



BUFFALO STATE
The State University of New York

Teacher Education Unit
1300 Elmwood Avenue
Buffalo, NY 14222-1095

<https://epp.buffalostate.edu/>

Teacher Education Unit

Executive Summary of Observation Case Studies (TEU Case Study Protocol)

Phase 2 2020-2021

Table of Contents

Introduction & Rationale.....	2
Background	2
Methodology	3
Timeline	4
Instrumentation	5
Analysis of Data	6
Table 1: Participant Information	7
Table 2: Faculty Participants	8
Results of Case Study Observation and Evaluation Form.....	8
Summary of Impact on Learning.....	9
Summary of Teaching Effectiveness.....	10
Reliability.....	11
Sustainability of research	11
Table 3: Structured Observation Rubric Results for Completers.....	13

Introduction & Rationale

The Teacher Education Unit at Buffalo State College seeks continuous improvement and assures program quality through our *Buffalo State Education Assessment System* (BSEAS). This system helps us to establish priorities, enhance program elements, and highlight innovations. We utilize a suite of multiple measures aimed at accomplishing these goals, one of which is the Observation Case Study.

Through this case study project, we study our program impact and the effectiveness of our completers (employed by schools) on *P-12 Student Learning and Development*. Given the unavailability of P-12 student outcome data or teacher effectiveness data from New York State Department of Education or local area school districts, we conducted a case study research project as an “inservice measure”. This method has the potential to contribute to a “powerful source of information for EPP improvement and monitoring of success (p. 1, CAEP Standard 4 Evidence: A Resource for EPPs, 2017). CAEP recognizes case studies as a direct measure of what P-12 students have learned or of teacher performance in the classroom. A pilot was conducted in the 2018-19 school year with anticipation of continuing in 2019-20 (with data collection in Spring 2020). This phase was put on hold due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Background

During the 2017-2018 academic year our CAEP Steering Committee formed a three-person workgroup (Budin, Fuzak, and Renzoni) to research processes for studying the results of our preparation programs when completers are employed in positions for which they are prepared. Specifically, we sought out methods to study teacher impact on P-12 student learning and development and teacher effectiveness. We sought to validate this tool and process by conducting literature searches, attending CAEP Conferences and webinars focusing on CAEP Standard 4, and leveraging the expertise of the SUNY EPP Assessment Consortium Group to identify possible case study methods for studying program impact, particularly without access to any value-added student growth measures. Through this process, we identified a case study protocol based on the Danielson’s (2007; 2013) *Enhancing Professional*

Practice: A Framework for Teachers (with rubrics aligned to InTASC Standards and APPR observation tools used in New York State to evaluate teachers).

This protocol had been successfully utilized by other SUNY institutions (i.e., Cortland). For additional content validity, we sought feedback from the broader CAEP Steering Committee, the TEU Assessment Committee, and stakeholders from the TEU Professional Advisory Committee (TEUPAC). TEUPAC members, comprised of partners from local area school districts, expressed a willingness to assist with the case study process in the absence of other teacher effectiveness and student level growth data.

Following our exploratory research and feedback efforts, we determined that this observation case study protocol could be one measure to contribute to the assessment and evaluation of our teacher preparation programs. We designed a pilot study to evaluate this protocol for implementation in the 2018-19 academic year with the purpose of providing a direct measure of the effective application of professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions of teachers (completers) in their classrooms. We did not conduct any studies during 2019-20 due to school closures Spring 2020. We reinstated the case study model in 2020-2021 and two were conducted by programs in English Education and Music Education.

Methodology

The Observation Case Study Protocol (OCSP) involves in-depth study by faculty researchers across multiple teacher education programs within our unit. It utilizes the Danielson Teaching Framework which is also aligned to the New York State Teaching Standards, INTASC Standards and was then aligned to our TEU Practicum Evaluation (utilized in student teaching and methods courses). It is organized around the following domains: Planning and Preparation, Classroom Environment, Instruction, and Professional Responsibilities.

Human Subject Review Board approval was obtained through Buffalo State College. All faculty participants completed Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI Program). Participating teachers (completers) completed an informed consent form and written approval was obtained by building principals prior to the start of any research.

Our phase-in plan for the OCSP was to conduct a pilot to study individuals who have completed one of our initial education programs and who are currently employed in P-12 school settings as the primary teacher of record. To assist in identifying a good sample of completers, we added a question item to our alumni survey (sent to completers 1- and 3-years post completion) to solicit interest in participation. Given the volunteer nature of this project, we do not plan to target specific completer cohorts, rather, must rely on a sample of convenience based on volunteer completers. Interviews for Phase 1 (pilot) began February 2019 with observations completed by June 2019 for our first round of completers (n=3). Our expectation that Phase 2 was to begin the following spring (2020; 1 year later) with a new set of volunteer completers, however due to COVID-19 closures and the inability (and reluctance of partners) to conduct observations in person or virtually, Phase 2 was postponed until spring 2021. Moving forward, we intend to cycle through all initial programs over a 4-year period to conduct one case study per program discipline. *See Timelines below.*

Suggested Timeline

YEAR 1 (pilot)	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5
2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Exceptional Education (now SCE)	Paused due to Covid	Music Education	Art Education	Math Ed
Childhood Ed		English Education	Business Marketing	Science Ed
Career & Tech Ed		Social Studies Education* (to be included in 2021-22 analysis)	Family & Consumer	Tech Ed
			Generalist SWD	
Volunteered		Volunteered	Alphabetical order	Alphabetical order

Implementation Timeline Case Study Activities:

October	Identify / recruit faculty & inservice teachers representing 2-4 EPP programs per year
November	Assure faculty have completed IRB/CITI training
December/January	Provided training to faculty (2 hours)
February	Faculty conducted first interview with teacher-participant
February/March	Faculty provided brief summary of data sources
March	Faculty conducted pre-observation interview with teacher-participant
March	Faculty observed effective practice and impact on students
March/April	Faculty conducted post-observation interview with teacher-participant
April/May	Faculty reviewed artifacts, coded data, analyzed and summarized results. Wrote up Case Study using template.
May	Review process with Phase 1 faculty research team (discuss results/findings, review instrumentation, and overall debrief). Revised tools and process as needed.
June	Write executive summary of all observations

The final step is to analyze the data reported by faculty researchers at each phase and develop an executive summary report based on the individual observations per phase. We will share with all program personnel and stakeholders as part of quality assurance process during advisory councils and meetings of the Teacher Education Council. We will replicate the process each year with 2-4 additional faculty and representative completers from initial programs. We seek to institutionalize the process as a formal unit-wide assessment procedure to be completed annually, cycling through all programs across the TEU over 4 years.

Instrumentation:

See appendixes for details.

1. Case Study Observation and Evaluation Form

This form is aligned with a rubric from Danielson's Framework which is also mapped to both the InTASC Standards as well as the Buffalo State Teacher Education Unit Practicum Evaluation. It includes a detailed rubric provided by ASCD, *Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching*, 2nd ed.

2. Structured Observation Rubric

This rubric is based on Danielson's Framework as well as NYS tools used to evaluate teachers (revised from SUNY Cortland). It will be used while observing program completers (teacher-participants) during instruction and

when conferencing with the teachers following the observation. Rubric criteria are 1-4 (1-unsatisfactory, 2- basic, 3- proficient, 4- distinguished).

3. *Interview Questions for Impact on Student Learning Case Studies*

Faculty Fellows will conduct three interviews with the teacher-participant during the case study process. Structured questions (revised from SUNY Cortland) will be used for each interview.

4. *Case Study Template*

This template is a report form that each Faculty Fellow will use to report their case study findings. form is aligned with a rubric from Danielson’s Framework which is also mapped to both the InTASC Standards as well as the Buffalo State Teacher Education Unit Practicum Evaluation. This tool will be as a “case study report” and includes 7 sections to be completed by the faculty fellow.

5. *Executive Summary Template*

This template will be used by the Teacher Education Unit (e.g., Assessment Committee and/or Assistant Dean for Assessment and Accreditation) to evaluate the findings as an entire unit and examine ways the results may be generalizable.

Additional Details about Faculty Involvement:

- Faculty researcher conducts **three interviews** with a teacher-participant as well as **one in-class observation, at minimum**. Additional time is needed for gathering case study context information, reviewing artifacts, compiling of evidence, data analysis and summarization and commentary related to the findings using the Buffalo State TEU Case Study Protocol. (NOTE: In the future, location and type of observation may be modified due to COVID restrictions).
- Faculty are encouraged to apply effective and appropriate technology tools throughout this process, where appropriate (i.e., video conferencing).
- Because this process is viewed as “action research” and faculty will be encouraged to apply rigor to this process and explore scholarly outlets for dissemination following the case studies. Collaboration across programs will be facilitated to explore outcomes applicable across the Teacher Education Unit.
- Faculty in Phase 1 were provided with a modest honorarium (e.g., \$300). Phase 2 did not receive one.
- Teacher participants (completers) were not compensated.

Analysis of Data

Two completers participated in the case studies. Teacher A completed her initial certification program 6 years prior (English Education) and has been teaching since 2014. Completer B completed hers 12 years prior (Music Education), however has only been employed teaching since 2018 and recently obtained her master’s degree in Music Education from Buffalo State College in 2020. Candidate A teaches at a suburban middle school with a 40% diverse population. Candidate B teaches music in an urban district across three elementary schools with an 81% diverse population, including many English language learners. Information about teacher participants, students and classrooms can be found in Table 1. Three faculty participated in the data collection. See Table 2 for details.

Table 1

Teacher Participants: Demographic and Classroom Information

Completer Program	Completer Year	Grade Level	Subject	Number of students	School Setting / Location
English Education (initial) female N=1	2014	8	ELA	234 across four sections (7 have 504 plans, 5 receive instructional support [AIS]; 1 section of honors students)	Suburban Public School
Music Education (initial) female N=1	2008	Elementary (5/6)	Music lesson	2 total (individual lessons)	Urban Public School
AIS = academic intervention services;504 = eligible for accommodations via 504 Plan					

Table 2

Faculty Participants by Department

English Education N=2	Music Education N=1
Associate Professor Assistant Professor	Associate Professor

Results of Case Study Observation and Evaluation Form

Completer performance was evaluated using several rubrics based on *Enhancing Professional Practice, A Framework for Teaching* by Charlotte Danielson (2007, 2014). These Structured Observation Rubrics were utilized individually and are included in the individual case study reports written by each faculty researcher. In this executive summary, data for all three completers are grouped for analysis in Table 3.

Using a four-point scale (1=unsatisfactory to 4=exemplary), all candidates performed at a proficient or exemplary level on all criteria. On average, completer performance in all domains was at the “proficient” level (3.83 or higher out of 4). Completers were effective in the planning and preparation domain, scoring 4 out of 4 for all areas except student assessment (scored 3 out of 4). Performance in the other domains for Teacher A (English Education) was judged to be exemplary; Teacher B was also rated as exemplary for all areas except for “using assessment in instruction where she was rated as “proficient” (3 out of 4).

In both case studies it was noted that the completers were particularly effective in using discussion and questioning strategies to engage the learners. In the case of the Teacher A, her discussion strategies were appropriate for the content area and matched the learning context. In addition, the discussion techniques acted as a model for the written tasks and analyses students were to complete independently.

In both contexts, completers engaged in scaffolded instruction. Notable for Teacher B was her use of guided practice used during the music lesson that allowed students to experience success and generalize their new skills to other music settings. Teacher A also engaged in scaffolding during her lesson – using it as a way to use and model literacy lenses to critically analyze texts before students had to do it independently.

Both faculty observers took note of the assessment techniques utilized by the completers. Despite this being rated as one of the lower areas (3 out of 4), it was still appropriate for the context. Teacher B engaged in both formative and summative assessment

tying SLOs to the appropriate assessment technique. She utilized multiple forms of technology to assist in the dissemination of content and evaluation of student learning. For example, her students submitted FlipGrid videos when completing performance assignments and then received written and verbal feedback, adjusting future instruction as needed. Teacher A provided written artifacts that illustrated deep reflection on the part of her students as well as appropriate citations and references to the relevant text. The written samples clearly met the goal of students linking their own personal lived experiences to their text analysis. Reflection activities were embedded in both classrooms- music students submitted a GoogleForm to reflect upon their technical and musical growth whereas English language arts students engaged in the reflection process through writing about the literacy connections in their own lives.

Other areas of instruction, including the classroom environment or engaging in professional responsibilities were strong. No notable areas of weakness noted.

Summary of Impact on Student Learning

In addition to their performance on the rubric criteria listed above, in both case studies the teacher participants (i.e., completers) were actively engaged in evaluating the impact of their teaching on student learning. Teacher B (Music Education) was particularly aware of the need for a variety of measures, both formative and summative, formal and informal, and infused technology in a very fluid manner.

Summary of Teaching Effectiveness

As evidenced by performance on the rubric criteria listed above, both teacher participants engaged in a variety of effective instructional practices. Many of these practices are research-validated, high leverage teaching practices that positively impact student outcomes. Based on additional observation and interviews, some of the most salient practices included:

Strengths observed:

- Use of scaffolded instruction:
 - Modeling, guided practice, and independent practice opportunities noted.
 - Providing feedback and guidance in a graduated way to ensure carryover and generalization.

- Teaching Generalization:
 - Connecting to students' own lives
 - Providing opportunities to practice with feedback before independent practice.
- Technology use
 - Appropriate and relevant technology used for setting and tasks.

Areas for growth observed:

- Assessment: Despite both teachers incorporating assessment practices into their lesson, the faculty observers felt these skills were not “exemplary”, but rather “proficient”. While that is more than sufficient for these purposes, it is something that has been brought up by employers and alumni alike as a potential area for growth.

Sustainability of Research with Program Completers

After this second phase of observation case studies, we believe that conducting 2-4 per year is feasible and valuable to faculty. We will continue to work toward the institutionalization of the process as a formal unit-wide assessment procedure to be completed annually, cycling through all programs across the TEU over 3-4 years (3 if no COVID shutdown). Valuable insight can be obtained by conducting this research across the unit. Although completers demonstrated strong evidence of their effectiveness and impact on student learning, some areas of continued growth were also noted. This information will be reflected upon and shared with programs to inform program decisions in the future.

We have increased our efforts in maintaining relationships with our completers once they graduate, in hopes that we may offer them additional professional development or act as a resource in other areas.

As a unit, one other challenge that persists in this form of research is the ability of faculty to continue this level of analysis once candidates leave the programs. Given faculty teaching loads, service obligations, and scholarly pursuits, additional research such as this may not be prioritized. Honorariums were not available for this Phase (they were in Phase 1) and it is not expected that they will be available moving

forward given the current budget situation. Recruitment of faculty researchers for the 2021-22 academic year will begin early so that case studies can be completed in a timely manner. As we continue to “institutionalize” the observational case study process, we believe additional faculty will see the value of participating in the process.

Table 3
Structured Observation Rubric Results for Completers
 N=2

DOMAIN 1: Planning & Preparation										
COMPLETER	1a K of content & pedagogy	1b K of students	1c Setting inst outcomes	1d Demo K of resources	1e Design coherent inst	1f Design student assess		Total Points	%	Mean per Completer
English Education (Teacher A)	4	4	4	4	4	3		23	96%	3.83
Music Education (Teacher B)	4	4	4	4	4	3		23	96%	3.83
Mean per Criteria	4	4	4	4	4	3				Overall: 3.83

DOMAIN 2: Classroom Environment									
COMPLETER	2a Env of respect & rapport	2b Cult for learning	2c Manage classroom procedures	2d Manage student behavior	2e Org physical space		Total Points	%	Mean per Completer
English Education (Teacher A)	4	4	4	4	4		20	100%	4.0
Music Education (Teacher B)	4	4	4	4	n/a zoom		16	100%	4.0
Mean per Criteria	4	4	4	4	4				Overall: 4.0

DOMAIN 3: Instruction									
COMPLETER	3a Commun w/ student	3b Quest & disc techniq	3c Engage in learning	3d Use assess in instruct	3e Domo flex & responsive		Total Points	%	Mean per completer
English Education (Teacher A)	4	4	4	4	4		20	100%	4.0
Music Education (Teacher B)	4	4	4	3	4		19	95%	3.80
Mean per Criteria	4	4	4	3.5	4				Overall: 3.9

DOMAIN 4: Professional Responsibilities*										
COMPLETER	4a Reflect	4b Accurate records	4c Comm w/ families	4d Participate prof comm	4e Grow & dev prof	4f Show profess		Total Points	%	Mean per completer
English Education (Teacher A)	4	4	4	4	4	4		24	100%	4.0
Music Education (Teacher B)	4	4	n/a	4	4	4		20	100%	4.0
Mean per Criteria:	4	4	4	4	4	4				Overall: 4.0

*professional responsibilities not observed for 2 of the 3 completers, therefore did not calculate total or mean.