

Case Study

Evidence	Review of Evidence of First Year Graduates
What is it?	This is a review of the qualitative data from a case study involving one elementary education graduate following her first year of teaching.
How was it created?	One graduate was asked to supply evidence of student learning and participate in a discussion.
How will this information be used to improve the program?	The findings from this study will help guide future program adjustments to ensure all graduates from the EPP are fully prepared to enter the field.

Faulkner University College of Education
Case Study Report 2021

Background of the Study

Standard 4 of the CAEP accreditation process requires that Education Preparation Providers (EPPs) to supply evidence of (4.1) completers contribution to an expected level of student-learning growth and (4.4) that program providers perceive their preparation as relevant to the responsibilities they confront on the job and that their preparation was effective. This case study was conducted to gain information from a program completer to determine to what extent Faulkner University's College of Education had been able to prepare her to be effective classroom teacher who impacts the learning of those students in her classroom and believe that her preparation was successful in preparing her after graduation.

Research Questions

There were three research questions that guided this case study:

1) After a year of service, to what extent did Faulkner University's College of Education graduates feel prepared to teach and positively affect student learning in their first year of teaching?

2) After a year of service, to what extent did administrator evaluations of first year teachers indicate strengths or weaknesses in their preparation program, especially as related to their impact on student achievement?

3) After a year of service, do you feel that Faulkner University's College of Education prepared you for the field on your own?

Methodology:

The spring 2020 undergraduate elementary program graduated 4 teachers. All 4 had accepted employment in the field for the 2020-2021 academic school year. Out of this pool of 4, 1 (20%) was randomly selected as a participant in the case study. There were 2 2019-2020 Physical Education graduates.

The participant was contacted by email in the spring of 2021 by the Field and Clinical Director and given a description of the expectations for the study.

The expectations for this case study were:

- 1) Participation in a focus group interview
- 2) Submission of a form of evaluation from their administrator following their first year of teaching
- 3) Submission of a form of evidence of student learning

Because there was only one graduate included in this study, the focus group meeting was held at the graduate's school. The interview was transcribed and coded. The graduate allowed the College of Education to keep her forms of evidence and these were also evaluated for themes.

Introduction and Background

Ms G teaches 4th grade at Wilson Elementary School in Montgomery County. Wilson Elementary is a rural Pre K-5 school with approximately 429 students, 27 full-time classroom teachers, and 1 full-time school counselor. Of the school's population, approximately 42% qualifies for free and reduced lunch. The racial breakdown of the school is approximately 70% African American, 15% Asian and 10% white. In 2020, 45% of the students scored at or above

the proficient level for math, and 50% scored at or above that level for reading. At the time of the interview, Ms G was one of 4 4th grade teachers and was serving both in class and virtual students.

Data Analysis

Ms G said she felt prepared to teach, at least as much as she could have been for starting in a pandemic. She commented that she felt she would have been very prepared to a “normal” year. When asked about her strengths and weaknesses during her first year of teaching she listed her strengths as writing lesson plans, especially the 5E I/A plans, teaching science, and being able to build relationships with her students. The weaknesses she discussed included finding a balance between her work and personal life, especially when she was teaching from home. She also stated that she struggled with setting boundaries when communicating with parents. Students struggled to complete work. She felt that parents were less concerned with getting their children to complete assignments for science and social studies when neither would count for promotion for this year. Ms G also said it was a struggle to match the science textbook she was given to the state standards which meant she had to pull resources from other sources or create her own.

When discussing student gains, she noted she doubted her ability to positively affect student learning, especially at the beginning of the year, because her students had essentially missed an entire quarter’s worth of learning due to the pandemic. She felt she was required to catch the students up with what they missed in third grade, but also get them ready for fifth grade.

However, she said that she witnessed several students “blossom” and to begin to make connections between topics they studied in science and social studies. So, in the end, even though she didn’t feel like she was going a good enough job, her students were in fact learning and growing in her class.

Evaluation Summary

Question 1: After a year of service, to what extent did Faulkner University's College of Education graduate feel prepared to teach and positively affect student learning in her first year of teaching?

Ms G reported that she did feel prepared to teach.

Question 2: After a year of service, to what extent did administrator evaluations of first year teachers indicate strengths and weaknesses in their preparation program, especially as related to their impact on student achievement?

Wilson Elementary's principal reported that Ms G's strengths included flexibility, the ability to accommodate students' learning, ability to work out problems, knowledge of technology, ability to work with peers, parents, and community members.

Question 3: After a year of service do you feel that Faulkner University's College of Education prepared you for the field on your own?

Yes, especially had it been a "normal" year.

4.1 Impact on P-12 Student Learning and Development

Ms G These scores show me which standards students have or have not mastered, as well as where they are versus where they should be for grade level at that current time. On each student's individual report, where they are supposed to be for grade level and where they are at are both marked on a chart. Unfortunately due to technical difficulties from Scantron and the year it has been, the district was only able to complete testing for the middle of the year, instead of beginning and middle. This data is from January 2021.

Measure: Scantron Testing of Science Standards, Middle of Year Testing

Ms G reported that due to technical difficulties with Scantron and COVID, the only testing was Middle of the Year (Jan. 2021) instead of Beginning and Middle. Therefore, there isn't data to compare. However, there is information by standard for the 3 classes Mrs. G teaches as a whole which reports the numbers of students who have attained each standard and the numbers of students who have not attained each standard.

4.4 Satisfaction of Completers

First Year Completer Reflective Journal

Areas Where Completer Felt Preparation was Effective	Areas Where Completer Felt Preparation was Limited
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing lesson plans that include effective plans for effective teaching • Teaching science • Teaching social studies • Classroom management • Building relationships • Variety of learning styles • Accommodating assignments for students with special needs • Asking higher order questions • Collaborating with colleagues and parents • Use of technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balancing work and personal life • Working with parents of students who did not fully participate in a virtual setting • Teaching science with a textbook that was not aligned with state standards

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See the teacher's specific responses in the attached document.