

Completer Case Study Implementation Plan

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Introduction/Overview

Since Alabama does not release impact data to the Institutions of Higher Education programs across the state, the EPP is required to be more creative in identifying the impact of our graduates on student learning. One solution that will allow the EPP to show the impact of graduates on the P-12 students taught within the first three years of teaching is case study research. Case study research is focused on the empirical study of cases that are contextually unique (Harland, 2014; Stake, 1995). Case study research is individualized, problem-focused research that addresses a researcher’s area of interest (Harland, 2014). In this case, the area of focus will be on program completers’ impact on the learning of the students that they teach.

For the EPP, case study research will be collected to identify strengths and needs in the program and the impact of program completers on the performance of the students they teach. This research will be conducted using a 3-year process. In the first year (Fall 2018 and Spring 2019), a pilot case study was completed using 4 program completers that were employed in partner schools. The completers were observed and evaluated using the *Framework for Teaching Evaluation Instrument* (Danielson, 2013). Overall, the feedback gained from these 4 completers indicated an impact on P-12 student learning. However, the *Framework for Teaching Evaluation Instrument* (Danielson, 2013) was not the best, most authentic choice for evaluation of teaching in the context of the state. The EPP faculty decided to use the *Educate Alabama assessment instrument* (alsde.edu, 2018), which is the new teacher evaluation system in the state of Alabama, in future case study observations. The *Educate Alabama assessment instrument* (alsde.edu, 2018) is the most current tool used by principals and other administrators in the state of Alabama to evaluate teachers in the schools making the instrument more authentic and valid than the *Framework for Teaching Evaluation Instrument* (Danielson, 2013).

The 4 program completers were observed separately in the fall of 2018. The teachers observed were assessed using the *Framework for Teaching Evaluation Instrument* (Danielson, 2013). In the spring of 2019, the program completers that were observed in the Fall of 2018 will share their professional learning plans (PLP) with the EPP. The PLP's are aligned to the EDUCATE Alabama state assessments so that the EPP may use the PLP and the results of the observations completed in Fall 2018 to investigate trends in teacher effectiveness and awareness of needs. The results from these case studies are informal and will be formalized in the next school year to ensure that candidates are followed so that the impact of program completers teaching on the students that they teach is evident and routinely collected.

At the end of the spring 2019 term, the EPP will select 5 candidates to study further in Fall 2019. Over the summer of 2019, IRB approval will be completed so that formal data collection may occur on the second year of case study protocol development. Program completers selected for participation will administer a pre/posttest assessment with reflection and analysis to the EPP. Field notes and observations will be collected by the EPP faculty. P-12 student surveys will be administered to evaluate the effect of the teaching of program completers. In the Spring of 2020, employer evaluations of completer PLP analysis will be collected along with an overall analysis of data to create a complete case study.

By Fall 2020, the case study protocol will be finalized and participants will be expanded to represent each initial program represented in the EPP. The EPP will collect data each year to ensure that program completers are able to accurately demonstrate their ability to impact the achievement of the students they teach. The goal moving forward is that the case study implementation will move from being completed by EPP faculty to being completed by doctoral students in the Ed.D. program at the EPP. The case study will be beneficial to both parties by allowing the doctoral student to collect data for a potential publication while faculty will assist but that will be removed from being their sole responsibility.

The ultimate goal of the case study research is to identify strengths in each initial program and areas for improvement. The EPP intends to adjust their programming after the results of each case study to ensure that all program completers are effective teachers that impact the learning of the students that they teach.

Connection to research

Teacher effectiveness is one of the most challenging constructs to measure in Education. The variables that factor into student success can include parental education, early life experiences, poverty, neighborhood, family dynamics, sociocultural background, language skills and the list continues (Lekwa, Reddy, & Shernoff, 2018). In addition, the measurement of effective teaching is also challenging and controversial (Stumbo & McWalters, 2011). Therefore, the ability for institutions to measure the impact on learning is extremely challenging due to the subjectivity associated with the definition of teacher effectiveness. However, other areas of study such as social work, have utilized the case study method as a means of determining impact on constituents (Thomas, 2016). This construct is relatively new in the field of education, but provides promise for institutions of higher education attempting to identify the impact of program completers on the students they teach within 1-3 years of completing an initial certification program.

The Research Questions

The research questions to be addressed by this case study are (1) How do the EPP completers positively impact the achievement of the P-12 students they teach? (2) How do the EPP completers apply effective knowledge, skills and dispositions for effective class instruction? (3) What is the predictive relationship between the EdTPA score of program completers and the impact of performance completers in the field 1-3 years out of the program?

Methodology

Participants

The participants in the study during pilot year 1 were a small sample of 4 students selected from a partner school. At the end of 2019, another small sample (4-5 completers) of recent completers (2-3 years since graduation) will be solicited through email for voluntary participation in the year 2 case study. For each following year, more recent completers will be solicited for voluntary participation in the case study from 2 initial programs (approximately 8 recent completers). Then, in year 4 the sample will be expanded to include completers from 3 initial programs (approximately 10 recent completers). In year 5, all initial programs will be represented with 12-15 participants in the case study. Candidates will be selected from recent completers who are teaching within 40 miles of the EPP. Candidates will be solicited via email requests for volunteers and with follow up phone calls and personal requests from EPP faculty. The intent by the end of the 5-year pilot case study is to obtain a sample of completers that teach at a variety of schools, in a variety of settings, and a variety of grade levels in order extrapolate data to reflect the impact on student achievement of program completers. Since completer selected are new to the profession, they do not have a permanent employment history thus limited the EPP's ability to obtain all the necessary permissions timely. The EPP is working with other EPP's in the state to determine a protocol that will enable a more systematic process.

Measures

The dependent measures to be collected as part of the case study include student survey evaluations of the program completers success as a teacher. The instrument selected for the student survey of the classroom teacher will be the *Tripod Project Survey* funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation that was originally created by Ron Ferguson, a researcher from Harvard University. The Tripod survey is a valid and reliable instrument to measure the effectiveness of teachers. The survey measures 7 constructs associated with effective teaching with questions focused on how well teachers teach and how much students learn. The surveys cover three grade bands K-2, 3-5, and 6-12 which is why the survey is appropriate across the grade levels taught by initial programs in the EPP. The use of the survey will be pending approval from the school system.

In addition to student survey evaluations, pre/posttest data from the program completers' unit plan using benchmark assessments from the fall and winter that will be shared by the EPP. The assessments used for the pre/posttest will utilize benchmark testing from the fall to the winter to the spring using the state selected benchmark assessment. This includes the *Scantron* test for grades 3 and above and Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) or other district-selected class-wide benchmark assessments for grades K-2. The benchmark assessments selected by the school district already have proven reliability and validity to ensure that the assessment instrument is measuring what it is expected

to measure and measures it consistently. Again, the use of data will be pending approval of the school system.

After the completion of the two pre-selected assessments, an EPP-created pre/posttest survey of participants in the study with a reflection on his/her impact on student learning will be administered. Also, narrative field notes from observations of program completers lessons using the Educate Alabama assessment tool will be analyzed for themes. Then, program completers' professional learning plan aligned to the Educate Alabama assessment tool with an analysis of student work samples and lesson plans will be analyzed by EPP faculty. Finally, employers will complete an EPP survey evaluation of participants. The EPP survey tools to be utilized will be tested for reliability and validity by using interrater reliability to ensure that results are consistent and the content measured is appropriate. The Educate Alabama assessment tool has already been assessed for validity and reliability.

Educate Alabama Handbook and Assessments

<https://www.nctq.org/dmsView/EDUCATEAlabamaorientationmodule1>

Procedures

After the initial case study is completed in year 1, the EPP will obtain Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval to begin collecting data on program completers for the impact on student learning of the students that they teach. This data will be collected on years 2-5 of the case study. To begin the study, candidates will be solicited via email and personal phone calls to represent one initial program. Pretest measures will be completed along with principal consent to participate. Program completers will provide opportunities for EPP faculty to observe using the Educate Alabama assessment tool. Posttest data and Professional Learning Plans will be analyzed to identify trends, areas of strength, and areas for improvement moving forward. Each year will follow the same procedures but add on an additional initial program to be investigated.

Data Analysis

Data will be collected and analyzed for statistical significance to determine if program completers had an impact on student achievement. In addition, trends, areas of strength, and areas for improvement will be identified to address in the EPP moving forward in the next year.

Conclusions from year 1

The goal of the first-year implementation was to determine an appropriate protocol in terms of EPP resources and procedures. The first-year participants agreed to work with EPP faculty to determine procedures that would be effective in obtaining data relative the CAEP Standard 4 requirements. The areas examined were faculty workloads, school system permissions, completer participation, instruments as well as other logistical information. After piloting using the *Framework for Teaching Evaluation Instrument* (Danielson, 2013), the EPP determined that the *Educate Alabama assessment instrument* (alsde.edu, 2018) was more aligned to the goals of the study. This instrument was developed by the Alabama State Department of Education and is used to evaluate the effectiveness of teachers within the state of Alabama. Since the EPP is using participants PLP plans to examine areas of perceived growth, Educate Alabama more closely aligns with this plan.

In year one, participants for this pilot study were selected from our partner school. These participants were program completers who also work closely with the faculty who teach in the partnership setting. Their participation in the study was to assist the EPP in establishing appropriate protocol and procedures for future participants. For year one, the EPP faculty chose the *Framework for Teaching Evaluation Instrument* (Danielson, 2013) because it is a proprietary observational instrument, closely aligned to the pedagogy learned and practiced by candidates during their education preparation program. The duration of each observation was approximately 40 minutes. Data from EPP completer observations indicated that EPP completers promote positive and encouraging environments. In 100% of the observations, the observer reported that teachers helped their students make connections, especially during discussion, and that both choice and challenge were used to motivate students and engage them in their learning process. All four teachers seamlessly integrated technology, notably using Promethean Boards as their primary interface with students. However, EPP faculty also noticed at least one teacher circulating the room and individually discussing learning targets with students. We can assume that the discussion about students' learning targets as a teaching strategy is the result of the teacher's professional learning or required practices at the partner school. The results from the case study in year one assisted the EPP faculty in determining how to proceed in identifying participants and collecting data on program completers for years 2-5.

Overview of Steps Case Study Implementation:

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| <p>Spring 2019: Select participants for the study Obtain IRB approval</p> |
| <p>Summer 2019: Conduct orientations with participants, trainers and EPP faculty involved with data collection Obtain school/ system approval</p> |
| <p>Fall 2019 Quarter 1 & 2 Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 conduct Field observations (2) using Educate Alabama formative assessment tool</p> |
| <p>Spring 2020 Quarter 3 Participants collect pre/post data on unit of study Participants complete a post unit reflection using survey response (Qualtrics) Survey will focus on perceived impact on student learning and ability to use effective instructional strategies</p> |
| <p>Spring 2020: Quarter 4 Participants obtain student surveys and write a reflection of results based on student outcomes as well as their PLPs Employers complete a survey regarding participants' ability to impact student learning and ability to use effective strategies based on their PLP</p> |
| <p>Summer 2020 EPP faculty will compile and analyze results and prepare report for Fall Data Day for recommendations Faculty will also examine measures to make adjustments in processes</p> |

Minutes from EPP Professional Learning Community

This professional learning community is comprised of faculty from 3 EPPs in the state of Alabama. The purpose of this PLC is to determine the most appropriate methods for obtaining data to support CAEP Standard 4.

Student Impact Inquiry

3-17-2019

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| Meeting called by: | Amy Hoaglund Samford | Type of meeting: | Initial inquiry for collecting student impact data |
| Facilitator: | Lorie Johnson UNA | Note taker: | Amy Hoaglund |

Attendees: Amy Hoaglund, Karen Birkenfeld, Lorie Johnson (Members not in attendance but offered information, Jeff Cornelius) Members not present: Janet Bavonese (JSU) Christi Trucks (JSU)

Minutes

Agenda item: Student Impact data

Discussion:

The issue is that Alabama is a data privacy state so obtaining student data is problematic. UNA is working with some selected school systems to receive permission to obtain data. This approach does not work as well for Samford as many of their completers are scattered and not local. UNA shared their contract/MOU for data collection. The group shared other ways to obtain data such as pre/post unit grades.

Conclusions:

After discussion, the group is still unsure if the proper permission can be obtained. Dr. Cornelius is concerned with sample size of the study. He felt that a great deal of resources would need to be provided for small return. Samford faculty felt that as a small university, it is difficult to devote time to conducting the case study because faculty already had to wear many hats.

Agenda item: Student Surveys

Discussion:

UNA is going to use the Tripod survey. Samford is also investigating this as well. With changes in administration, Samford is having difficulty with budgeting costs. UNA is working with their administration on determining if purchasing a survey rather than developing in house is feasible. In addition, some faculty members have contacted the ALSDE (Tony Thacker) to request employment information be sent to EPPs. For example, Dr. Thacker can send EPPs information on their completers such as place of employment in the state and number of years. This is time consuming for state officials but it yields more conclusive results than a survey.

Conclusions:

The costs associated with data collection is significant. These costs will need to be budgeted at the beginning of the fiscal year to provide the appropriate resources.

Other Information

The group will convene in May to discuss progress on standard 4.

Agenda items will include:

IRB approval

Update on the ALSDE completer employment information