

Data-Based Decisions: English Teaching

2018-19 2016-17 2015-16 2014-15 2013-14 2012-13 2011-12 2010-11

2018-19

Data-based decisions correlated to direct measures

1. From our readings of student materials, we will encourage students to use more consistently the language and vocabulary of the profession.
2. We will work with students to ensure that their conclusions and decision-making should be based on good evidence.
3. We will help students locate, understand, and incorporate professionally based “best practices” in English education.
4. We will consider collecting assessment updates from individual faculty on how their courses are revised according to feedback and assessment.

2016-17

Data-based decisions correlated to direct measures

As a whole, these projects demonstrate persuasively the ability of English Education students to function at or above the level expected from educational professionals. The faculty has strategically incorporated more lesson planning activities in a scaffolded approach in the professional suite of courses. The students are also showing increased proficiency in using professional language.

The responses from the student interviews over the past two years revealed several improvements we can make to the English Teaching Program. In response to this student feedback, we have already begun the following:

Data-based decisions that rely on indirect measures

- New programs and courses:
 - English Teaching Composite Major, approved by the Utah Board of Regents Fall 2016 and fully enacted Fall 2017 on the USU Logan campus with 15 students.
 - The English Teaching Composite initially was not offered via Distance Education, but the faculty worked on staffing, and the courses are all covered, enabling the composite to be delivered to distance students.
 - ENGL 3500, “Literacy, Community, and Service Learning” offered Fall 2017 (and hereafter on biennial basis) provides the first clinical experience for students and gets them in schools earlier. (13 enrolled F17.)
 - ENGL 3470, “Approaches to Research in English Studies,” provides a Quantitative Intensive (QI) class to English majors with particular attention to preservice teachers who need to be able to undertake action research and to understand research that may affect them. Included in the syllabus is an assignment on beginning the Teacher Work Sample, which replaces the student portfolio.
 - ENGL 4530, “English Clinical Experience” (1 credit, P/F), coupled with English 4520 (formerly 4220), Teaching Literacy in Diverse Classrooms. With this course, English takes control over the preparation of its English Teaching majors and removes redundancies with SCED3600/3300.
- Students asked for more teaching experience early and often. The Department has taken over the two clinical experiences entirely as of Fall 2017. (Some difficulties with the Office of Field Experiences still exist as of November 2017 in terms of placement, communication, and scheduling, but the faculty met with faculty and staff who oversee the clinical experiences, and solutions have been suggested. We will assess at the conclusion of spring 2018 to see how well that worked.)
- At the conclusion of the new clinical experience course, English 3500 (offered Fall 2017), the curriculum committee will re-assess its course title and course credits.
- A Clinical Experiences Handbook (print and web-based) has been drafted by Sonia Manuel-Dupont and UTF/English Teaching student Carolyn Lyle.
- UTF funding has increased over the last year, and the majority of the UTFs are English Teaching emphasis students. This provides another opportunity for early teaching experiences.
- English Education faculty members nominate students appropriately to the Writing Center and the Writing Fellows Program for teaching experiences.
- A Praxis Quizlet has been developed by UTF/English Teaching student Carolyn Lyle (with the supervision of Dr. Manuel-Dupont) to help preservice teachers prepare for the Praxis exam.
- Students requested more instruction in teaching grammar; as a result, a textbook on grammar has been added to English 4500, Teaching Writing.
- Students requested more instruction on classroom management. Faculty members have made an effort to be more transparent about classroom management; additionally, the faculty is considering a textbook and speaker on classroom management: Mike

Roberts, *Hacking Classroom Management*. Roberts is the 2014 Utah Teacher of the Year and a popular speaker at UCTE.

- A Teacher Advisory Group, established June 2016, laid the groundwork for more interchange between secondary teachers and USU, including guest speakers from the English faculty to visit the schools, and more information on graduate programs for them. The graduate program has seen an increase in secondary teachers applying for the English master's program.
- We have requested and received funding for Undergraduate Teaching Fellows (UTFs) in two classes taught by English Education faculty (ENGL 4530, Clinical Experience; ENGL 3470, Research Methods) and intend to use this for English Teaching majors to get additional experience in a teaching/learning setting.
- Regularizing curricular offerings to ensure that courses offered at the USU-Logan and USU-Uintah Basin campuses are not in conflict.
- In 2016, students requested a student chapter of NCTE; however, in a meeting conducted by Jessica Rivera-Mueller and Ben Gunsberg to assess the feasibility, no students stepped up to take on leadership roles. The faculty will continue to offer professional development opportunities, but most likely they needed to be tied to courses. For example, award-winning teacher and USU Distinguished Alumna Mary Heers did a presentation on "Learning for All" on October 9, 2017 in English 4520/4530.

2015-16

Data-based decisions correlated to direct measures

In sum, this group of English Teaching graduates meets or exceeds expectations in the three learning objectives. In addition to these objectives, reviewers of student professional work noted that assessment in the lesson plans was a weakness. Students need more practice with data-driven decision making. As they design unit lesson plans, they should be creating opportunities for the teacher to collect data on the percentage of students meeting the learning objectives, exceeding the objectives, and not reaching the objectives. Based on that analysis, subgroups of students should be given differentiated learning activities. Both teaching and outcomes should be differentiated so that all groups receive stimulating and suitable instruction that moves their learning to the next level. We will work in our classes to strengthen this skill. We believe that the integration of clinical experiences within our curriculum will be helpful.

We are pleased that students showed progress in "reaching compelling conclusions" in their professional work over previous years. In previous assessment reports, we noted this goal: "From our readings, we will encourage students to reflect critically on their lesson planning"; "we will emphasize the importance of using professional language"; and we want students to see

themselves as “reflective decision makers.” Based on these data, we will continue to reinforce these objectives as we believe we have made changes to good effect.

Data-based decisions correlated to indirect measures

The responses from the student interviews revealed several improvements we can make to the English Teaching Program. In response to this student feedback, we will do [or have already begun doing] the following:

- New programs and courses
 - English Teaching Composite Major, approved by the Utah Board of Regents Fall 2016.
 - ENGL 4540, “Teaching Creative Writing,” developed by Ben Gunsberg, that crosses both English Education and Creative Writing (spring 2017). This builds on two important groups of students: those enrolled in English Teaching and those in Creative Writing.
 - ENGL 3500, “Literacy, Community, and Service Learning” provides the first clinical experience for students and gets them in schools earlier.
 - ENGL 3470, “Approaches to Research in English Studies,” provides a Quantitative Intensive (QI) class to English majors with particular attention to preservice teachers who need to be able to undertake action research and to understand research that may affect them. Included in the syllabus is an assignment on beginning the Teacher Work Sample, which replaces the student portfolio as of 2016-2017.
 - ENGL 4530, “English Clinical Experience” (1 credit, P/F), to be coupled with English 4520 (formerly 4220), Teaching Literacy in Diverse Classrooms. With this course, English takes control over the preparation of its English Teaching majors and removes redundancies with SCED3600/3300.
- The Qualtrics Survey of seniors revealed that we do well on all objectives except for teaching about classroom management. Students also requested more instruction in teaching grammar.
- A Teacher Advisory Group was established June 2016, which has already recommended specific clinical experiences for English Teaching majors, a list of guest speakers from the English faculty to visit the schools, and more information on graduate programs for them. We have followed up with each of these recommendations.
- We have requested and received funding for Undergraduate Teaching Fellows (UTFs) in two classes taught by English Education faculty (ENGL 4530, Clinical Experience; ENGL 3470, Research Methods) and intend to use this for English Teaching majors to get additional experience in a teaching/learning setting.
- New Faculty Hires

- Jessica Rivera-Mueller at the USU-Logan campus replacing Patricia Gantt, who retires. Dr. Rivera-Mueller is undertaking increased professionalization of English Teaching majors. She secured funding for English Teaching majors (n=14) to attend UCTE, and will work on a student chapter of NCTE.
- Amy Piotrowski at the USU-Uintah Basin campus, replacing Vini Exton, who retired. The position had gone unfilled for a year, and it was important to get a faculty member on the ground at the Uintah Basin campus.

2014-15

Data-based decisions correlated to direct measures

Our annual assessment report (September 2015) noted that our students score well on several department learning objectives. While in an acceptable range, we want them to do better in these areas: to reflect critically on their lesson planning; to emphasize the importance of using language and vocabulary of the profession; to encourage students to view “teachers as reflective decision makers.”

Data-based decisions correlated to indirect measures

In addition to the standard department assessment instrument in which we evaluate senior student portfolios, we used two other input measures: 1) a Student Advisory group; 2) a Qualtrics survey to seniors on how well graduates feel they met the objectives of the English Teaching Program.

Outcomes from our data sources, particularly the Student Advisory Group, include the following:

- New programs and courses
 - English Teaching Composite Major, approved by the Utah Board of Regents Fall 2016.
 - ENGL 4540, “Teaching Creative Writing,” developed by Ben Gunsberg, that crosses both English Education and Teaching Writing (spring 2017). This builds on two important groups of students: those enrolled in English Teaching and those in Creative Writing.
 - ENGL 3500, “Literacy, Community, and Service Learning” provides the first clinical experience for students and gets them in schools earlier.
 - ENGL 3470, “Approaches to Research in English Studies,” provides a QI class to English majors with particular attention to preservice teachers who need to be able to undertake action research and to understand research that may affect them.

- ENGL 4530, “English Clinical Experience” (1 credit, P/F), to be coupled with English 4520 (formerly 4220), Teaching Literacy in Diverse Classrooms. With this course, English takes control over the preparation of its English Teaching majors and removes redundancies with SCED3600/3300.
- The Qualtrics Survey revealed that we do well on all objectives except for teaching about classroom management. Students also requested more instruction in teaching grammar.

2013-14

Data-based decisions correlated to direct measures

Overwhelmingly, student papers were in the acceptable or exceptional category. On the basis of this data, we are not making any changes this year.

2012-13

Data-based decisions correlated to direct measures

Student papers were in the acceptable or exceptional category. In response to Learning Objective 1, our students do a good job of developing and articulating conclusions. At times the depth of their analysis is not as strong as we might wish and their work can contain more errors in mechanics and editing than we prefer for future English teachers. Therefore, in all our classes and assignments we will emphasize crafting strong analysis and proofing for errors in mechanics.

2011-12

Data-based decisions correlated to direct measures

All the students' papers were in the acceptable range. These samples indicate that our students are able to communicate their ideas at an acceptable level; nevertheless, we seek a more sophisticated mastery of writing skills. Specific concerns include reflective writing, mechanics, editing, and in-depth analysis. We will focus more on the kinds of writing used in the teaching profession (job applications, newsletter articles, letters to parents, textbook rationales, teaching philosophies, etc.).

2010-11

Data-based decisions correlated to direct measures

In Learning Objectives 1 and 3, students scored in the acceptable category. One

student scored in the marginal category in Learning Objective 2. In response to the marginal score in Learning Objective 2, we found that the completed products are strong, but find little evidence of the process students followed to produce them. Therefore, next semester student products will be accompanied by student commentary about the process: how did they make decisions about what to teach and how to teach it? what options did they consider? what core beliefs about students and teaching support their decisions? how does this project connect to their career goals?