



Measure 1: Indicators of Teaching Effectiveness

Case Studies

The Department of Education at RMU completed two case studies of recent graduates to ascertain the program's effectiveness in creating prepared and effective teachers. Below is an overview of both case studies as well as the guidelines for the case studies.

Case Study Overview – Teacher #1 Spring, 2023

OVERVIEW

The student graduated from Robert Morris University in Spring 2021 with a B.S. in Early Childhood and Special Education. The former RMU student is a special education teacher at a suburban Catholic high school in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The teacher started at the school in the fall of 2021.

According to an interview with the head of the special education program, the teacher has met all performance standards. They were particularly impressed with her classroom management, attention to her students' needs, and ability to collaborate with her colleagues at the school.

Based on the classroom observations conducted by the regional program supervisor, the teacher scored between proficient and distinguished in the areas of planning and preparation, classroom environment, instruction and professional responsibilities.

According to her semi-annual evaluation for 2022-2024, the teacher uses multiple assessment data sources and strategies to help differentiate her instruction to meet the goals of the IEPs for her students. She was observed using technology to support student learning among her 9 students with a variety of abilities and learning styles.

She uses newsletters, emails, phone calls and in person meeting with parents/guardians to promote a healthy learning environment in her classroom. The newsletters include events happening at the school and her classroom. She clearly communicates activities and special events to students and parents/guardians.

The teacher uses data she has collected to develop individual, behavioral plans in accordance to IEP goals. The IEPs show the goals for each student, how the goals will be measured and how often, and the report of progress in meeting those goals. Data collection includes classroom observations, notes, checklists, Brigance testing in IEP, and IEP data sheets. The report of progress is very detailed and well documented allowing the reader to clearly understand the progress of each student.

The teacher's lesson plans were carefully crafted to attend to the needs of her students. The objectives focus on higher level skills, and attend to PA standards. The instructional activities attend to the objectives, in an engaging, student centered manner, and utilizes formative assessments to adjust and adhere to the needs of her students.

Two observations were conducted by faculty members at RMU using the ND Common Metrics-Skills of Teaching Tool (STOT) in which she scored proficient and distinguished in all applicable areas. Of note from

these observations, the teacher, has created a warm and rigorous classroom environment for her students. The teacher created a calming corner to assist students when needed. She utilizes the skills of the para-professionals in the classroom to further individualize instruction based on the needs of each student. Finally, her students demonstrate great warmth and respect for the teacher.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the teacher has done an outstanding job at the school. This is demonstrated not only by classroom observations, student progress, and input from her colleagues, but by the students themselves. She plans to continue her education and pursue her master's degree to further her growth and development.

Case Study Overview – Teacher #2 Spring, 2023

OVERVIEW

The teacher graduated from Robert Morris University in May, 2022 with a B.S. degree in Early Childhood and Special Education. She was employed at a large public suburban school outside of Pittsburgh, PA as a long term substitute teacher. She was observed teaching 4th grade reading in a learning support classroom by RMU faculty.

Her lesson plans are well organized and professionally executed attending not only to PA standards and course objectives, but attends to the needs and interests of her students. The observed lesson was on similes and metaphors, During the lesson, the students read different paragraphs from a handout and identified similes and metaphors, which were mapped by the teacher on the board. Her delivery was concise and instructions were clear throughout the lesson. It was obvious the students respected and appreciated her feedback while working on their projects based on the observed interactions she had with her students. Both faculty observers, using the ND Common Metrics-Skills of Teaching Tool (STOT), ranked her teaching as proficient or distinguished in all applicable areas.

Pre- Post-data demonstrated growth among her students from the beginning of the year, through mid-year and end of year student assessment of site words. Each student had shown growth in this area as a result of the teacher's instruction.

A formal classroom evaluation from her administrator indicated the teacher was doing excellent work specifically in regards to her relationship with her students, meeting the objectives of the lesson, and differentiating instruction based on the needs of her individual students. One area that was indicated for area to develop was knowing the curriculum better, since this was a new curriculum to the teacher.

CONCLUSION

This being the teacher's first year of teaching after graduating from RMU, the teacher has shown to be an effective teacher across all domains. She is well prepared for her lessons, effectively teaches the lessons, and creates an exciting and engaging learning environment for her students. She was offered a permanent position for the 2023- 2024 academic year, and currently serves a permanent faculty at the school, demonstrating the school's pleasure with her work performance.

1. Each September – Assessment Coordinator calls a meeting with the members of the assessment Case Study Standard 4 committee to select a pool of 4-5 potential case study participants.
 - The certification and accreditation specialist creates a list of all program completers within the last 3 years. Data on the program completer is pulled from the Education database and includes:
 - Completion Date
 - Gender
 - GPA
 - PDE ratings during student teaching
 - Area of certification
 - Current Employment/Employer
 - The Case Study Standard 4 committee then uses the list provided and the following criteria to identify potential participants:
 - Completed within the last 3 years
 - Student is employed as a full-time teacher or permanent substitute teacher
 - Employment is geographically central to RMU (within 50 mile radius)
 - This list of potential participants is further examined for diversity of the case study group considering the following factors:
 - Gender
 - GPA
 - PDE 430 ratings during student teaching
 - Area of certification
 - Awards/honors/recognitions
 - Ethnic and racial
 - School type
 - Location of employment
2. From the potential case study participants, the committee selects the first two to contact.
3. The Dept. Head drafts a letter to the principal or superintendent explaining the rationale for the case study and requesting RMU alumni teacher and district participation.
4. Once approval from the district has been obtained, the Dept. Head or assessment coordinator makes further contact with the alumni/program completer to request inclusion in the case study. If they do not wish to continue as a case study participant, they are thanked for their consideration.
5. Upon approval by the school or district and participant, the assessment coordinator sets a time to meet the case study participant to review the data collection and case study procedures.

6. The following data are collected over a 4-8 week period:
 - *Two lesson plans provided by the case study participant and two observations from faculty qualified in the corresponding certification area (observations are conducted on separate dates) using the NDACTE observation form.
 - *Evidence of a formal observation by a director or principal within last 12 months using the district observation instruments
 - **Student pre/post assessment data (teacher created or commercial {i.e., AimsWeb, DIBELS, CBM}) OR benchmark data over a period of time on a whole class or period {9 weeks}
 - *An interview with the participant conducted by the faculty person overseeing the case study. There were three general questions used to initiate reflection and discussion:
 - i. What was one or two things that you needed to know or have more practice in during your teacher education program?
 - ii. Based on what you learned in the teacher education program, what do you think is your strength in teaching?
 - iii. Is there anything else that you want to add?
 - *Two interviews with school team or grade level colleagues. Interview questions originated from items on the NDACTE observation form that were not scored with the observation alone (i.e. professionalism, commitment to the profession, collaborates with colleagues from InTasc Standard 9 and 10).
 - K-12 student survey results https://www.ets.org/s/ppa/pdf/student_survey.pdf
 - Other data that the case study participant would like to share:
 - Family/Parent contact log or notes
 - Discipline referrals
 - MTSS data
 - Reflection logs
 - Lesson plan
 - Grant work
 - Extracurricular activities
 - Other
7. Once the data are collected, the assessment coordinator calls a meeting with the Case Study Standard 4 Committee to review.
8. The assessment coordinator writes a collective summary.
9. The collective summary is used as a data source and included in reports and the EPP's continuous improvement cycle.
10. By May of the academic year, there are 2 case studies completed.