

## **Education Students' Knowledge and Competence as Literacy Professionals**

### **Education MS (Literacy and Reading) – College of Education**

#### **Step 1: Student Learning Outcome**

The Department of Literacy and Reading Education is developing candidates with the skills, dispositions and knowledge necessary to become knowledgeable and competent literacy professionals.

#### **Step 2: Methods and Measures**

The Department of Literacy and Reading Education is developing literacy professionals with the skills, dispositions, and knowledge necessary to make an impact in their field. Candidates are assessed on indicators of knowledge and competence using the Culmination Assignment and selected items from the Exit and Employer Year Out surveys.

Course instructors use a rubric to score assignments.

The College Assessment Office administers survey electronically via Qualtrics. Enrolled candidates, identified at each survey point, are invited via email to complete the survey. Survey scales are identified on the survey instrument.

#### **Step 3: Criteria for Success**

**Assignments:** A minimum of 90% of candidates meet the required criteria for passing.

**Surveys:** A minimum of 75% of candidates have an average rating of 3 or higher (e.g. “agree”/”strongly agree”).

#### **Step 4: Results**

##### **Assignments:**

The program's emphasis on depth of knowledge with a breadth of application in a variety of diverse settings was reflected in the Culminating Assignment with 97% meeting required criteria for passing, an improvement from last year (2018-2019) when 82% met the criteria.

##### **Surveys:**

Exit Survey: Results from fall 2019 and spring 2020 (response rate 44% and 73% respectively) revealed 92% of respondents reporting they were likely to recommend the program to colleagues; a marked increase from the prior year when only 74% of respondents reported the same.

Graduating candidates also reported that the program met all criteria in the area of developing knowledgeable and competent literacy specialists, with 100% of respondents “agree” or “strongly agree” that the program provided:

- Intellectual challenge
- Ample opportunities to expand knowledge of research that is relevant to (their) field of study
- Assignments that helped link theory to practice
- Faculty who demonstrated strong subject matter

Of note, program faculty have been revisiting their coursework and pedagogy during the past two years, and emphasizing direct and explicit connections between literacy and reading research and theory with practice with classroom instruction and school-wide application.

Employer Year-Out Survey: Strong preparation was echoed in graduates currently working in the field. Currently, 95% of program alumni work in their field and according to the Year-Out Survey results (response rate 32%), 100% of graduates reported that they “agree” or “strongly agree” that they are:

- Prepared with knowledge of the foundational research that informs (their) field
- Prepared to successfully explain the key concepts
- Prepared to design and implement assessments that are aligned with instructional goals and learner characteristics
- Prepared to accept leadership roles

The College of Education “Objective 2: Technology” is also an important aspect of candidates’ skill development. The 2020 Year-Out Survey revealed 94% of respondents felt the program “prepared them to integrate technology as it relates to their role in schools”. Results represented a significant increase from the prior year with only 50% of respondents “agreed “or “strongly agreed”.

Improvement may be attributed to the program graduate faculty “Course Custodians” who met quarterly during the 2019-2020 academic year to revisit course curriculum to strengthen innovative technology integration. Specifically, faculty enhanced their understanding of digital literacy and 21st-century literacy skills, attended FDC workshops and shared strategies during monthly department-wide faculty meetings. Part-time faculty received additional technology training in spring 2020 and technology integration was the focus of department meetings.

The fall 2019 and spring 2020 Exit Survey results reflected additional improvements related to technology:

- 100% of respondents reported that they were “prepared to evaluate technology as it relates to (their) role in schools/work environment.”

- 100% of respondents reported that they were “prepared to use technology to support teaching and learning, or as appropriate to (their) role in school/work environment.”
- 96% of respondents felt the Program provided “quality online instruction.”
- 96% of respondents felt the Program provided “opportunities to explore technology integration practices as it relates to (their) role in schools/work environment.”

Despite these gains, one measure was unmet according to the fall 2019 Exit Survey: only 88% of candidates believed that the program prepared them to “advance technology integration as it relates to (their) role in schools/work environment.”

### **Step 5: Improvement Actions**

This improvement plan is written in response to themes and patterns found in the data, and runs across all three areas: Knowledgeable and Competent, Reflective and Responsive, and Caring and Competent. This improvement plan also addresses the College of Education (COE) Strategic Plan. As part of the program improvement plan for the 2020-2021 academic year, a student survey will be administered in fall 2020 to further gauge candidates’ needs. Second, faculty who teach in the graduate program will continue to meet quarterly to share ideas on how to embed advanced technology integration into the many roles and responsibilities of the literacy professional. Next, this information will be shared with candidates via individual courses. Finally, a digital literacy section will be added to the Department’s Canvas Community Site where it may be easily accessed program-wide.