

“SUCCESS WITH STUDENTS”

NEW TEACHER WORKSHOP (OCTOBER 29, 2013)

TEACHER PREPARATION INITIATIVE (TPI)

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Executive Summary

Technical issues

1. The sample was sufficient to draw conclusions about the quality of sessions, the professional utility, of sessions, the degree to which programmatic goals were met, and (for planning purposes) perceived need(s) for future professional development content.

Sample statistics

1. The workshop (“Success with Students”) met its target of serving primarily St. Cloud State completers (61.4%).
2. New teachers from across the partnership attended the new teacher workshop, though it appears that Sauk Rapids-Rice hired the greatest number of new teachers in ’13-’14, N = 20, nearly half of the sample.
3. Exceeding past conferences, the October ’13 workshop targeted the population of new educators. Eight-eight percent were in their first year in a new district with nine percent in their second year. Very few of the new-to-district teachers reported having had licensed teaching experience in districts other than their current one, averaging 1.2 years previous experience—and this included one 16-year veteran.

Significant outcomes

1. The sessions were reasonably well received, averaging a quality score of 3.4 (on a four-point scale) and a utility rating of 3.2. Across sessions, 91% of

participants selected the highest two ratings for quality and 85% did the same for utility.

2. The following sessions received particularly high quality ratings
 - Classroom management panel: Teachers serving on the panel
 - Classroom management panel: Content of responses
 - Transition station leaders
 - Leaders of the student interaction-engagement station
3. The highest “usefulness” ratings accrued to the following sessions:
 - Classroom management panel: Content of responses
 - Due-to-circumstances session
4. A strong majority of new teachers rated the pre-established goal domains as having been met. The items received a mean rating of 3.44, with 93% agreeing that all goals had been met. Participants rated the “opportunity to network” goal highest, though nearly 6 in 10 awarded the highest possible rating to “opportunities to take useful practices back.” In terms of participant perceptions, we conclude that goals set for the October 2013 session were met.
5. All selections for future professional development topics received ratings near 3.5 on a four-point scale except “Teaching in a diverse classroom.” In terms of maximum rating, “teaching at risk” was the most commonly-voiced need domain (91%, two highest ratings and 55% highest rating). The following areas received nominations as needs from greater than 8) % of respondents:

- How to reach at risk (91%)
- Differentiation in the classroom (86%)
- Responsive classroom (83%)
- Classroom management (83%)

Recommendations

1. The low need rating for “teaching in a diverse classroom” presents something of a planning conundrum. Local data indicate that the ethnic-white achievement gaps have not declined significantly in Central Minnesota, this suggesting that this domain represents an objective need. It is possible that respondents felt that they had covered diversity-based teaching via “at risk” and “differentiation” items. Another

possibility is that ethnic and racial diversity may be objectively low in the districts served by this particular sample. Thus, we recommend, that as part of the next workshop, or via some other method, the reasons for the low rating of “teaching for diversity” be explored in more depth.

2. Several comments associated with the needs evaluation seem to suggest that planners should attempt a more nuanced analysis of professional development needs and preferences disaggregated more by grade levels and content fields. Note that no differences by assigned grade level appeared in the current analysis.

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Method

We assess direct-service aspects of the partnership’s direct-service events by asking participants to complete questionnaires designed to estimate quality and utility of activities held at training sessions; in addition, via the survey format, we ask participants to assess whether or not, or to what degree planners attained the goals set ahead of time for events. Finally, we have asked for input regarding future professional development topics.

Space is provided for participants to write details about their experience at the event. In addition, we elicit input about targets for upcoming events and trainings. This report is based upon data from an event held on October 29, 2013 (N participating new teachers = 44).

We have organized results as follows, unless otherwise stipulated: Means, numbers and percentages are worked into most of the tables. The datum entitled “valid percent” refers to percentages based upon the total number of respondents who answered at any level of a give item. This figure is provided unless otherwise specified. In many tables, the “percent high quality” or “percent high utility” represents the proportion of respondents who selected either of the two highest ratings (e.g., 3 or 4 on a four-point scale). We have set scalar variables so that

higher values represent more positive reactions to events and speakers.

For items related to workshop activities, we asked (via the instrument) that respondents rate both the quality of the activity, in terms of the presentation, specifically, “...the degree to which speakers or activities retained your interest, seemed informative, and were tied to a reasonable theory or level of background information.” We describe utility ratings with the following language: “...the degree to which an activity struck you as immediately relevant and applicable in your professional and/or personal lives.”

We requested information about the quality of speakers’ efforts, but *not* the utility of the speakers—utility was addressed only as it related to topics.

Raw data were organized into tables for the benefit of planners. All analyses and interpretation are presented only in the executive summary. Any enquiry or extended analyses can be requested from the TPA assessment team.

Results: Raw Data: “Ready-Set”

Given the need to keep the assessment-based feedback loop timely, we elected not to comment directly on the tables in the method section, but rather to provide them as a resource for planners.

We have reserved our summative and formative commentary for the executive summary. We situated these conclusions at the head of the paper.

Table 1. College or University: Locus of most recently earned license.

<u>College or University</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Valid Percent</u>
SCSU	27	61.4
College of St. Benedict/ St. Johns	2	4.5
Concordia College	2	4.5
Luther College	2	4.5
Other (N = 1 in all cases)	11	25.0
TOTAL	44	100.0

Table 2. District of employment for new teacher attendee.

<u>District</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Valid Percent</u>
Sauk Rapids-Rice	20	45.5
Sartell- St. Stephen	7	15.9
Monticello	7	15.9
St. Cloud Area	4	9.1
Holdingsford	3	6.8
ROCORI	2	4.5
Milaca	1	2.2

Table 3. Self-identified licensure domains in descending order by frequency.

<u>Licensure Domain</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Valid Percent</u>
Elementary	15	36.6
Special Education	7	17.1
Comm Arts & Lit	4	9.8
K-12 Music	3	7.3
Mathematics	2	4.9
Secondary Science	2	4.9
Technology Education	2	4.9
Visual arts	2	4.9
Early Childhood (+ECSE)	1	2.4
World Languages	1	2.4
Physical Education	1	2.4
Speech Language Specialist	1	2.4
Total	41	100.0
Missing System	3	-----
Total	44	-----

Table 4. Years' experience³.

	N	Mean	SD
Years Exp. New District ¹	43	0.6 ²	.20
Total Years Exp	43	1.2	2.70
Valid N (listwise)	43	-----	-----

¹Excluding a case where Years New District = 16

²First-year teachers were asked to enter "0", representing X < 1 full year of experience

³First year (clearly) = 38 (88%), Second Year (clearly indicated) = 4 (9.3%), Total first + second year teachers = 42 = 98%

Table 5. Session and content ratings, reverse order by mean quality ratings.

Activities	Quality Ratings				Utility Ratings			
	N	Mean	SD	Percent High Quality	N	Mean	SD	Percent High Utility
Classroom Management Panel: Rate the Teachers on Panel	43	3.6	0.5	100.0	----	----	----	----
Classroom Management Panel: Rate the Content of Responses	44	3.5	0.6	95.5	36	3.4	0.7	97.2
Leaders of Transitions Station	42	3.5	0.6	97.6	----	----	----	----
Leaders of Student Interaction-Engagement Station	42	3.5	0.7	90.5	----	----	----	----
Leaders of "Due-to-Circumstances" Station	41	3.5	0.6	97.6	32	3.3	0.7	93.8
Content of Transitions Station	42	3.3	0.7	83.3	37	3.2	0.7	86.5
Content of Student Interaction-Engagement Station	42	3.3	0.9	88.1	37	3.1	0.8	75.5
Content of "Due-to-Circumstances" Station	42	3.3	0.6	95.2	38	3.2	0.8	86.8
Use of Socratic (if applicable)	34	2.8	1.1	67.6	32	2.7	1.1	68.3
TOTAL	---	3.4	---	90.6	---	31.5	----	84.7

Table 6. Meeting preset goals in descending order by mean.

Goal Area	N	Mean	SD	Percent Met¹	Percent Highest Rating²
The opportunity to informally network (speak with colleagues about personal concerns and professional issues/ meet new people/ pick up existing friendships)	43	3.44	.67	90.7	53.5
Motivation to discuss the topics under consideration both formally and informally.	43	3.42	.59	95.3	46.5
Opportunities to carry ideas and practices back to one's professional life.	43	3.56	.55	97.7	58.1
Opportunity to take useful resources away from the conference.	43	3.35	.69	88.4	46.5
TOTAL	---	3.44	---	93.0	51.2

¹Percent ranking item at highest two ratings (e.g., 3, 4).

²Percent attaining the highest possible ranking, e.g., "4."

Table 7. Nominations for future professional development in descending order by highest rating.

Topic	N	Mean	SD	Percent Nominating ¹	% Nominating @ Highest Level ²
How to Reach At-Risk Students	42	3.45	.67	90.5	54.8
Differentiation in the Classroom	42	3.31	.78	85.7	47.6
Professional Development Needs: Managing Stress	42	3.17	.85	71.4	45.2
Responsive Classroom	42	3.29	.74	83.3	45.2
Classroom Management	42	3.19	.83	83.3	40.5
Teaching in a Diverse Classroom	41	2.68	.79	63.4	12.2

¹Percent selecting choices “3” or “4.”

²Percent selecting highest rating, “4.”

Qualitative Responses to Needs Analysis

The needs analysis section (see Table 7 above) included room for respondents to add suggestions for future training topics. No clear pattern emerged from these suggestions, though a few observations were worth the attention of planners:

- Tune the training more to grade-level and content area needs. This might require planners to undertake a more nuanced needs analysis.
- Several respondents noted that the sessions felt rushed.

Several themes emerged from the written data, though, with the exception of the first one, we observed no clear concordance:

- About half of the respondents took the time to offer general positive remarks about the quality and utility of sessions, including specific thank you notes to presenters and organizers.
- As has been true of nearly every study of the SCSU induction program, several new teachers wrote about the benefits of networking and brainstorming.