



**ST. CLOUD STATE UNIVERSITY TEACHER EDUCATION UNIT
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION**

**THE EDUCATION TRACKING PARTNERSHIP
ANNUAL REPORT #1**

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Background & Introduction

Until about 2009 representatives of the education unit had worked with the University Foundation to gather names and subsequently to send assessment surveys to candidates who had been out of the program from two- to five years. While these reports proved informative, assessors were frustrated that no more than 20% of candidates ever returned surveys. In addition, despite instructions to the contrary, completers who had *not* attained teaching positions did not return surveys. We had no way to compare notes with the University Foundation's employment data.

During the 2010-2011 academic year, the completer study became part of the Bush Foundation project. That year, assessment staffers developed a list of candidate-completers as part of the agreement with the Bush Foundation. Some use was made of an early edition of what was called the *Student Teacher Leaver Survey* whereby we collected contact information from student teachers just prior to completion of these experiences. We also tapped the contact information collected by SCSU through the MnSCU data system. Despite these efforts, we still only drew responses from about 15% of completers.

In the fall of 2012 representatives of the Teacher Preparation (Bush) Initiative (TPI), Career Services, and the School of Education negotiated an agreement to pool resources for tracking candidates. This effort, the Education Tracking Partnership (ETP), was designed to benefit education programs and to enhance the tracking already required of SCSU Career Services. The negotiators agreed on the following purpose and vision statement:

The purpose of this memorandum of understanding is to form a partnership between TPI, the School of Education (representing the education unit), and Career Services to create a defensible, shared system for tracking teacher education candidates into their careers.

All parties voiced the hope that more education candidates could be reached by telephone and via other electronic means, earlier after graduation. This would allow for (a) better estimates of short-term employment data, and (b) produce better contact information for two surveys sent out by Bush Foundation, *Transition to Teaching* and *the Next Employer Survey*. As part of the agreement, assessors in the education unit would informally evaluate the effort and report to all parties (thus this report). The MOU allowed for hiring and training of a student worker whose primary responsibilities would be to connect with education completers.

Method

Once data were collected and reported to Hezel (for Bush), an *Employment Report* (2013) was produced for the Education Unit that would supplement employment data reported by Career Services. Following the completion of this report, Ms. Carrie Klaphake, the student worker, was

interviewed as was MS. Addie Turkowski, Director of Career Services. The results are provided below.

Results

Numerical Findings

Ms. Klaphake successfully contacted 90.7% of the completer list provided through MnSCU and OCE data. This is a far higher number than had been reached in past studies through Career Services. By contact, we mean that (a) the student was reached via telephone, (b) they provided employment status data, (c) respondents provided current contact information, and (d) completers provided employer information if they were in an education position (other than performing paraprofessional services or working as a substitute teacher).

Table 1, adapted from the *Education Tracking Study*, shows the disposition of 2011-2012 education completers. It is used here to demonstrate data that can be collected on a regular basis through the partnership.

Table 1. Disposition of 398 candidates: Unit wide

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Continuing their education	6	1.5
Full time teaching	211	53.0
non-teaching job	66	16.6
Paraprofessional	2	.5
Part-time teaching job	12	3.0
Related field	4	1.0
Substitute teaching	38	9.5
Verified unemployed	22	5.5
Unknown (not found)	37	9.3
Total	398	100.0
Ed-related Status (full-time teaching + Part-time teaching + continuing education + related)	233	58.6

Interview Findings

Via the interviews, we were able to pinpoint activities that proved effective in tracking education majors into their careers and some methods that were not as effective. These are listed specifically in a later “suggestion” section. In addition, we learned that Career Services benefitted from the project in several ways. First, they had the resources to contact more education candidates than they had experienced in the past. Second, according to Ms. Turkowski, having an extra pair of hands allowed them to better serve students. For example, if a student showed up, Ms. Klaphake could break off from the interviews and work with these individuals.

Perhaps the most beneficial aspects of the project was that better connections were made with candidates who had either not found positions or who proved dissatisfied with their present

positions. These personal contacts are a central goal of Career Services in their service mission; Ms. Turkowski was very pleased with this aspect of the project. Next year, we plan to keep track of the follow-up connections and assistance to education majors produced by this project so that these figures can be reported.

It is hard to avoid the conclusion that much depends upon the individual student hired to fill the partnership position. Ms. Klaphake was a communication studies major with considerable experience in student services. In addition, Ms. Klaphake had taken an interest in career counseling and was actively seeking employment in this area. It may prove difficult to reproduce these human resources!

Finally, Ms. Turkowski emphasized the importance of partnerships with academic units in the work of Career Services. She opined on April 15, 2013, that, "It is crucial to work with the colleges and schools across the campus; this project can be a model for these partnerships."

We have been informed by representatives of the Bush Foundation that few candidates are responding to the survey, either electronically or via snail mail. Thus, we need to prepare our candidates to understand the importance of feedback about their progress and to continue to emphasize that the contact data are collected in order to attain feedback from them and their employers. Ms. Turkowski noted during the interview that response rates to employment inquiries have been decreasing systematically.

Recommendations

We recommend that the project be continued for at least another year. Improvements in the employment data alone made the project worthwhile. The cost-benefit ratio seems worthwhile.

Information from the Caller

Ms. Klaphake retained a list of strategies for locating candidates and obtaining information from them. These are presented below as a numbered list.

1. All informants agreed that the telephone contacts were worthwhile. Better employment data resulted, personal contacts were made, and some completers received employment advice that they probably would not have otherwise.
2. The interview script seemed effective, though it should be revisited each year.
3. Students liked e-mail for initial contacts, thus the g-mail accounts (collected via the exit survey) proved very important.
4. As a result of feedback from the project we have reminded the student teachers to bring contact information to their survey sessions. This information, when available, proved invaluable to the project.
5. About 10 completers who were initially difficult to find, responded through Ms. Klaphake's private Facebook account.

6. Half of the contacts were located via *evening* telephone calls.
7. Parents answered calls about 10% of instances. Once the nature of the project was explained and it was distinguished from fundraising they proved very helpful in finding candidates.
8. The Minnesota teacher license system was easy to tap and proved very helpful in locating completers and their employers.
9. We propose the following addition to the interview protocol to facilitate responses.

Please be aware that a survey will be administered either electronically or via e-mail after you have been away from your program for about one year. Your participation is extremely valuable and valued by St. Cloud State. It gives you a chance to reflect on your preparation after you have been away from the program. The survey is called the *Transition to Teaching Survey* and we ask that you complete it whether you are employed or not.

Other Suggestions

1. The project was not started until about December 1, 2012. We recommend that, since the data are available by September 1, that the scripts be developed and that the effort start in early fall in preparation for the February reporting deadline.
2. We have experienced some difficulty with candidates identifying themselves with their major and not volunteering that they obtained licensure as teachers of English as a second language. As a result, assessors ought to work with the Office of Clinical Experience each year and with representatives of the TEOSL program to garner a list of candidate names. The caller would be altered to these candidates for special consideration.
3. I recommend that we work with Hezel to develop a system whereby we can auction off some incentives for responding to the *TTS*.