

4.4 Completers Perceive Preparation as Relevant and Effective

The validated Completer Survey illustrates that IUP educator preparation program completers perceive their preparation as relevant and effective to their professions. Most completers (38/49 - 78%) who consented to participate responded to the survey that was based on the ten InTASC Standards and ten of the InTASC dispositional standards (See CAEP 4 Completer Survey Results). Of the thirty-eight responders, 100% strongly agreed or agreed that they were prepared to design and implement developmentally appropriate and challenging learning experiences (InTASC 1). One IASD Kindergarten teacher, EPK1, wrote, “While many colleagues have resorted to numerous worksheets and other busy work to cover the standards, I have found that I can meet the same learning objectives by using hands on activities and incorporating music and movement into my lessons. I strongly believe that this was fostered during my time at IUP.” Most completers (95%) strongly agreed or agreed that they were prepared to ensure inclusive learning environments that enable each learner to meet high standards (InTASC 2). One English Education completer who disagreed did not provide responses to the follow up interview question that asked how IUP could have better prepared her. The other, PPFUK1, wrote, “University students should be handed multiple curriculums to explore and create lessons from... If we want teachers to be prepared for the best of what’s ahead, they should be given the opportunity to plan, deliver, and execute a lesson that is from an updated curriculum.” All 38 completers strongly agreed or agreed that they were prepared to work with others to create environments that support individual and collaborative learning (InTASC 3) and create learning experiences that make the discipline accessible and meaningful for learners (InTASC 4). While 97% of completers agreed or strongly agreed, one completer, PPFUK1, indicated she was not prepared to engage learners in critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving relating to local and global issues (InTASC 5) nor did she perceive being prepared to use multiple methods of assessment to engage learners (InTASC 6). She did not provide a comment as to how IUP could have better prepared her. One PPSD completer, PPL11, wrote that she uses a variety of methods for assessment including “formative and summative assessments, progress monitoring and fluency check-ins, exit slips, and computer-based benchmark assessments.” All completers agreed or strongly agreed they were prepared to plan instruction that supports every student in meeting rigorous learning goals (InTASC 7). All but one completer, ECSP graduate and IASD first year teacher HM41, perceived they were trained to use a variety of instructional strategies (InTASC 8); she did not provide recommendations for preparation. IASD veteran teacher, SHSS1, wrote, “My education at IUP definitely focused on providing multiple means of instruction and assessment. While I sometimes still lecture, I consistently look for varied ways of presenting material, including primary source analysis, political cartoon analysis, working with maps and tables, and graphs...I have attempted to include more reading and writing prompts as bell-ringers and formative assessments to measure student understanding.” One completer, PPFUK1, did not believe she was prepared to engage in ongoing professional learning (InTASC 9) and provided the following recommendation, “University students should be given the opportunity to participate in professional development sessions alongside teachers in the Indiana area during their field placements to gain new insight/exposure.” With our new partnerships, candidates attend professional development activities. All but one nine-year veteran teacher perceived adequate training to seek appropriate leadership roles and opportunities to collaborate with others to ensure learner growth and advance the profession (InTASC 10); she did not provide recommendations for preparation. In summary, one PPSD completer, PPFUK1, disagreed with four of the ten InTASC categories. She is a teacher with nine years’ experience and graduated from the former

Elementary Education Urban Track program. None of the recent Early Childhood with Special Education Urban Track graduates disagreed or strongly disagreed in any of the categories. It is probable that the changes in curriculum and field placements have provided the candidates with more confidence in their preparation to teach in the urban setting.

The InTASC Critical Dispositions were also included in the CAEP 4 Completer Survey. All of the completers believed they were prepared to respect learners' differing strengths and needs (InTASC CD 1h). Fourth-year teacher HM42 wrote, "The biggest challenge of teaching is to meet the needs of all students. It is hard to reach each student during every lesson even though I use different instructional strategies. Because of my education at IUP, I have been able to tackle this challenge with confidence." All survey participants also agreed or strongly agreed that they are prepared to make learners feel valued and value each other (InTASC CD 2n) and value the role of learners in promoting each other's learning (InTASC CD 3o). All responders agreed or strongly agreed that they were trained to appreciate multiple perspectives (InTASC CD 4p). EP11 remarked that IUP always encouraged candidates to be accepting of all students' beliefs, values, and opinions. All participants agreed or strongly agreed that IUP prepared them to value flexible learning environments (InTASC CD 5r). While 92% of candidates agreed or strongly agreed, three candidates disagreed that they were prepared to commit to the ethical use of various assessments and assessment data (InTASC CD 6v). PPFA41 said, "Although we learned about all of the various types of assessments while at IUP, all content knowledge remediation or deepening skills were taught and learned from my cooperating teacher. I don't believe that I learned how to unpack a standard or eligible content and diagnose areas of remediation." Assessment was also addressed as a weakness with employers. Only one former Elementary Education program completer disagreed that she was taught to value planning as a collegial activity (InTASC CD 7q) and did not provide a recommendation for improvement. While 87% of completers felt prepared to commit to exploring new and emerging technologies (InTASC CD 8r), five teachers disagreed. One of the completers, HM41, provided a suggestion, "It would be great to have a course that solely focuses on technology...it would be beneficial if one classroom had a Promethean board. I would have benefited from taking a class that taught us how to create interactive flipcharts." There is now a required technology course for all education majors; many IUP classrooms are equipped with Promethean or Smart Boards. Interestingly, employers believed IUP completers are prepared with appropriate technology skills. All 38 completers agreed or strongly agreed that they understand the expectations of the profession (InTASC CD 9o). One completer from the former Elementary Education Program disagreed that she was encouraged to embrace the challenge of continuous improvement (InTASC CD 10t) and did not provide suggestions for improvement. Overall, the majority of completers agreed that IUP prepared them for the critical dispositions necessary to be an effective teacher.

While these data point to program effectiveness, an obvious limitation is the self-reported perceptions of preparation exclusively from the volunteer case study participants. The data that were gleaned for other standards were from other EPP constructed surveys and were sent to all completers. In the future, the EPP will use one survey and use the data more intentionally with completers who participate in the full case studies and completers who complete only the survey.

The EPP's tracking system for completers is an area in need of improvement. In order to invite a more representative sample, a system is under development for a more inclusive approach. A goal moving forward is to attain information from completers of all programs in our EPP.

CAEP 4 Completer Survey Results