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Teacher Education Unit

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

2023-24

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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. Case Studies were re-instituted in the 2020-21 academic year.

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 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 reinstituted the case study model in 2020-2021 and two were conducted by programs in English Education and Music Education. Social Studies Education program conducted a case study in May 2021, but due to timing of the final report, it was included in the 2021-22 data cycle, along with two additional case studies (Students with Disabilities Generalist 7-12 Program and Food and Consumer Sciences Program). For the 2022-23 and 2023-24 cycles case studies in science education and childhood education were conducted and are presented here.

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 Responsivities.

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.

Phases: 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. The original intent was to move forward in a four-year cycle, however, following COVID restrictions and the reality of the added, uncompensated workload for faculty, we extended it; thus, we will continue to conduct one case study per initial program discipline during a six-year cycle. It is anticipated that the first full cycle will be complete in Spring of 2024. A new cycle will begin 2024-25. *See Timelines below.*

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First Cycle Timeline

YEAR 1 (pilot)	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5	YEAR 6
2018-19	**2019-20**	**2020-21**	**2021-22**	**2022-23**	**2023-24**
Exceptional Education (now SCE)	Paused due to Covid	Music Education	Family & Consumer	Tech Ed (did not complete)	Math Ed (did not complete)
Childhood Ed		English Education	Social Studies Education		Science Ed
Career & Tech Ed		Art Education	Generalist SWD		Business Marketing (did not complete)
					Master's in Initial Teaching (Childhood)

Note: Due to lack of personnel able to conduct the case studies, the Tech Ed and Business and Marketing Education case studies were not completed during this timeline. Math Education did not complete theirs for unknown reasons.

New (Current) Cycle Timeline

YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5	YEAR 6
2024-25	**2025-26**	**2026-27**	**2027-28**	**2028-29**	**2029-30**
Special Education-Childhood Ed	Childhood Ed / EC	Music Education	Family & Consumer	Master's in Initial Teaching (Childhood)	Catch up as needed
Math Ed (did not complete)	Career & Tech Education	Business Marketing	Social Studies Education	Tech Ed	
	English Education	Art Education	Generalist SWD	Science Ed	

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	Provide training to faculty (2 hours)
February	Faculty conduct first interview with teacher-participant
February/March	Faculty provide brief summary of data sources
March	Faculty conduct pre-observation interview with teacher-participant
March	Faculty observe effective practice and impact on students
March/April	Faculty conduct post-observation interview with teacher-participant
April/May	Faculty review artifacts, code data, analyze and summarize results. Write up Case Study using template.
May	Review process with Phase X faculty research team (discuss results/findings, review instrumentation, and overall debrief). Revise tools and process as needed.
June	Write executive summary of all observations for that academic year.

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 continue to seek the institutionalization of the process as a formal unit-wide assessment procedure to be completed annually, cycling through all programs across the TEU over 6 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). Later phases did not receive one and there does not appear to be any compensation for future researchers.

- Teacher participants (completers) were not compensated.

Analysis of Data

Three completers participated in the case studies (Teacher A, B, and C). Teacher A completed her initial certification in childhood education in the master's in initial teaching program (MIITC) at Buffalo State in 2022 and has been teaching since 2022 (in year 2 of teaching). She holds New York State certification in Childhood Education (Grades 1-6). Teacher B and Teacher C both completed the Buffalo State science education master's program (in May 2022 and May 2023) and hold New York State Certification in Secondary Science Education. Teacher B is a novice, first year teacher while Teacher C has one-year prior teaching experience.

Teacher A teaches 3rd grade in an urban charter school in Western New York. Both Teacher B and C teach at suburban middle schools in a predominately white school district (71%) with 5% English language learners. Teacher B teaches in an 8th grade science

classroom and Teacher C teaches in a 7th grade co-taught science classroom that includes several students with disabilities and one aide. 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**
Childhood Education-Master's in Initial Teaching (MIITC) (initial) female **N=1**	2022	3rd grade	English Language Arts	N=20	Urban Charter School
Science Education (Master's for Initial Certification) **N=1**	2023	8th grade	Science	N=18	Suburban Middle School
Science Education (Master's for Initial Certification) **N=1**	2022	7th grade	Co-taught Science	N=16	Suburban Middle School

Table 2

Faculty Participants by Department

Childhood Education (MIITC) N=1	Science Education N=1
Assistant Professor	Lecturer

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. The four domains evaluated include:

Domain 1- Planning and Preparation; Domain 2- Classroom Environment; Domain 3- Instruction; Domain 4- Professional Responsibilities.

Teacher A: Using a four-point scale (1=unsatisfactory to 4=exemplary), Teacher A performed at a proficient or exemplary level on all criteria across the domains except for one criteria (Engaging Students in Learning scoring a 2= Basic Level). Communicating with Families was scored as "not applicable" for this observation. Mean performance on all domains ranged from 3.2 to 4.0 with an overall mean performance of 3.7, indicating proficient performance overall. Teacher A's strengths appeared to be Planning and Preparation followed by Classroom Environment and Professional Responsibilies that included reflecting on teaching, maintaining accurate records and growing professionally. Relative to other domains the teacher appeared to struggle more with instructional aspects such as engaging students and using questioning techniques.

Teacher A appeared to be quite reflective and discussed their growth mindset in trying to learn and employ new lesson delivery techniques to help foster student independence.

Teacher B: Using a four-point scale (1=unsatisfactory to 4=exemplary), Teacher A performed at a proficient or exemplary level on all criteria across the domains with the strongest area being Planning and Preparation. Teacher B was observed as being engaging with strong routines and expectations, including procedures that allowed for strong classroom management skills. She demonstrated excellent higher order questioning skills and was very reflective about ways she might improve the lesson for the next time. Modeling was very evident at all points in the lesson.

Teacher C: Using a four-point scale (1=unsatisfactory to 4=exemplary), Teacher A performed at a proficient or exemplary level on all criteria across the domains with the strongest area being Professional Responsibilities such as reflection and noting areas for growth and development. The area of Instruction was noted as relatively lower, compared to other

domains (3.2) with ability to question students and use assessment in instruction as areas that were proficient but not as high as other criteria. Teacher C also seemed to struggle more with classroom management and noted that was an area of concern for them.

Summary of Impact on Student Learning

In addition to their performance on the rubric criteria listed above, Teacher A demonstrated strong evaluation skills in determining the impact of instruction on student learning outcomes. For example, they utilized interactive comprehension strategies and exit tickets as a form formative and summative assessment. The exit tickets were meaningful in that the teacher previewed prior exit tickets and modified the instructional focus based on the performance of her students. The participant identified her own areas of growth as deepening questioning skills and increasing student talk in her classroom which shows that they are a reflective practitioner, which can also lead to improved learning outcomes.

Teachers B and C engaged in many evidence-based practices and appreciated the value of student led activities and exploration in science content. Both were very reflective about their ability to build relationships and reflect on student needs, including those with disabilities. Both teachers reported need to work on "timing" but realized this was an area for growth and were actively seeking ways to improve, thus improving their impact on student learning.

Summary of Teaching Effectiveness

The biggest area of strength across all three teachers was their ability to prepare and plan for their instruction. They all had strong knowledge of their content and related pedagogy for their discipline. Relationship building and rapport were also prioritized and noted that social emotional connections were a strong part of success in the classroom.

Areas for growth observed:

- Student Engagement: Although this was rated as lower for Teacher A, it was noted that this teacher was also reflective about the importance of active engagement and was engaging in professional learning and goal setting to improve in this area.

- Managing student behavior was noted as one of the lower areas but still within the proficient level. That said, it is possible that by increasing engagement and using more routines and procedures (as noted in Teacher B's classroom), this area will improve.
- Parent communication was not very high, however, this is likely due to limitations of the case study protocol used. It is possible that anecdotal and self report might enhance this area in our case study.

Table 3
Structured Observation Rubric Results for Completers (Teachers A, B, C)
N=3

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**
Childhood Master's in Initial Teaching (MIITC) Participant (Teacher A)	4	4	4	4	4	4		24	**100%**	**4.0**
Science Education Participant (Teacher B)	4	4	4	3	4	4		23	**96%**	**3.8**
Science Education Participant (Teacher C)	4	4	4	3	3	3		21	**88%**	**3.5**
Mean per Criteria	**4**	**4**	**4**	**3.33**	**3.67**	**3.67**		**22.6**	**94%**	**Overall: 3.8**

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**
Childhood Master's in Initial Teaching (MIITC) Participant (Teacher A)	4	3.0	4	4	4		19	95%	**3.8**
Science Education Participant (TeacherB)	4	4	4	3	3		18	90%	**3.6**
Science Education Participant (Teacher C)	4	4	3	3	4		18	90%	**3.6**
Mean per Criteria	**4**	**3.67**	**3.67**	**3.33**	**3.67**		**18.3**	**91.5%**	**Overall: 3.67**

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**
Childhood Master's in Initial Teaching (MIITC) Participant (Teacher A)	4	3	2	4	3		16	**80%**	**3.2**
Science Education Participant (Teacher B)	3	4	4	4	3		18	**90%**	**3.6**
Science Education Participant (Teacher C)	3	3	4	3	4		17	**85%**	**3.2**
Mean per Criteria	**3.33**	**3.33**	**3.33**	**3.67**	**3.33**		**17**	**85%**	**Overall: 3.33**

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**
Childhood Master's in Initial Teaching (MIITC) Participant (Teacher A)	3	4	n/a	4	4	4		19	**95%**	**3.8**
Science Education Participant (Teacher B)	4	3	3	4	4	4		22	**92%**	**3.67**
Science Education Participant (Teacher C)	4	3	3	4	4	4		22	**92%**	**3.67**
Mean per Criteria:	**3.67**	**3.33**	**3.0**	**4.0**	**4.0**	**4.0**		**21**	**93%**	**Overall: 3.71**