**Wells College Education Program**

**Annual Assessment Report**

**2019**

1. **Program Assessment Meetings**

Education Program faculty (Marcie Belfi, Sara Levy, Susan Wansor) met weekly throughout the 2018-2019 academic year to discuss program issues, concerns, and questions. Topics relating to assessment were included in most program meetings. During the fall semester these meetings general occurred on Wednesdays from 2:00-3:00 pm. During spring, these meetings generally occurred on Thursdays from 12:30-1:30 pm. Topics discussed throughout the year included: the upcoming accreditation site visit, the establishment of an Advisory Council for the WCEP, advising, student teaching, and program requirements. The Education Program faculty met on May 22, 2019 from 9:30 am - 12:00 pm to discuss the assessment findings within this report and to articulate assessment goals for the 2019-2020 academic year.

1. **Closing the Loop: 2018 Education Program Goals**
2. *Increase opportunities for students to engage in discipline-specific instructional methodologies.* (Continued from 2017-2018)

As noted in the 2017-2018 Assessment Report, the decision was made to require that all students seeking adolescence certification take *EDUC 304: Inclusive Instruction and Assessment*. This course focuses on the general principles and practices of lesson and curriculum design and was required for all students seeking childhood certification. Prior to this decision, students seeking adolescence certification were only required to take *EDUC 406: Instructional Strategies for Secondary Education*, which included this same focus on lesson and curriculum design in addition to focus on specific content methodologies. By requiring EDUC 304, the attention to general lesson and curriculum planning was removed from EDUC 406, allowing more time to be devoted to content-specific methodologies and readings.

Professor Levy taught EDUC 406 in Fall 2018 with seven students majoring and/or seeking certification in four subject areas: History, English, Spanish, and Chemistry. In order to meet the needs of all students, she designed the course around the methodology of inquiry-based learning and used readings and materials that provided students with an understanding of how inquiry looks in their specific content areas (ex: Cammarata, L, 2016; Wilhelm & Wilhelm, 2010) in addition to materials on broader inquiry-based frameworks such as Authentic Intellectual Work (Newman, King, & Carmichael, 2007). She also focused on constructing and leading discussion in classrooms using chapters from the text *Academic Conversations: Classroom Talk that Fosters Critical Thinking and Content Understandings* by Zwiers and Crawford. She kept several of the smaller assignments from previous iterations of the course, as they focused on content-specific pedagogies, while significantly changing the final project for the course. Previously, the final assignment for the course asked students to develop a curriculum unit for their content area. Given that students complete this task in EDUC 304, and given the challenges students have faced when writing their edTPA commentaries (NYS-mandated performance assessment tied to teacher certification), Professor Levy sought to create a final that asked students to apply all that they had learned over the course of the semester in the writing of two lessons they would teach in their EDUC 345 practicum, and to reflect on their decision making in writing. To prepare students for this project, she assigned readings on reflective practice (Zeichner & Liston, 2013) to acquaint students with this important topic and central tenet of the WCEP. The majority of students met the expectations of this assignment, with one student scoring below a C and five of the seven students earning a B- or higher. Professor Levy will continue to modify this course each time it is offered based on the content areas of the enrolled students.

1. *Revise the portfolio process to be more focused on a holistic reflection of students’ learning from the Wells College Education Program.*

As demonstrated in the 2017-2018 Assessment Report, students struggle to fully articulate their decision-making abilities and focus on one or two experiences related to their student teaching placements during their portfolio defenses. As the portfolio process (both the development of the portfolio and the portfolio defense) is meant to be a capstone project that demonstrates the whole of students’ learning in the WCEP, we would like to revise the individual parts of this project in order to better guide students to think holistically about what they know and how they use that knowledge when making pedagogical and curricular decisions.

We would like to continue this goal in the 2019-2020 academic year. We made slight changes to the portfolio rubric, removing a requirement that students be able to find and use evidence from their physical portfolio for each question asked during the defense. This did allow the defenses to focus more on what students were saying, as the EDUC 408 instructor evaluates their portfolios more thoroughly after the oral defense. However, it was clear from both the experience of the portfolio defenses and the scores students earned on the portfolio rubric (see Section III of this report) that the current process is neither meeting our needs nor helping us to most accurately assess our students in their capstone experience. Therefore, we are planning to completely revamp the portfolio assignment, oral defense questions, and rubric prior to student teachers beginning their placements in January 2020.

1. *Explore changes to our program assessment plan in order to better serve the assessment of both student learning and our program in general.*

This goal related to developing an understanding of the requirements of CAEP, the educator preparation accrediting body with which we were registered at the end of the 2017-2018 academic year. Professor Levy attended CAEPCon early in the Fall 2018 semester and was concerned that the demands of the CAEP accreditation were not compatible with our program, particularly since New York State does not have an agreement to provide data required by CAEP. Therefore, Professor Levy attended a one-day workshop held by AAQEP, a newer accreditor that allows for more flexibility in the accreditation process and with which many New York State institutions have registered. The decision was made, after consulting Dean Speaker and President Gibralter, to move to AAQEP for our next cycle of accreditation. Professor Levy will lead the writing of the self-study for this accreditation during Summer 2019 with a site visit planned for April 21-22, 2020.

1. *Introduce opportunities for students to practice making assessments and analyzing assessment data.*

As seen in the data from the 2017-2018 Assessment Report, student teachers are not proficient in several areas related to assessment. We chose to focus this year on providing students more opportunities in their methods courses and related practicum courses to develop and implement assessments, and to analyze assessment data. Relatedly, we intended to develop opportunities for students to practice giving useful feedback to students on assessments. All three WCEP faculty members sought to meet this goal in their courses, detailed below.

EDUC 302 (Professor Wansor)

In EDUC 302 students were required to implement two different assessments.

o   The students were required to assess a child in grades 3-6 using the QRI-6 (*Qualitative Reading Inventory, 6thEdition*).  After assessing a child with this instrument, they were required to analyze the child’s fluency and comprehension.  Once their analysis was complete, they needed to recommend specific strategies and skills the teacher would focus on during instruction and explain how and why these will help the student improve.

* The students were also required to assess a child’s writing.  They were required to create a writing prompt that the child would write to, have the child respond to the prompt and analyze the child’s writing.  Utilizing the information from the analysis, the students were required to develop three related lessons that focused on a specific writing trait.   They had to teach and video the three lessons.  After the three lessons, they were required to create a second prompt that the child could respond to so they could identify any areas of growth in the child’s writing.  The final requirement was for the students to reflect on their teaching.  They had to identify changes they would make to better support or extend the child’s performance.  They were required to include reasoning for why they felt these changes would benefit the child.

EDUC 402 (Professor Belfi)

Students create an assessment or use one that is already in place, and select the three lowest scores from the class. The students then design two small-group lessons for those three students based on the recorded scores, after which they will re-test them on the content to see if there is improvement.

EDUC 406 (Professor Levy)

This continues to be an area of focus for our adolescent certification program. As detailed above, the majority of the changes made to EDUC 406 during the Fall 2018 semester related to providing students more experiences learning about and using discipline-specific teaching strategies. Professor Levy will teach this course again in Fall 2020 and will develop authentic ways of teaching about and allowing opportunities for students to practice designing, implementing, and analyzing assessments.

1. *Review and revise offerings to better support students’ abilities to work with students learning English as a new language.*

As demonstrated in the data from the 2017-2018 Assessment Report, our students would benefit from further instruction in working with ELL students. Our goal for the 2018-2019 academic year was to review the most recent scholarship on teaching students learning English as a new language in order to best support our pre-service teachers in this area. Again, all three WCEP faculty members attended to this goal in their courses, as detailed below.

EDUC 215 (Professor Levy)

Readings from the text *Educating Emerging Bilinguals: Policies, Programs, and Practices for English Learners* by Ofelia Garcia and Jo Anne Kleifgen (2018) were included in the course, to supplement a text that was no longer as relevant (Kim & Hinchey, 2013). Students found some of the information helpful, while some of the readings seemed too dense or obscure for the undergraduate level. Professor Levy will continue to seek new resources to use in this class related to ELL students.

EDUC 216 (Professor Belfi)

A new textbook will replace *Working with English Language Learners—Answers to Teachers Top Ten Questions* (2007) by Stephen Cary​. The new textbook to be used this fall will be *Making Content Comprehensible for English Learners: The SIOP® Model Fifth Edition (2017)* by Echevarría, Vogt, Short.

EDUC 331 & 332 (Professor Wansor)

The text, *Unlocking English Learners’ Potential: Strategies for Making Content Accessible* by Diane Staehr Fenner and Sydney Snyder was added to EDUC 331 and EDUC 332.  This text explains how to assist English learners at the middle and high school levels.  It provides strategies for scaffolding instruction, building academic language and background knowledge, formative assessment, building oral language development, etc.  Utilizing this text allowed for class discussions on the many aspects of instruction that need to be considered when working with English learners.

1. **Examination of Data Collected**

The Wells College Education Program has four goals, based on the claims used to structure our 2013 CAEP self-study. These goals are:

Goal 1: Graduates of our program will be proficient in subject matter knowledge and apply this knowledge in their teaching.

Goal 2: Graduates of our program will understand and apply the necessary pedagogy and methodology to meet the diverse needs of students.

Goal 3: Graduates of our program will be responsive, reflective professionals who have the knowledge and skills to serve their students.

Goal 4: Graduates of our program will utilize relevant teaching technologies, their knowledge of students’ individual and multicultural differences, and opportunities for continued growth in order to serve their students.

As student teaching is the culminating experience in our program and encompasses all of the goals of our program, it makes sense to organize this section around the Student Teaching Rubric, which breaks these four goals down into the relevant objectives and outcomes for our program. Seven pre-service teachers completed the student teaching experience in Spring 2019. Five of these pre-service teachers graduated from Wells with the Inclusive Childhood Education major and two graduated having completed the Adolescence Education Certification Program; one with a major in English: Creative Writing and one with a major in Spanish. Since each student completed two student teaching experiences, and each cooperating teacher in each experience assessed their Wells student teacher using our rubric, we have fourteen scores per rubric item as completed by external evaluators. As students are also evaluated by Wells College faculty members who supervise their students teaching experiences, we also have fourteen scores per rubric item as completed by internal evaluators. This allows for twenty-eight scores per rubric item in our final analysis. While these numbers still fall short of providing statistically significant results, they are robust enough to provide a strong sense of our program’s strengths and weaknesses.

We analyzed the data using an Excel spreadsheet and simply found the mean scores for each item. As the rubric is organized on a four point scale, with 4 being exemplary and 3 being proficient, we focused our attention on those scores that fell below a 3. As indicated in the data that follow, the majority (18/21) of low scores fell under the categories *Planning for Diverse Learners, Assessment for Diverse Learners,* and *Instruction for Diverse Learners*. All of these categories would fall under Goal 2: Graduates of our program will understand and apply the necessary pedagogy and methodology to meet the diverse needs of students. The categories can also be read as objectives, for example “Graduates of our program will be able to use multiple forms of assessment to gauge student understanding and will use those assessments to guide instruction.” Each specific rubric item can then be read as an outcome.

Planning for Diverse Learners

* *Plan for Instruction to Meet Learning Goals*
  + The lessons and units allows for different pathways according to student need. **N=28. Mean Rubric Score: 2.79**
  + Varied opportunities for students to demonstrate learning of instructional goals are planned. **N=28. Mean Rubric Score: 2.75**
* *Knowledge of Students*
  + A solid understanding of students varied approaches to learning is regularly reflected in the planning process. When planning, attention is paid to addressing the learning styles, modalities and different “intelligences” within the class. **N=28.** **Mean Rubric Score: 2.89**
  + Knowledge of varied group interests, backgrounds and cultures is regularly reflected in the planning process. **N=28. Mean Rubric Score: 2.93**

Content Knowledge

* *Knowledge of Content*
  + Seizes obvious opportunities for integrating content as a way of deepening understanding. **N=28.** **Mean Rubric Score: 2.93**

Assessment for Diverse Learners

* *Use Diagnostic, Formative, and Summative Assessments*
  + Both informal and formal diagnostic tasks are regularly used to assess needs of students prior to instruction. **N=26. Mean Rubric Score: 2.85**
  + Regularly uses varied formative tasks (informal and formal) to assess students’ understanding during instruction. **N=28.** **Mean Rubric Score: 2.93**
  + Regularly uses different types of summative tasks (more than traditional tests) to assess student learning after instruction. **N=24.** **Mean Rubric Score: 2.96**
* *Use of Assessment Criteria:*
  + Established standards and criteria are regularly used as tools for student self-assessment and reflection. **N=24.** **Mean Rubric Score: 2.63**
* *Feedback:*
  + Students are regularly made aware of how they are meeting the established standards and criteria. Student questions regarding progress are few. **N=25.** **Mean Rubric Score: 2.84**
  + Feedback is regularly specific and constructive. Students know how they can improve. **N=27. Mean Rubric Score: 2.93**
  + Feedback is generally provided in a timely manner. **N=25. Mean Rubric Score: 2.96**
  + Student teacher regularly provides opportunities for students to reflect on and make use of feedback. **N=24. Mean Rubric Score: 2.46**
* *Use of Assessment Data:*
  + Information from assessments is regularly analyzed, interpreted and used to inform instructional practice. The student teacher is knowledgeable in the process of using data to inform instruction. **N=24.** **Mean rubric score: 2.92**

Instruction for Diverse Learners

* *Active Learning Strategies*
  + Regularly uses teaching and learning strategies that encourage higher level thinking skills. **N=28. Mean Rubric Score: 2.82**
* *Use of Questions*
  + Regularly provides probing, “higher level thinking” questions that seek clarification or elaboration. **N=28.** **Mean Rubric Score: 2.68**
  + Questioning regularly attempts to engage all learners in discussion. **N=27. Mean Rubric Score: 2.85**
* *Communication*
  + Directions are generally clear to students and contain an appropriate amount of detail. **N=28.** **Mean Rubric Score: 2.96.**
* *Instructional Strategies that Support Literacy*
  + Regularly asks students to cite specific evidence when supporting their own points when reading and writing. **N=23.** **Mean Rubric Score: 2.96**

Learning Environment

* *Organization and Management*
  + Transitions are regularly directed efficiently with little loss of instructional time. **N=28.** **Mean Rubric Score: 2.68**

Reflection and Continuous Growth

* *Reflection on Teaching*
  + Makes a few specific suggestions of what may be tried another time. **N=28. Mean Rubric Score: 2.86**

Clearly, the data indicate that our students need more instruction and practice in developing and implementing assessments and in fully differentiating both process and product. A brief qualitative analysis of the open-ended responses included in the rubric shows that some barriers to meeting these expectations are cooperating teachers’ adoption of district-wide and/or Common Core assessments at the elementary levels and the belief that differentiation need not happen in tracked classes at the secondary level. Further, it appears that cooperating teachers are more satisfied with our pre-service teachers’ ability to assess than are the WCEP faculty supervisors. One area in which both cooperating teachers and faculty supervisors agree is in the need for pre-service teachers to provide better and more timely feedback to students. Additionally, the data indicate that there are some specific areas of instruction in which pre-service teachers would benefit from further practice, particularly in the areas of scaffolding their instruction to help their own students reach higher order levels of thinking and being clear in their directions and communication with students. We have decided to revisit the Student Teaching Rubric itself, as it may no longer best meet the needs of our program.

In addition to the Student Teaching Rubric, we also use the Portfolio Rubric to assess students upon the completion of their student teaching experience. While the Student Teaching Rubric is tied to EDUC 408, the Portfolio Rubric is tied to EDUC 410. While other majors at Wells often include a senior thesis, the education program employs a portfolio approach that has two purposes. First, it is meant to provide students with a way to summarize their learning during their time in our program. Second, it is meant to be the start of a professional teaching portfolio that students could take with them on job interviews. The portfolio contains a teaching philosophy, resume, lesson and unit plans, examples of student work, assessments, examples of collaboration, etc. The majority of the artifacts included in the portfolio come from the two student teaching placements, though students may include work from Wells courses or artifacts from other teaching experiences such (ex: internship). The portfolio is presented in two ways; the physical collection of artifacts is turned in to the instructor of EDUC 410 and the student sits for a 45-minute defense with all members of the Wells College Education Program faculty. Several years ago, we developed a rubric to assess both the physical portfolio as well as the oral defense. As with the Student Teaching Rubric, the Portfolio Rubric is scored on a 4 point scale, with three being proficient. Unlike the Student Teaching Rubric, this rubric is only completed once by the instructor of EDUC 410, and therefore only seven scores per rubric item were available from 2018-2019.

We analyzed the Portfolio Rubric data from 2018-2019 in the same way as the Student Teaching Rubric, and found that students were not cumulatively proficient in any area; the mean scores of all criteria were below 3.0. However, all scores were above 2.5, which indicates that most students were proficient or nearly proficient in each area. The lowest scores, 2.5, came in the area of *Learning Environment*, which perhaps demonstrates the challenge of documenting a strong and inclusive classroom community grounded in authentic relationships. This was an area in which the pre-service teachers uniformly performed well on the student teaching rubric. The WCEP faculty slightly revised the portfolio rubric prior to the 2019 spring semester and it is clear that further revisions need to take place, in addition to changes made to EDUC 408.

**V.-VI. Program Changes with Action Plan for the Upcoming Year**

1. *Revise the portfolio process to be more focused on a holistic reflection of students’ learning from the Wells College Education Program.* (Continued from 2017-2018)

As demonstrated in section III, students struggle to fully articulate their decision-making abilities and to document their achievements during student teaching. As the portfolio process (both the development of the portfolio and the portfolio defense) is meant to be a capstone project that demonstrates the whole of students’ learning in the WCEP, we would like to revise the individual parts of this project in order to better guide students to think holistically about what they know and how they use that knowledge when making pedagogical and curricular decisions.

Action Steps:

* Revise the guidelines for portfolio contents
* Revise the questions used in portfolio defenses
* Revise the portfolio rubric

1. *Review and revise the way student teaching is assessed.*

As demonstrated in section III, there are a variety of concerns related to student teaching and our current method of assessing student teachers during their placements in schools may no longer meet our needs. We will meet to review and revise the assessment of student teachers.

Action Steps:

* Review alternatives to the WCEP Student Teaching Rubric, including the CPAST
* Include viewpoints of other stakeholders, as represented by the WCEP Advisory Council, which will meet for the second time in June 2019
* Implement a new protocol in the Spring 2020 semester

1. *Introduce opportunities for students to practice making assessments and analyzing assessment data.* (Continued from 2017-2018)

As seen in the data from the Student Teaching Rubric in part III, student teachers are not proficient in several areas related to assessment. While Professors Belfi and Wansor were able to begin this work during the 2018-2019 academic year, Professor Levy will work to implement this goal for the next session of EDUC 406 in Fall 2020. We will also work to better incorporate the issue of assessment into the EDUC 408 class sessions.

Action Steps:

* In methods courses with connected practicum experiences (EDUC 302, 402, and 406):
  + Develop assignments and/or coursework that allow students to develop and implement assessments.
  + Develop assignments and/or coursework that teach students to give useful, actionable, specific feedback.
* During student teaching, focus EDUC 408 class sessions on assessment and feedback