

EXAMINING COMPLETER AND EMPLOYER SATISFACTION IN ADVANCED-LEVEL PROGRAMS

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ABSTRACT

Advanced-level education programs are held to rigorous accreditation standards that often require evidence of satisfaction from both program completers and their employers. The purpose of this study was to develop a pragmatic method of collecting this evidence for smaller liberal arts institutions. A convergent parallel mixed methods data collection approach was designed to simultaneously gather qualitative and quantitative data. This data collection method was piloted with eight alumni from an advanced-level literacy program at a small private liberal arts university in the American Northeast. Evidence of program completer satisfaction included analysis of self-reported data regarding perceptions of preparation relevant to current job responsibilities and program goals. Evidence of employer satisfaction included analysis of employment milestones and employer evaluations and/or observations. This study provides a model for future research intended on identifying practical ways of collecting evidence toward demonstrating overall satisfaction of program completers and/or their employers for smaller liberal arts institutions.

OVERVIEW

Advanced-level programs are defined as “educator preparation programs at the post-baccalaureate or graduate levels leading to licensure, certification, or endorsement” (Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation [CAEP], 2015a, para. 1). These programs are designed to develop P-12 teachers who have already completed an initial preparation program for employment in P-12 schools/districts. With increasing accountability in the field of education, it follows that advanced-level programs are held to high standards through rigorous accreditation procedures (Cochran-Smith et al., 2017). The Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) (2016b) standard A.4 states that providers of advanced-level programs must document the satisfaction of its completers and their employers with the relevance and effectiveness of their preparation. Additionally, the Association for Advancing Quality in Educator Preparation (AAQEP) (2020) requires programs to provide multiple measures of evidence of completer performance, including perspectives from program completers and employers. This leads to the question of how providers of advanced-level programs can collect valid and reliable data pertaining to the satisfaction of both its graduates and the schools that employ them. The purpose of this study was to develop a pragmatic method of collecting evidence that would provide a holistic interpretation of program completers and employers satisfaction with advanced-level programs.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Advanced-level programs in the field of education must align themselves with standards related to a specific discipline. For example, a graduate program leading to special education certification may align with the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) standards (Council for Exceptional Children [CEC], 2015) while a graduate program leading to literacy specialist

certification may align with the International Literacy Association (ILA) standards (International Literacy Association [ILA], 2017). Given that standards are frequently updated to reflect changes in the field and societal expectations, it is necessary that programs continuously assess whether the preparation provided by the program meets the aligned standards *and* that these standards have practical application in the field. This demonstrates programs are not simply producing “standard” teachers, or those taught only to meet standards, but producing educators who can apply coursework in a practical manner in the field (Bourke, Ryan, & Lloyd, 2016). It follows that accreditation bodies, which can grant a level of credibility to a program, would need to gauge if advanced-level programs are developing competent and caring educators who can both meet standards and operate effectively in the field. When it comes to receiving accreditation of education programs in the United States, this is done by demonstrating the satisfaction of both program completers and their employers (Association for Advancing Quality in Educator Preparation [AAQEP], 2020; Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation [CAEP], 2016b).

Accreditation

Historically, teacher preparation in the United States morphed from normal schools into four-year colleges, eventually seeking and winning the title “university” (Coble, Edelfelt, & Kettlewell, 2004; Labaree, 2008, p. 295; Ogren, 2005). As universities grew, so did specific licensure requirements known as accreditation. In 1954, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) was founded as a non-profit, non-governmental accrediting body for teacher preparation programs (CAEP, 2015b). NCATE worked to “establish rigorous standards for teacher education programs, hold accredited institutions accountable for meeting these standards, and encourage unaccredited schools to demonstrate the quality of their programs by working for and achieving professional accreditation” (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education [NCATE], 2014, para. 1). From the inception of NCATE, there have been several accreditation bodies for teacher preparation programs, including the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC), Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), and the Association for Advancing Quality in Educator Preparation (AAQEP) (Teacher Education Accreditation Council [TEAC], 2014; CAEP, 2015b; AAQEP, 2020). With CAEP currently being the largest accrediting body for teacher preparation programs, it follows that this study was designed to provide evidence towards meeting two specific subcomponents of CAEP (2016b) standard A.4:

- Satisfaction of Employers – Standard A.4.1: The provider demonstrates, using measures that result in valid and reliable data and including employment milestones such as promotion and retention, that employers are satisfied with the completers’ preparation for their assigned responsibilities in working with P-12 students.
- Satisfaction of Completers – Standard A.4.2: The provider demonstrates, using measures that result in valid and reliable data, that program completers perceive their preparation as relevant to the responsibilities they confront on the job, and that the preparation was effective.

Stakeholder Satisfaction

Although CAEP outlines a guide for collecting evidence for towards meeting standards, the system for the analysis, evaluation, interpretation of data, and conclusions supported by data are left to the program provider to establish (Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation [CAEP], 2016a). Given this ambiguity and the lack of specifics outlined for data collection, it follows that

there is a gap in pragmatic methods of collecting evidence through the development of evaluative measures by which advanced-level programs can measure the program impact through examining program completer and employer satisfaction. As the CAEP Chair, Karen Symms Gallagher, points out, this leaves room for inconsistency in ways to accurately assess a program's impact (Goodson, 2018). Additionally, it is often not possible for smaller liberal arts institutions to use limited resources and funding to collect the large amounts of data needed to run statistical analysis or generate enough participation form a smaller student body. Thus, smaller institutions may be innately limited in the methods that can be used (e.g., value-added measures, student-growth percentiles, case studies, etc.) to provide evidence towards meeting accreditation standards (Alkathiri, 2020).

Now that accreditation requires programs to show direct evidence of consumer satisfaction (Cochran-Smith et al., 2016), it is suggested by Heafner, McIntyre, and Spooner (2014) that a combination of input measures for data collection should be used to determine satisfaction of both program completers and their employers. The Steinhardt School of Culture, Education and Human Development at New York University (NYU) outlined how they were "creative in [their] approach to measuring the satisfaction of employers" by developing an annual survey of school building leaders to be administered annually across all the schools that were known to hire graduates (Lyons et al., 2018, p. 11). When it came to measuring the satisfaction of completers, NYU outlined how they designed the student teacher End-of-Term Feedback Questionnaire (ETFQ) as an integral component of the evidence base for student's perception of preparation of the field (Lyons et al., 2018). Case studies have also been used by institutions seeking to examine satisfaction of employers and completers for accreditation purposes in states like Texas (Morgan et al., 2020). However, "there never seems to be enough time, money or personnel power to make the best case scenario a reality" (Peacock, 2015, p. 39).

Other institutions have utilized quantitative data (e.g., survey data) and/or qualitative data (e.g., case studies) to collect valid and reliable data pertaining to the satisfaction of both its graduates and the schools that employ them (Houglund, 2008; Kansas State University, 2019; Princeton University, 2019; University of Florida, 2017; University of North Alabama, 2016; Webster University, 2019). However, small liberal arts and science institutions looking to receive or maintain accreditation must "get creative" in their approaches to increase the response rate of an increasingly busy population of educators and administrators and utilize pre-existing data that may speak to the variables being addressed.

METHODS

This study used a convergent parallel mixed methods approach (Creswell, 2014) to simultaneously gather qualitative and quantitative data. This approach was designed to provide a holistic interpretation of program completer's and their employer's satisfaction with the relevance and effectiveness of their preparation from an advanced-level program in literacy instruction at a small private liberal arts university in the American Northeast. With priority to subcomponents A.4.1 (Satisfaction of Employers) and A.4.2 (Satisfaction of Completers), the following research questions were addressed:

1. In what ways do employers demonstrate satisfaction with recent graduates?
2. In what ways, if any, have recent graduates reached employment milestones?

3. How do recent graduates perceive their preparation as relevant to their current job responsibilities?
4. How do recent graduates perceive their preparation as effective relative to the goals of the program?

As demonstrated in Table 1, information from pre-existing documents was gathered to address the first research question. This included teacher evaluations containing quantitative Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) scores and field observations containing qualitative comments from supervisors. Information from an Alumni Survey was gathered to address the second, third, and fourth research questions. This included quantitative and qualitative responses regarding completer’s employment milestones and completer’s preparation relevant to their current job, as well as quantitative responses regarding completer’s preparation relative to the goals of the program (i.e., 2017 ILA Standards).

Table 1.

CAEP Standard, Research Questions, and Associated Data Collection

CAEP Standard	Research Question	Data Collection
Satisfaction of Employers: Standard A.4.1	(1) In what ways do employers demonstrate satisfaction with recent graduates?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher Evaluation Forms • Field Observations
Satisfaction of Employers: Standard A.4.1	(2) In what ways, if any, have recent graduates reached employment milestones?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alumni Survey
Satisfaction of Completers: Standard A.4.2	(3) How do recent graduates perceive their preparation as relevant to their current job responsibilities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alumni Survey
Satisfaction of Completers: Standard A.4.2	(4) How do recent graduates perceive their preparation as effective relative to the goals of the program?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alumni Survey

Participants

The data collection method designed in this study was piloted with eight alumni from an advanced-level literacy program at a small private liberal arts university in the American Northeast. Purposive sampling was used to identify 55 alumni who graduated within the last three years (2016, 2017, and 2018). Graduates from the past three years were selected in an effort to keep results relevant. To identify potential participants, a data base of program alumni from the past three years was obtained containing school email addresses as well as some personal email addresses. To secure more updated contact information, the university also provided a list of updated email addresses student’s supplied upon graduation. An internet search was also utilized in an attempt to acquire current employment email addresses by searching for alumni by name.

Purposive sampling was also used to further identify alumni who were currently employed in a New York State public, private, or charter school to ensure the necessary teacher evaluation data was available for analysis. Given that not all alumni who pursue a degree in the field of education end up working in the field of education, and individuals may be hired as part time or substitute teachers, it follows that not all of the alumni would qualify to participate due to lack of the necessary teaching evaluations and/or observations. Since graduates of the same program often have peers updated contact information, snowball sampling was also used. Alumni were asked to provide current contact information for other recent alumni. Of the 55 recent alumni, eight qualified for participation, completed the Alumni Survey, and forwarded a copy of their most recent teaching evaluation and/or observation.

All participants graduated from the same advanced-level program in literacy instruction in 2016 (37.50%), 2017 (25%), or 2018 (37.50%). The sample of participants included primarily White (87.50%) females (100%). All participants were between the ages of 20 and 30 and received both a Bachelor's and Master's degree. All participants indicated they were currently employed in a New York State public, private, or charter school. Participants reported working in grades K-2 (25%), grades 6-8 (37.50%) or mixture/subset of these settings (e.g., K-5, grades 5-6, etc.) (37.50%). Participants reported working in primarily suburban (75%) public (75%) settings. All but one participant (87.50%) had been a teacher of record for at least one year at the time of the study. Participants held a variety of positions within their schools, including literacy specialist/coach (25%), classroom teacher (37.50%), special area teacher (PE, music, art, technology, etc.) (12.50%) and long-term substitute teacher (25%). Most participants reported earning between \$40,000 and \$40,999 (75%) while some reported making less than \$30,000 (25%) at the time of the study (i.e., within three years of receiving their Master's degree).

Procedure

Prior to beginning the study, approval from the institutions Institutional Review Board (IRB) was received. The approval included permission to analyze data obtained from pre-existing documents and conduct research on human subjects (i.e., alumni). The approval included the authorization of the consent form, disclaimer about volunteering, security of data, confidentiality, survey items, and sampling procedures for the participants.

An email was sent to all potential participants (to all available email addresses) in the middle of February 2018. Over the course of two months, additional emails were sent reminding alumni a) of the chance to participate, b) to complete the survey they started, or c) to forward a copy of their most recent teaching evaluation and/or observation. In an effort to reach individuals for whom updated contact information was not available, a link to the survey was posted via the University's social media accounts (i.e., Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook) to solicit a greater response. Incomplete surveys were disregarded for the purposes of the data analyses. Additionally, individuals who completed the survey but did not forward the necessary teaching evaluation and/or observation forms were disregarded for the purposes of the data analyses.

Upon agreeing to participate, alumni completed a survey involving multiple sections. The first three sections included personal demographics, current employment information, and information regarding employment milestones. The fourth section validated participants had the necessary teaching evaluation and/or observation forms. The fifth section had participants rate their agreement through a Likert scale, *one* (extremely prepared) to *five* (not prepared at all), to a series of questions phrased to determine their preparation relative to the goals of the program (i.e., 2017

ILA standards). The sixth section involved information regarding the ways, if any, in which the program prepared participants for their current job responsibilities. The last section was optional and collected updated contact information for other potential participants.

Qualified participants who completed the survey were provided the researcher's email address and instructions to forward their most recent teaching evaluation and/or observation. The researcher communicated directly with participants via email to answer questions regarding materials and to ensure that documents were provided in an acceptable format. Upon completion of the survey and receipt of the necessary documents, individuals who completed the study received a \$25 electronic Amazon gift card via email that was mentioned during study participation solicitation.

Data Analysis

Anonymity could not be offered since the researcher had access to participants' names and contact information to remain in contact through the duration of the study. However, each participant received a numerical identifier (e.g., Participant 1) to maintain confidentiality. This identifier was also used to label all corresponding documents received from participants.

Research question 1 addressed the way in which employers demonstrate satisfaction with recent program completers. Document analysis, a form of qualitative research in which documents are interpreted, was used to address this question (Bowen, 2009). Provided documents (i.e., teacher observations and/or evaluations) were used to determine themes of employer satisfaction with participant performance in the field. Documents were coded using evaluation coding to establish specific areas of observation and/or evaluation (i.e., teaching domains) (Saldaña, 2013). Employer domain ratings were determined for each participant by looking at the domain mode (i.e., most frequent rating assigned). Documents were also used holistically to determine an overall measure of employer satisfaction using the percentage of ratings provided by employers in each category (i.e., ineffective, developing, effective, and highly effective). This overall measure was then compared to educator evaluation data collected by New York State (New York State Education Department, 2016). Additionally, qualitative comments provided by employers were analyzed using *in vivo* coding, involving the use of short phrases or words from the employer's own language as codes (Saldaña, 2013).

Research question 2 addressed the ways that recent program completers reached employment milestones. The percentage of participants that held a position of literacy specialist since graduation was represented with a bar chart to demonstrate a pattern of receiving a position in a field related to one's degree (employment milestone). Additionally, the number of years participants were a teacher of record was represented with a bar chart to determine the amount of teaching experience prior to participation in the study as well as demonstrate a pattern of retention (continued employment). Qualitative responses regarding specific position(s) held and length of each position were synthesized and analyzed using *in vivo* coding for trends in retention (continued employment) and promotion (position rank) (Saldaña, 2013).

Research question 3 addressed how recent program completers perceive their preparation as relevant to their current job responsibilities. To address this question, the percentage of participants who recorded being extremely prepared, prepared, somewhat prepared, not very prepared, or not prepared at all for their current job responsibilities was represented with a bar chart. Additionally, qualitative responses indicating specific responsibilities participants felt most/least prepared for were analyzed using *in vivo* coding (Saldaña, 2013). *In vivo* coding was also used to analyze qualitative responses provided by participants regarding the preparation provided by their practicum, including

observation and ongoing feedback by supervisors (Saldaña, 2013). A bar chart was used to outline specific fieldwork experiences that participants indicated (from a provided list) prepared them for their current job responsibilities, while in vivo coding was used to analyze qualitative responses regarding specific ways field work experiences prepared them or experiences that would have been more helpful (Saldaña, 2013).

Research question 4 addressed how recent program completers perceive their preparation as effective relative to the goals of the program. Participants rated their agreement to questions phrased to determine their preparation to meet various aspects of the 2017 ILA standards based on the preparation they received through a Likert scale, one (not prepared at all) to five (extremely prepared). Analysis included calculating the average extent of preparation participants recorded to determine the center of the data, along with the standard deviations to determine the variation of the data from the mean.

FINDINGS

Employer Satisfaction

Document analysis was used to interpret provided documents related to employer satisfaction. Table 2 outlines the type of document(s) received by participants. The documents received were of various forms (i.e., OBS_eRVE, Edivate Observe, Unannounced Observation Rubric, Summative Performance Report, and Private School Form) making *direct* associations between documents unattainable. Some observations provided by participants included an overall rating while others did not. Given the inconsistencies, including ratings on some or all of the four teaching domains and their subscales, proportions were used to indicate the percentage of ratings provided by employers on the observation forms in each coded category (i.e., ineffective, developing, effective, and highly effective). In addition to forwarded APPR score report information, these comprehensive percentages were used to determine each participant’s overall rating. Again, omitted ratings (i.e., not observed, does not apply, N/A, not yet rated, not evident, left blank) were not included in analysis.

Table 2

Pilot Example for Overall Employer Ratings

	Type of Document(s)	Percentage of Ratings			
		(1) Ineffective	(2) Developing	(3) Effective	(4) Highly Effective
Participant 1	Teacher Observation	0	0	66.66	33.33
Participant 2	Teacher Observation	0	0	0	100
Participant 3	Teacher Observation	0	0	25	75
Participant 4	Teacher Observation	0	14.29	71.42	14.29
Participant 5	Teacher Observation	0	0	62.50	37.50
Participant 6	Teacher Observation	0	0	41.86	58.14
Participant 7	Teacher Observation & APPR Score Report	0	0	50	50*
Participant 8	Teacher Observation	0	--	100	--

**indicates APPR rating*

Comparing participants overall ratings to the most recent New York State Educator Evaluation Data outlined in Figure 1 (New York State Education Department, 2016) allows a program to gather whether employers who hired program completers were satisfied to a similar extent if not more than that of a larger sample.



Figure 1: Educator Evaluation Data for Educators in New York State: APPR Overall Composite Ratings (New York State Education Department, 2016)

Specific analysis of each observation form revealed participants were evaluated on some or all of four common domains of teaching, which aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching (The Danielson Group, 2013): (1) planning and preparation, (2) classroom environment, (3) instructional practices and (4) professional responsibilities. Table 3 outlines the employer domain ratings for each participant in some or all of the four teaching domains addressed within the observation provided. All but one participant was rated by employers on a four-point scale, allowing for associations to be made across evaluation/observation forms. Terms used in the various four-point rating scales (e.g., unacceptable, insufficient, emergent, needs improvement, proficient, accomplished, etc.), were coded into four categories. The four rating categories of (1) ineffective, (2) developing, (3) effective, and (4) highly effective were selected for this study since this scale was used on several of the observations forms and represents the APPR ratings used by New York State (New York State Education Department, 2016). The terms used in the two-point rating scale on Participant 8’s observation form (i.e., evident or missed opportunity), were coded as (1) ineffective or (3) effective. Omitted ratings (i.e., not observed, does not apply, N/A, not yet rated, not evident, left blank) were not included in analysis. Employer domain ratings were determined by looking at the domain mode (i.e., most frequent rating assigned).

Table 3

Pilot Example for Employer Domain Ratings

	Domain Ratings			
	Planning and Preparation N = 6	Classroom Environment N = 7	Instructional Practices N = 5	Professional Responsibilities N = 6
Participant 1	Effective	Effective	Highly Effective	Effective
Participant 2	Highly Effective	Highly Effective	Highly Effective	Highly Effective
Participant 3	Highly Effective	Highly Effective	Highly Effective	Effective
Participant 4	Highly Effective	Developing	Effective	Effective
Participant 5	--	Effective	Effective	--

Participant 6	Effective	--	--	Effective
Participant 7	--	Highly Effective	--	--
Participant 8	Effective	Effective	--	Effective

Qualitative comments included by employers on each of the observation forms provided were also coded, specifically into two categories (i.e., strengths and improvements). Themes that emerge from strength comments suggest what employers are satisfied with regarding the ability of program completers while themes that emerge from improvement comments suggest areas for program improvement. Template comments not directly selected or provided by the employer, but rather automatically generated from the rating selected, were not included in analysis.

Employment Milestones

The percentage of participants that held a position of literacy specialist since graduation was gathered through qualitative responses gathered through a survey. Figure 2 provides an example of how a bar chart can be used to demonstrate a pattern of receiving a position in a field related to one’s degree since graduation (e.g., literacy specialists for students in an advanced literacy program), which is an employment milestone. It should be noted that even if participants do not indicate they hold a *specific* position, they may indicate they are still employed in the field of education, which is still an employment milestone. Figure 3 provides an example of how a bar chart can be used to demonstrate a pattern of retention/continued employment as a teacher of record for program completers. Qualitative responses regarding specific position(s) held and length of each position were synthesized and analyzed using in vivo coding for trends in retention (continued employment) and promotion (position rank) (Saldaña, 2013).

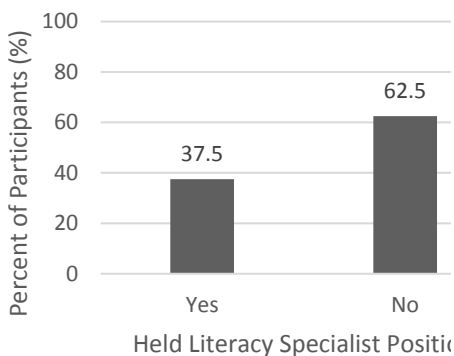


Figure 2. Pilot Example for Literacy Specialist Since Graduation

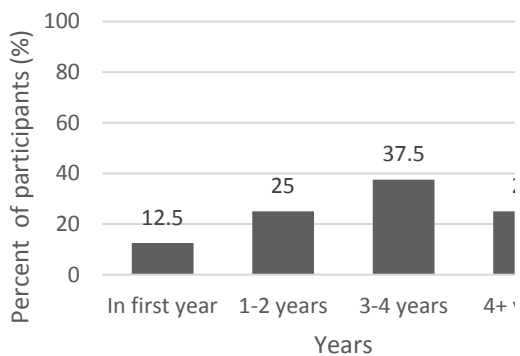


Figure 3. Pilot Example for Years as Teacher of Record

Table 4 outlines responses from participants regarding specific position(s) held in education and length of each position. Comments were coded into two categories, including position(s) and length of position(s) demonstrating a pattern of retention/continued employment. Multiple positions held by participants may demonstrate a pattern of promotion awarded (increased responsibility) while the increased rank of each subsequent position (e.g., substitute teacher to long-term substitute teacher to full time teacher) may also demonstrate a pattern of promotion. If a participant indicates

that they held only one position in education, but that this was a full-time teaching position, this further demonstrates a pattern of reaching employment milestones like receiving a *full-time* position in the field after graduation.

Table 4
Pilot Example for Employment Retention and Promotion

	Position(s) Held (chronological order)	Length of Position
Participant 1	First Grade Teacher	3-4 years
Participant 2	6th Grade Classroom Teacher	3-4 years
Participant 3	Teaching Assistant	Less than 1 year
	4th Grade Long Term Teacher	Less than 1 year
	Literacy Specialist	1-2 years
Participant 4	Secondary Teacher	3-4 years
Participant 5	Building-Based Substitute Teacher	1-2 years
	Long-Term Substitute Teacher	Less than 1 year
Participant 6	Art Teacher (tenure track)	1-2 years
Participant 7	Long Term Substitute Teacher	1-2 years
	.4 Special Education Teacher/.6 Teaching Assistant	Less than 1 year
Participant 8	Fourth Grade Teacher	Less than 1 year
	Literacy Specialist	1-2 years

Perceived Preparation: Current Job

The percentage of participants who recorded being extremely prepared, prepared, somewhat prepared, not very prepared, or not prepared at all for their current job responsibilities was gathered through responses gathered through a survey. Figure 4 provides an example of how a bar chart can be used to demonstrate a pattern of preparation. It should be noted that this preparation may be to work specifically towards something related to the advanced-level program (e.g., literacy specialist) or in the field of education in general pending how the survey questions are structured.

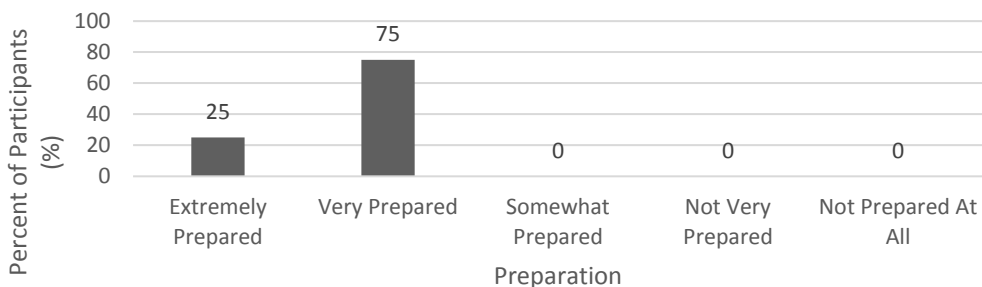


Figure 4. Pilot Example for Perceived Preparation for Current Job Responsibilities

Qualitative responses from participants regarding preparation for their current job responsibilities were coded into three categories, including aspects of their current job responsibilities in which they were most prepared and least prepared, as well as aspects they felt they were prepared for by practicum experiences. The themes that emerged can provide program with information pertaining to what completers were most and least prepared for upon entering the field, as well as feedback regarding if and how required practicum experiences contributed to completers overall preparation. Furthermore, Figure 5 outlines provides an example of how a bar chart can be used to outline how fieldwork experiences related to *specific* advanced-level programs prepared them for their current job responsibilities. This can help programs determine if the skills acquired through these experiences may have the most practical application after graduation.

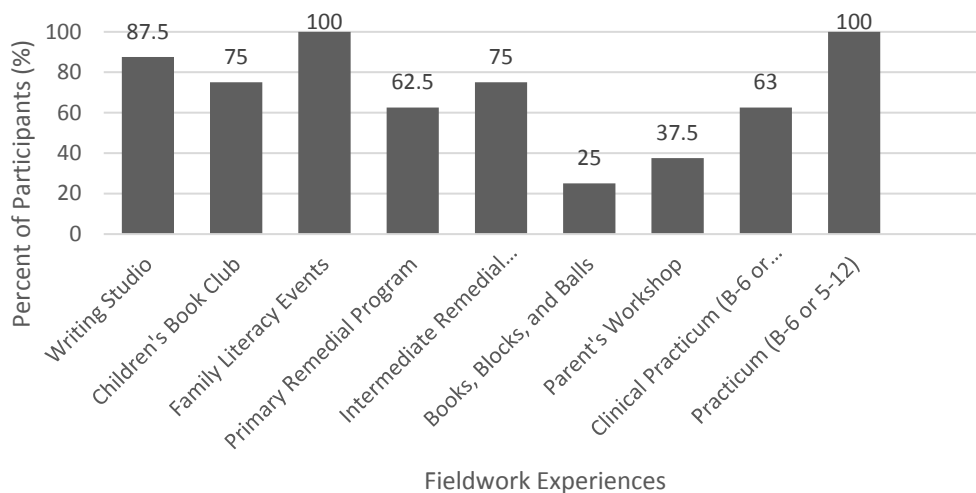


Figure 5. Pilot Example for Preparation from Specific Fieldwork Experiences

Qualitative responses from participants regarding ways that fieldwork experiences prepared them for their current job responsibilities were coded into two categories (i.e., strengths and improvements). Themes that emerge from strength comments suggest specific ways field work experiences prepared them for their current job responsibilities while themes that emerge from improvement comments suggest areas for program improvement related to field experiences and how to provide opportunities to connect learning with practice as well as prepare students for day-to-day responsibilities.

Perceived Preparation: 2017 ILA Standards

Measures of central tendency were used to analyze survey data pertaining to how recent program completers perceived their preparation as effective relative to the goals of the program. Table 5 outlines an overall perception of preparation regarding the 2017 ILA standards (specific to advanced literacy programs). By looking at the average perceived preparation in the range of very prepared (4) to extremely prepared (5) and standard deviations below one, programs can determine if data clustered around these high means, suggesting the program prepared graduates to a high extent to meet the standards. By looking at the average perceived preparation in the range of not prepared at all (0) to not very prepared (1) and standard deviations below one, programs can determine if

data clustered around these low means, suggesting the program did not prepare graduates to a high extent to meet the standards. Identifying standards with a standard deviation above one, indicating a wider spread of data from the mean, may also be helpful identifying area within standards that can be used for program improvement. For example, standard 3.3 and standard 6.3 in Table 5 are the only two standards with an average perceived preparation in the range of somewhat prepared (3) to very prepared (4) and a standard deviation above one, and both standards address the same area of leadership.

Table 5

Pilot Example for Perceived Preparation Relative to Goals of Program (2017 ILA Standards)

	Mean	Standard Deviation		Mean	Standard Deviation
ILA Standard			ILA Standard		
Standard 1.1	4.25	.46	Standard 4.2	4.25	.71
Standard 1.2	4.25	.71	Standard 4.3	4.75	.46
Standard 1.3	4.38	.52	Standard 4.4	4.13	.64
Standard 1.4	4.00	.76	Standard 5.1	4.50	.76
Standard 2.1	4.63	.52	Standard 5.2	4.25	.71
Standard 2.2	4.50	.76	Standard 5.3	4.13	.83
Standard 2.3	4.50	.76	Standard 5.4	4.50	.53
Standard 2.4	4.00	.93	Standard 6.1	4.75	.71
Standard 3.1	4.13	.64	Standard 6.2	4.38	.74
Standard 3.2	4.38	.74	Standard 6.3	3.75	1.67
Standard 3.3	3.75	1.75	Standard 6.4	4.13	.64
Standard 3.4	4.25	.89	Standard 7.1	4.50	.76
Standard 4.1	4.13	.64	Standard 7.2	4.50	.76
			Standard 7.3 & 7.4	4.13	.83

CONCLUSION

It is necessary for providers of advanced-level programs to collect valid and reliable data pertaining to the satisfaction of both its graduates and the schools that employ them in an effort to demonstrate adherence to everchanging standards in the field (e.g., 2017 ILA standards) as well as maintain program accreditation. This study fills a gap in pragmatic methods of collecting evidence through the development of evaluative measures by which advanced-level programs can measure their program's impact through examining program completer and employer satisfaction.

This study provides a model for future research intended on measuring the satisfaction of program completers. By collecting self-report data from alumni working in the field through a survey, institutions can gauge in-service teacher's perceptions of satisfaction relevant to both their

current job responsibilities as well as the preparation program's goals. Given that goals of specific programs will vary across institutions, modifications to the survey used in this study would need to be made to reflect specific program standards. Additionally, self-report data regarding employment milestones collected from alumni working in the field can be used by institutions to demonstrate continued employer satisfaction through patterns of promotion and retention. Finally, employer evaluation data collected from the evaluations and/or observations of alumni working in the field can be used by institutions to demonstrate overall employer satisfaction through employer's performance ratings as well as remarks on performance.

Limitations and Recommendations

This study's insights into methods used to measure the satisfaction of program completers and their employers are rooted in the CAEP (2016b) standards for advanced programs which may restrict the generalizability of the results. The model this study outlines may be less effective in measuring a different set of program accreditation standards. Although a large sample size would be necessary for more meaningful and robust results regarding completer and employer satisfaction, smaller populations resulting from restrictions set in place to keep results relevant, along with outdated contact information often gathered by smaller institutions, may limit the ability to gather a larger sample size. A strategic plan set in place by institutions outlining methods of collecting and maintaining a database of current contact information for alumni could potentially increase the size of future samples. Additionally, solicitation of participation *prior* to graduation may increase the sample size and overall validity of the study by encouraging participation from both effective and developing educators. Finally, providing alumni with practical forms of compensation, including free professional development opportunities for areas of improvement identified by the study (e.g., leadership) may work to increase the sample size for smaller liberal arts and science institutions.

Finally, the variation of observation and/or evaluation forms provided by participants made document analysis challenging. Although it would be ideal to limit the type of evaluation rubrics accepted or give preference to participants with select New York State approved teacher rubrics (i.e., Danielson, Marzano, or NYSUT), this would considerably limit the sample size given the percentage of alumni working in schools utilizing other forms of teacher evaluation. Additionally, although it would be ideal to limit participants to those who have and are willing to share their APPR scores, this would further limit the sample size.

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APPENDIX

PROGRAM COMPLETERS' PERCEPTION OF THEIR PROGRAM PREPARATION

Part A. Quantitative Questions

Please respond to the following survey questions of your perception of the teacher program preparation by using a 5-point Likert scale:

Extremely prepared [Code = 5]

Very prepared [Code = 4]

Somewhat prepared [*Code = 3*]

Not very prepared [*Code = 2*]

Not prepared at all [*Code = 1*]

Based on the preparation you received through your program, how prepared did you feel in the following areas?

____ Q1. Demonstrating knowledge of the major theoretical, conceptual, historical, and evidence-based components of reading (e.g., concepts of print, phonological awareness, phonics, word recognition, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension) development throughout the grades.

____ Q2. Demonstrating knowledge of the major theoretical, conceptual, historical, and evidence-based components of writing (e.g., handwriting, spelling, sentence construction, typing, word processing, conventions) development and the writing process throughout the grades.

____ Q3. Demonstrating knowledge of theoretical, historical, and evidence-based components of communication (e.g., structure of language, conventions of standard English, vocabulary acquisition and use, speaking, listening, and viewing) throughout the grades.

____ Q4. Demonstrating knowledge of the historical and evidence-based foundations related to the role of the reading/literacy specialist.

____ Q5. Using foundational knowledge to design, select, critique, adapt and evaluate evidence-based literacy curricula that meets the needs of all learners.

____ Q6. Planning, adapting, teaching, and evaluating a range of evidence-based instructional approaches and practices to meet the literacy needs of whole class and groups of students in learning to read, write and communicate and in the service of content learning.

____ Q7. Planning, adapting, teaching, and evaluating a range of instructional approaches and practices for individual students, especially those who experience difficulty with literacy.

____ Q8. Collaborating with and coaching school-based educators in developing, implementing, and evaluating literacy instructional practices and curriculum.

____ Q9. Understanding the purposes, attributes, formats, strengths/limitations, and influences of various types of tools in a comprehensive literacy and language assessment system (including validity, reliability, inherent language, dialect and/or cultural bias) and applying that knowledge to using assessment tools.

____ Q10. Collaborating with colleagues to administer, interpret, and use data for decision making about student assessment, instruction, intervention, and evaluation for individual students.

____ Q11. Participating in and lead professional learning experiences to assist teachers in selecting, administering, analyzing, interpreting, and using results data for instructional decision making for classrooms and schools.

____ Q12. Explaining assessment results and advocating for appropriate literacy and language practices to a variety of stakeholders, including students, administrators, teachers, other educators, parents/guardians, and students using both written and oral communication

____ Q13. Demonstrating knowledge of foundational theories about diverse learners, equity, and culturally responsive instruction

____ Q14. Demonstrating understanding of yourself and others as cultural beings through your pedagogy and interactions with individuals within and outside of the school community

____ Q15. Creating and advocating for inclusive and affirming classroom and school environments

____ Q16. Advocating for equity at school, district, and community levels

____ Q17. In consultation with families and colleagues, meeting the developmental needs of learners, taking into consideration their physical, social, emotional, cultural, and intellectual factors

____ Q18. Collaborating with school personnel to implement a variety of digital and print materials to engage and motivate all learners

____ Q19. Integrating digital technologies in appropriate, safe, and effective ways and assisting colleagues in these efforts

____ Q20. Participating in and leading schoolwide efforts to foster a positive climate with families and colleagues that support a literacy-rich learning environment

____ Q21. Becoming a reflective, self-aware, lifelong learner

____ Q22. Engaging in collaborative decision making with colleagues to design, align, and assess instructional practices and interventions within and across classrooms

____ Q23. Developing, refining, and demonstrating leadership skills through effective interpersonal and written communication

____ Q24. Consulting with and advocating on behalf of teachers, students, families, and communities for effective literacy practices and policies

____ Q25. Working with individual and small groups of students at various grade levels to assess students' literacy strengths and needs, develop literacy intervention plans, implement instructional plans, and assess impact on student learning

____ Q26. Developing, reflecting on, and studying your own teaching practices through ongoing and cyclical collaborative and novice coaching experiences with peers and experienced colleagues

____ Q27. Completing your authentic, school-based practicum experiences

____ Q28. Based on the preparation you received through your program, how prepared were you for your current job responsibilities?

Part B. Open-ended Questions.

OQ1. What responsibilities in your current job, if any, were you prepared for the *most*?

OQ2. What responsibilities in your current job, if any, were you prepared for the *least*?

OQ3. In what ways, if any, did your practicum supervision, including observation and ongoing feedback by supervisors, prepare you for your current position?

OQ4. What specific fieldwork experiences did you participate in while a student (check all that apply)?

Writing Studio	[Code = 1]
Children's Book Club	[Code = 2]
Family Literacy Events	[Code = 3]
Primary Remedial Program	[Code = 4]
Intermediate Remedial Program	[Code = 5]
Books, Blocks, and Balls	[Code = 6]
Parent's Workshop	[Code = 7]
Clinical Practicum P-6	[Code = 8]
Clinical Practicum 5-12	[Code = 9]
Practicum (school based) B-6	[Code = 10]
Practicum (school based) 5-12	[Code = 11]

OQ5. In what ways did these fieldwork experiences prepare you for your current job?

OQ6. If not, what would have been more helpful?

OQ7. Do you know any other individuals graduated from the program within the past three years that would be willing to complete this survey?

OQ8. Would you be willing to discuss and elaborate on some of your survey responses if determined necessary by the researcher?

End of Survey

Note: The actual survey includes questions on program completers' demographic information, and quantitative and qualitative questions. Because of word limitation and format of journal publication, the survey has been modified to include only the quantitative and the qualitative questions.