and in some cases even stuffed animals. Interns realized the important of building relationships and creating a welcoming environment. In addition, 70% of respondents noted how they strove to create a welcoming environment. Cultural diversity was also a frequently mentioned idea. Eighty percent of respondents noted that they planned for diverse needs of their students and understood the diverse needs of their students. For instance, a music teacher incorporated diverse songs in her class to cover many cultures, another former intern noted they incorporate student's ethnic backgrounds when appropriate. One respondent did not they were caught a little off guard by some student's cultural beliefs (one student did not celebrate Halloween). Overall, while demographics and cultural diversity can be challenging, it seems our students were prepared and could handle these trends.

Diversity frames modern education. Demographics are rapidly changing and our former interns prepared for this change by employing a number of strategies. One intern noted how she contact's families to understand the families' cultural norms in additional to keeping a parent log. Similarly, another intern talked about how she learns the individual needs of her students. Another intern draws on the fact that she is an African-American woman to relate to her mostly African American students. Another of our former interns who is an art teacher assigned art projects with a diverse focus. She did run into some issues because she has some Afghani students and did not have many resources for Afghani art, nevertheless, this is a great example of how to use diversity to enhance and strengthen pedagogy. Similarly, another intern had students create presentations for black history and women's history month. Another former intern noted that she has a good deal of information present from her school district's diversity database and that she utilizes this database. Perhaps one student encapsulated the notion of diversity best when she said that she sees her student's diversity as a strength to build on. The quantitative data bears

some this out as well, 100% of former interns noted that they consistently understand the diverse learning needs of their students, while 100% noted that they consistently plan for diversity. As such, our former students feel confident in their ability to teach and plan for diversity.

Some former interns take on leadership roles in their school. For instance, one former intern spoke to her ESOL department about teaching diverse students; while another former intern serves on the equity team. Another intern notes how she communicates with administration and parents on a regular basis. Indeed, 83% of former interns interviewed noted that they show professionalism and take part in the school community while one former intern marked N/A.

Our former interns employ a variety of teaching strategies to meet the needs of their diverse learners. Some strategies that our interns mentioned have to do with connecting lessons with experience, which reflect on a focus on experiential and Deweyan education. Other former interns employ SEL instruction and learning circles. One former intern noted that she utilizes breakout room, T charts, KWL charts, anchor charts, picture walks, notice and wonder, stop and jot and jigsaws. Other strategies included breaking down reading and assignments, pre-teaching vocabulary and utilizing virtual tours. Interns also spoke of how they make activities more student centered and hands on. In addition, one intern also give multiple opportunities to students so they can adjust their assignments. One intern noted that utilizes data to make informed decisions and adjust lessons and reteaches to small groups when necessary. The pandemic did create some obstacles, but it is clear that our former interns do not employ the old “sage on the stage” model of teaching but rather employed active teaching and learning strategies as well as mastery learning. Although the quantitative data does show some consternation on the part of former interns when it comes to pedagogy, 67% said they inconsistently implement effective instruction that engages student’s learning and only 33% said they consistently implement effective instruction.

Assessments are crucial to any school and classroom. Like teaching strategies, our interns employ a number of formal and informal assessment strategies. For one, former interns talk to family members and schedule one on one meetings, as well as check in with, monitor and talk to students to gauge their progress. Former interns also use test scores, pre-assessments, checks for understandings, exit tickets, hand symbols for non-verbal learners, conversations, oral comprehension checks and worksheets as well. Our intern who is a former art teacher uses student’s work and art projects as an example of student growth. As many of the former interns pointed out, multiple forms of assessment are needed to gauge students’ progress. In addition, 100% of former interns interviewed noted that they plan for a diverse array of assessments to gauge student learning.

Technology was crucial before the pandemic and now has taken on more relevance after the pandemic. Our former interns are employing a number of technologies including nearpod, working canvas, pear deck, cammy, zoom, clever, amplify, I-ready, Eureka Math, Whiteboard, Google classroom, jamboards and spinning name wheels. Indeed, 100% of former interns interviewed noted how they utilize technology to enhance instruction. One intern also noted how she modeled various applications for her students as well.

Content is not the only consideration of great teachers. Relationships are crucial. Our former interns noted how they build relationships. As noted earlier, some intern's contact families and keep a parent log. Another former intern tries to create lessons that appeal to student's interests such as sports. Another former intern noted how she collaborates with the class to develop expectations. One former intern remarked how she made sure all students' comments and opinions were valued by giving student's opportunities to share in the chat box. Other former interns noted how they try to model good behavior and expectations as well as addressing student's disrespect immediately. Indeed 100% of former interns interviewed noted that they create a respectful environment for students.

A number of former interns noted how they were able to positively utilize aspects of their internship in their current teaching. One former intern noted the connections she made with her former mentor teacher while other former interns noted some of the pedagogical strategies they learned while an intern at NDMU, such as different teaching methods. Most former interns directly mentioned the internship at NDMU directly. Specifically, 50% of the respondents felt that their internship helped to prepare them (the other half did not mention the internship). One noted the internship prepared them for the ESOL but not the reading portion of teaching.

Perhaps one of the most effective ways to gauge our former intern's success is by consulting their observations. So far, all of our former interns had solid observations but not without obstacles. For instance, one former intern stated that she did very well but had to work on her asynchronous learning instruction. Another former intern had a tough principal and failed her first year observation but regained her footing and was fine by mid-year. Other former interns noted how well their observations went. In another case, our former intern's observations were waived because her first observations had gone very well. Overall, our intern's observations were solid. Former interns also utilized WIDA tests, SLO's and amplify readings tests to gauge their student's progress and all were successful. Overall, analyses demonstrate that these former interns had a positive impact on their current students and schools.