

## **Introduction**

Montana's Education Preparation Providers (MEPPs) have formed a Continuous Improvement Collaborative (CIC) for the purpose of developing a statewide protocol to survey our completers and employers and conduct case studies of our completers' effectiveness in the classroom. As per the continuous improvement protocol, the College of Education (COE) at Montana State University Billings (MSUB) administered a case study on our recent initial program completers. The Completer Case Study portion of the MEPP Statewide Protocol for Continuous Improvement will allow MEPPs to demonstrate and document the performance and impact of completers on student learning and development and completer perception of program relevance.

## **Problem Statement**

In the 2017-2018 academic year, as a part of the State's continuous improvement protocol, an employer survey and completer survey was administered with the recent completers. The college of education faculty analyzed the data from the MSUB completer/employer surveys and identified areas that need further investigation. These four areas are classroom management, data-based practices/curriculum planning, diversity, and cultural competence.

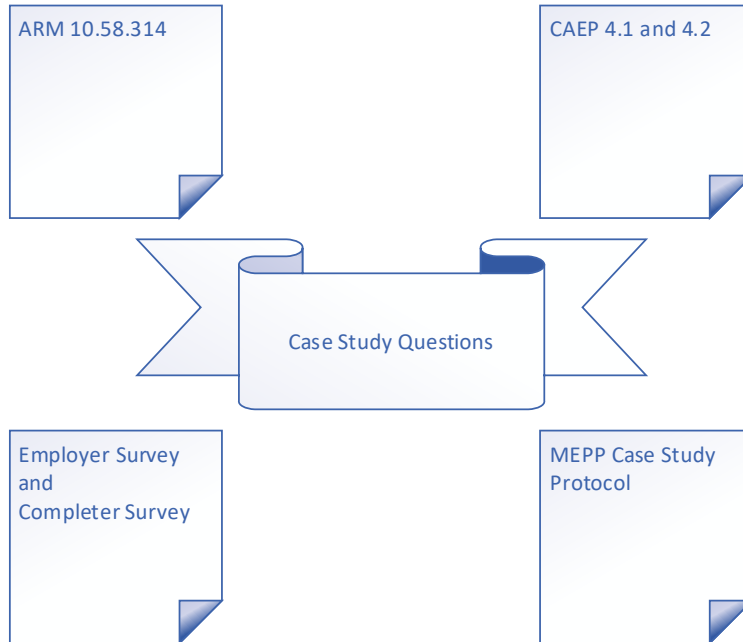
## **Research-Question Categories**

The following research-question categories guided this case study.

1. Completer perception of program relevance
2. Performance and impact of completers on student learning and development

## **Conceptual framework**

When crafting questions for the completer case study, we used the following framework to make sure the validity of the questions is addressed. The case study questions were also reviewed by the CAEP steering committee and faculty at the College of Education in Spring 2021.



Please see the below links for each item in the conceptual framework.

- ARM 10.58.314 - <http://www.mtrules.org/gateway/RuleNo.asp?RN=10%2E58%2E314>
- Case Study Questions ([view](#))
- Employer Survey ([view](#))
- Completer Survey ([View](#))
- MEPP Case Study Protocol ([view](#))

## Methodology

### Permission and Approval

This case study was approved by the Institutional Review Board at the Montana State University Billings.

### Research Design

This study utilized a case study methodology (Creswell, 2013) to investigate the research questions. The data were gathered through a self-reported open-ended survey through Qualtrics. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, it was not feasible to invite participants face to face for interviews/focus groups.

## **Participants**

All initial program completers from 2016 to 2019 were emailed requesting their participation in the case study. Initially, 15 completers volunteered to participate; however, eight completers did opt-out from participating in the case study during mid-data collection. The case study utilized a voluntary sample. Three Elementary Education K-8 completers, two English 5-12 completers, one Elementary Education/Reading K-12, and one Elementary Education/Special Education completers participated in the study.

## **Data Collection**

All 15 initial volunteers were sent an open-ended Qualtrics survey. In addition, the completers were asked to submit a video recording of their teaching. Out of the seven completers who participated in the case study, five submitted video recordings of their teaching. For the video recording, the COE offered the completers the option to check out Swivl robots to record their teaching. In addition to Swivl, WebEx was also provided by MSUB to video record teaching.

## **Data Analysis**

In April 2021, the COE faculty analyzed the data during a college-wide meeting. The faculty were divided into eight groups. Groups A-E evaluated a completer teaching demonstration using a Charlotte Danielson-based observation form (Danielson, 2007), and groups F-H evaluated the qualitative comments provided by the completers. Out of the five teaching demonstrations, three were related to in-class teaching, and two were related to online teaching. Using a basic interpretive approach (Merriam, 2002), the following are the themes emerged from the data. Due to confidentiality, open-ended qualitative data are not posted on this website.

### ***What is the completer perception of program relevance?***

This question was asked to get a general sense of participants' experience in COE. A vast majority of participants expressed having an overall positive experience while they were students. Although most participants felt that they had a positive overall experience, one participant distinguished between having a positive experience as a student and not feeling prepared to assume responsibilities once they became a classroom teacher. The majority of participants expressed that they had a positive experience as students in the College of Education

in the following areas: technology, data-driven Practices (DDP), classroom Management, clinical experiences, diverse learners, and culturally responsive pedagogy, and IEFA. However, some participants expressed that they did not receive enough information in IEFA, culturally responsive pedagogy/diverse learners, technology, classroom management, and special education. It should be noted that these are mixed results, and faculty groups indicated that further in-depth analysis of the qualitative comments along with the completer background would be required to analyze the data further and make recommendations.

In addition to the above comments, the completers also noted that time management skills and addressing work/life balance would be essential. Further, it was pointed out that learning to address the gap between teachers, administration, and parents, as well as understanding master contracts and school board meetings, working with Native American families, working with parents, addressing trauma, and teacher self-care are important areas needed to excel in the profession. In addition, the completers noted that they received professional development opportunities, training related to diverse learners, training related to standards-based grading during their first year of teaching. It was also noted that opportunities to make connections and receiving mentoring were some areas that the schools provided to them as a new teacher.

At the beginning of May 2021, the COE discussed the case study findings with the P-12 School District Advisory Committee. The advisory committee provided feedback on possible collaborations with the COE and the school districts to better identify the gaps between what is learned in the college and what is being practiced in schools. This information will be shared with the COE faculty during the fall 2021 semester to identify potential action items.

***To understand how completers' performance impacts student learning and development, we asked our completers, "how do you assess your impact on student learning?"***

The completers noted the following as a way of understanding the impact on their performance on P-12 students.

One completer noted that utilizing Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) scores and administering common assessments help to ensure that standards are taught to the level of understanding that students need. MAP growth is an assessment for measuring achievement and growth in K–12 math, reading, language usage, and science (NWEA, n.d.) The completer also

indicated that if students are struggling, the same standard is taught and practiced multiple times. The completer had collaborated with a fellow teacher to create a common assessment throughout the classrooms. For this assessment, the completer and the fellow teacher noticed that on MAP scores, the students were struggling with Reading standards in general, and remedial actions were taken to address this need. The completer provided a detailed explanation of the assessment that was collaboratively developed with the fellow teacher. Another completer provided details on completer's involvement in moving students from tier 2 to tier 3 in the AIMS web plus standardized test. AIMS web plus is a tool that “screens and monitors the reading and math skills of PreK–12 students” (Pearsonassessments, n.d.) Another one of the completers explained the contribution made towards moving more than 40% of the students from Novice to Nearing Proficiency level with ESSA report. According (The Office of Public Instruction, 2020), “under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the OPI publishes state, district, and school report cards every year. The ESSA report cards provide a concise and accessible way to show how Montana's schools are performing.” The remaining completers noted using formative assessments and standardized test data to improve instruction and assessment scores.

### **Findings and Recommendations**

The faculty completed the initial round of analysis of qualitative comments and teaching demonstration observations of these seven completers. Please note that only five completers submitted teaching demonstrations, and due to this reason, the data from teaching demonstrations are not posted on this website. In fall 2021, faculty will provide specific recommendations for program improvement based on the case study data. We have shared the case study findings with the P-12 School District Advisory committee during the early May 2021 meeting. The feedback from the advisory committee will also be taken into consideration during the fall 2021 semester to craft final programmatic improvements.

### **Limitations and Recommendations**

Due to the online evaluation of teaching demonstrations, some components of the Danielson framework were not able to be observed. Findings cannot be generalized to the broader population (all COE programs) due to the limited number of completers participating in each licensure area and some licensure areas not having a single participant. Another reason is that the sample used in this study is a voluntary sample. Including a random sample of participants,

conducting face-to-face interviews/focus groups, including more completers to represent each licensure area are some future recommendations for the case study design.

### References

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