



Measure 1: Completer Effectiveness

Each year, the Department of Education at RMU completes two case studies of recent graduates to ascertain the program's effectiveness in creating prepared and effective teachers. Below is an overview of both case studies as well as the guidelines for the case studies.

Case Study Overview – Teacher #1 R.V. Spring, 2021

OVERVIEW

The student graduated from Robert Morris University in May 2018 with a B.S. in Education specializing in special education/early childhood education. R.V. is a teacher at a school in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. She teaches in an approved private school in a self-contained life skills/behavioral classroom and has 8 students ranging from ages 12-16. The teacher started at the School in the fall of 2018 as an instructional assistant, then as a floating teaching, and, finally, as a classroom teacher in the fall of 2019. It should be noted that the lesson plans are not detailed, but are based on the requirements of her employer.

According to her year-end evaluation, met all performance standards. The performance standards instructional planning, instructional management, mentoring, organizational skills, interpersonal skills, and professional development. The supervisor indicated that "The teacher works hard to develop trusting relationships with the parents of the students in her classroom. Some of the parents of students in her classroom can be challenging, but the teacher always handles herself with poise when communicating with them. Especially during periods of remote learning, The Teacher provided support to the students and the families."

CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION

Overall, the teacher conducts a classroom that is engaging, fun, and informative. She was observed two times, once by each faculty member. Due to COVID, there were some students online and the majority f2f. The teacher did an excellent job with the scope and sequence of the lesson. The thematic lesson on Harry Potter was experiential in nature as they created a "potion" using different materials. The lesson focused on measurements, anticipated outcomes, and use of fine motor skills. Each student actively participated, the student online participated as much as the students that were f2f minus the use of fine motor skills.

The teacher incorporated formative assessment throughout the lesson and asked higher level questions as the lesson progressed. She ensured all students actively participated in the lesson, and made real life connections to the lesson's content. She utilized multi-sensory learning by asking questions such as what does it look like? Sound like? Feel like? She differentiated instruction and provided supports based on the needs of her students. Finally, she utilized visual prompts to support student learning. Overall, the classroom was well organized with few behavioral issues noted.

COMMUNICATION

In interviews with the teacher and her colleagues communication occurs on multiple fronts. With her colleagues they utilize a team approach. This includes two instructional assistants and behavioral, speech, and occupational specialists. In this team approach daily collaborations center on updates on students, home issues, remote sessions with OT, behavioral issues. Each month they have an extended team meeting. She is well liked by all including speech therapist, occupational therapist, behavioral therapists. A lot of the staff go to her for advice and is approachable. Colleagues reported the teacher has a close relationship with family members. She uses MS Teams page, classroom channel, and parents' message her through teams, during class times, multiple times a week. Communication can occur by personal cell phone, text, pictures of activities, emails through TEAMS, f2f with parents at pick up as well.

DIVERSITY

Though her classroom is comprised of male students only, the students come from diverse backgrounds. The teacher provides parents with her personal cell phone # to build rapport and make it easier for parents to contact her outside of school hours. She focuses on diverse topics, election topics, political issues, global perspectives, black history, music, sports, world inspirational influencers, climate activities. Her colleagues noted that Black History month is important, and the teacher focuses on diverse people in history, young people who are important, poetry, and different cultures.

IEP DATA RESULTS

Data were analyzed by a RMU faculty member, her summary is below:

Data were collected by quarter for each student, so R.V. had four quarters of data for each student, resulting in a total of 32 quarters of collected data. Each student had multiple goals and objectives being tracked each quarter. R.V. also used a standard prompt hierarchy to gather information on if/how each student was moving toward being able to complete the skill independently.

Specially designed instruction was also included on each initial data sheet which helps the teacher to remain cognizant of each student's individual needs. Some examples of SDI were: Encourage verbal expression of PCI words (specific words were also listed), continue to practice mastered sets, model sounds for AO to encourage phonemic awareness, label items around the room for AO to identify. This list is non-inclusive. It is only a small sample of the SDI for one student of the eight. However, it indicates an awareness on the teacher's part of where each student is functioning, and what supports are needed.

According to the data sheets, at least three trials of an objective must be observed prior to officially recording the data. Evaluation schedules were twice weekly, as indicated by the dates on the data collection sheets. R.V. is personally observing and collecting the data evidenced by the initials after each observation for each student. It is clear from the shared data, coupled with the formal observation that R.V. is appropriately collecting and utilizing data to inform her instruction.

Also evidenced by the data is student learning and improvement, as student criteria changed as the school year moved from fall to spring. For example, the original objective in Quarter 1 may be to identify 4/5 words, but the objective in quarter 3 was upped to 6/7. Changing criteria demonstrates that students were completing initially set objectives and goals, and moving on to incrementally more difficult standards throughout the academic year.

This data is well-organized and well-maintained. All hallmarks of an organized teacher who is tracking what her students are currently able to do, while keeping an eye on future objectives. R.V. seems to be using the data to appropriately inform instruction, which benefits each student in the classroom.

CONCLUSION

Overall, R.V. has done an outstanding job at the school. This is demonstrated not only by classroom observations, student progress on their IEPs, and input from her colleagues, it is shown in her career progression. Each year, the teacher has taken on additional teaching responsibilities with her having her own classroom in 2019.

Case Study Overview – Teacher #2 J.H Spring, 2021

OVERVIEW

J.H. graduated from Robert Morris University in May, 2020 with a degree in Masters of Science in Instructional Leadership. Her certification was in Early Childhood education (pf-4). J.H. is employed by a charter school as an online math teacher at the kindergarten level. Her students come from diverse backgrounds including a large portion for the city of Philadelphia. J.H. indicated that her many of her students are labeled with a disability and students that did not feel "safe" in their local schools (see interview notes). Her evaluations from her supervisor and self-evaluations range from needs improvement to proficient to distinguished with her ratings improving considerably from January, 2021 to April, 2021 indicating self-awareness and personal development in her profession.

CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION

Based on two online classroom observations by faculty she scored between Proficient and Distinguished on the ND Common Metrics-Skills of Teaching Tool. Note that not all areas of the ND Common Metrics-Skills of Teaching Tool could be assessed in one class setting. Those not observed were followed up in interviews with J.H. and her colleagues (see interview notes). Overall, J.H. is extremely enthusiastic in her lessons, which allows her students to be fully engaged during the learning activities. J.H. has appropriate scope and sequence to her lessons, employs a variety of teaching strategies in her lessons, and ensures all students are prepared for the upcoming lesson before the lesson

begins. Additionally, her lesson plans objectives attend to state standards and are met throughout her lesson. J.H. formatively and summatively assesses student learning in her class. Formatively she uses questioning strategies, including higher order questions, exit tickets, and call and response. Summatively, her quiz was well crafted following appropriate guidelines for creating a quiz and effectively address key learnings from the unit of instruction.

COMMUNICATION

According to her colleagues, parent log, and J.H.'s interview's J.H. does an excellent job of communicating with parents/guardians as well as her colleagues. Each week J.H. sends out a newsletter to parents (see sample newsletter). J.H. sees parents as partners in learning. At the start of year, J.H. conducts a 30 minute phone call with each student's parents. Moreover J.H. calls parents every month to parents, parents will stay after class to ask questions and use the chat feature plus email to communicate with J.H.. Finally, she checks in on families when there is an important event, ex. death in the family.

With her colleagues, J.H. meets every Friday with her pod, uses MS teams almost every day for daily communication and collaborates a lot on small groups for ELA and Math for remediation. In her pod they will observe small groups together, benchmark students together, determine what they are going to teach for small groups, talk about benchmarking scores, ex. i-ready, grades, and other quarterly benchmarks.

DIVERSITY

While there was limited observation of utilizing culturally relevant pedagogy in the classroom observations. J.H. did have diverse representation in her PowerPoint presentations. Her colleagues indicated that J.H. uses books featuring diverse experiences, characters, family structures, and incorporates diverse material when she has the opportunity to develop her own lessons once a week. Finally, it was observed that J.H. has high expectations for all her students, differentiates instruction as appropriate, and creates a respectful, equitable classroom environment.

I-READY RESULTS

Analyzing the i-ready math results for J.H., the RMU faculty member found the following:

J.H. Hone instructed 62 K students in four areas of math: number and operations, algebra and algebraic thinking, measurement and data, and geometry. Diagnostic results collected in September 2020 reported that 15 students (24%) were on or above grade level, 36 students were one grade below grade level, 0 students were two or more below grade level, and 11 students did not complete the evaluation.

At the midpoint (January 2021), many students showed progress according to the I-Ready evaluation: 39 students were on or above grade level in math, 14 students were one grade below grade level, 0 students were two or more grade levels below, and 9 students did not complete the evaluation.

At the end point (May 2021) nearly 3/4th or 74% of the 62 students demonstrated on or above math skills according to the i-Ready evaluation. Just 4 students were one grade level below and 0 students were two or more grade levels below. The data of 12 students was not reported because these students did not complete the evaluation.

According to the three data points, J.H. was an effective math teacher in the four targeted math areas. Nearly all students who were evaluated showed progress. There were only 4 out of the 62 students who were consistently below grade level at all three data points. Since this is K, many students are not identified yet for learning disabilities. The data from the remainder of the class strongly suggests that it is not due to ineffective teaching as the reason that the four students did not progress. There are likely other environmental/home or processing factors that have impacted these four students.

CONCLUSION

After 1 year of teaching, J.H. has shown to be an effective teacher across all domains. She is well prepared for her lessons, effectively teaches the lessons, and creates an exciting and engaging learning environment for her students. She uses data effectively to inform instruction. Her colleagues said she was a "data nerd." Moreover, J.H. has shown personal development in her profession, but using feedback from her supervisors to adjust instruction as needed. J.H. does an extremely good job in communicating with parents/guardians and her fellow colleagues. She is very professional and highly regarded by her colleagues. The impact of her instruction is documented in the results of her students over time vis-à-vis i-Ready scores. Ninety-four percent of her students showed progress in math, which is the area that J.H. teaches at the kindergarten level. Finally, J.H.'s work has been noticed by administrators. She has been asked to apply for a promotion as grade leader. This is happening after just one year of employment.

The following guidelines are used to guide the case studies.

1. Each September – Assessment Coordinator calls a meeting with the members of the assessment Case Study Standard 4 committee to select a pool of 4-5 potential case study participants.
 - The certification and accreditation specialist creates a list of all program completers within the last 3 years. Data on the program completer is pulled from the Education database and includes:
 - Completion Date
 - Gender
 - GPA
 - PDE ratings during student teaching
 - Area of certification
 - Current Employment/Employer
 - The Case Study Standard 4 committee then uses the list provided and the following criteria to identify potential participants:
 - Completed within the last 3 years
 - Student is employed as a full-time teacher or permanent substitute teacher
 - Employment is geographically central to RMU (within 50 mile radius)
 - This list of potential participants is further examined for diversity of the case study group considering the following factors:
 - Gender
 - GPA
 - PDE 430 ratings during student teaching
 - Area of certification
 - Awards/honors/recognitions
 - Ethnic and racial
 - School type
 - Location of employment
2. From the potential case study participants, the committee selects the first two to contact.
3. The Dept. Head drafts a letter to the principal or superintendent explaining the rationale for the case study and requesting RMU alumni teacher and district participation.
4. Once approval from the district has been obtained, the Dept. Head or assessment coordinator makes further contact with the alumni/program completer to request inclusion in the case study. If they do not wish to continue as a case study participant, they are thanked for their consideration.
5. Upon approval by the school or district and participant, the assessment coordinator sets a time to meet the case study participant to review the data collection and case study procedures.
6. The following data are collected over a 4-8 week period:
 - *Two lesson plans provided by the case study participant and two observations from faculty qualified in the corresponding certification area (observations are conducted on separate dates) using the NDACTE observation form.
 - *Evidence of a formal observation by a director or principal within last 12 months using the district observation instruments
 - **Student pre/post assessment data (teacher created or commercial {i.e., AimsWeb, DIBELS, CBM}) OR benchmark data over a period of time on a whole class or period {9 weeks}
 - *An interview with the participant conducted by the faculty person overseeing the case study. There were three general questions used to initiate reflection and discussion:
 - i. What was one or two things that you needed to know or have more practice in during your teacher education program?
 - ii. Based on what you learned in the teacher education program, what do you think is your strength in teaching?
 - iii. Is there anything else that you want to add?
 - *Two interviews with school team or grade level colleagues. Interview questions originated from items on the NDACTE observation form that were not scored with the observation alone (i.e.

professionalism, commitment to the profession, collaborates with colleagues from InTasc Standard 9 and 10).

- K-12 student survey results https://www.ets.org/s/ppa/pdf/student_survey.pdf
 - Other data that the case study participant would like to share:
 - Family/Parent contact log or notes
 - Discipline referrals
 - MTSS data
 - Reflection logs
 - Lesson plan
 - Grant work
 - Extracurricular activities
 - Other
7. Once the data are collected, the assessment coordinator calls a meeting with the Case Study Standard 4 Committee to review.
 8. The assessment coordinator writes a collective summary.
 9. The collective summary is used as a data source and included in reports and the EPP's continuous improvement cycle.
 10. By May of the academic year, there are 2 case studies completed.