

**Wells College Education Program  
Annual Assessment Report  
2018**

**I. Program Assessment Meetings**

Education Program faculty (Marcie Belfi, Susan Wansor and Sara Levy) met weekly throughout the 2017-2018 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 generally occurred on Tuesdays from 9:30-10:30. During spring, these meetings generally occurred on Thursdays from 9:30 – 10:30. Topics discussed throughout the year included: revision of the methods courses connected to the Inclusive Childhood Education major, discussion of the current field practicum rotation, and changes to EDUC 408 and 410 in order to better prepare students for the edTPA. The Education Program faculty met on May 24, 2018 from 10:00 – 12:00 to discuss the assessment findings within this report and to articulate assessment goals for the 2018-2019 academic year.

**II. Closing the Loop: 2017 Education Program Goals**

1. *Increase opportunities for students to engage in discipline-specific instructional methodologies.* (Continued from 2016-17)

We are continuing to re-develop the structure, materials, learning tasks and assessments of EDUC 406: Instructional Strategies for Secondary Education to focus more intentionally and thoroughly on varied content-specific methodologies. At the time the 2017 Assessment Report was submitted, this course was slated to run in Fall 2017 with two students. However, due to one student deciding not to pursue student teaching, the course did not run and the remaining student completed the course as an independent study. The course is now scheduled to run in Fall 2018 with six student pursuing certification in four content areas (2 Spanish, 2 English, 1 Chemistry, 1 Social Studies). Professor Levy will be redesigning the syllabus and assessments to focus more in-depth on discipline-specific methodologies and connections between the course and the revised secondary methods practicum.

Another way in which we sought to meet this goal was to revise the adolescent certification practicum experience. Beginning in Spring 2018, we removed the required twenty hours of field work from EDUC 332 and instead required students to register for a one-credit practicum course that requires students spend forty hours in a local, discipline-specific classroom. A similar practicum is a co-requisite for EDUC 406 beginning in Fall 2018. This more substantial field placement requirement allows students to be more immersed in their chosen content area and course instructors can facilitate reflection on and critical thinking about the similarities and differences between what students are reading and learning in class, and what they are seeing in the field. Both EDUC 332 and EDUC 406 require students to plan and teach two lessons in these placements, which also contributes to the students' development.

- Revise EDUC 304: Inclusive Instruction and Assessment to address the learning needs of candidates seeking certification at the Childhood (gr. 1-6) and Adolescence (gr. 7-12) levels.

EDUC 304 was revised to meet the needs of all certification students in regards to instruction and assignment. The texts used encompass instruction and assessment in grades K-12. These texts are as follows: *Integrating Differentiated Instruction and Understanding by Design* by Tomlinson and McTighe, *Assessment and Student Success in a Differentiated Classroom* by Tomlinson and Moon, and *Better Lesson Plans, Better Lessons: Practical Strategies for Planning from Standards* by Ben Curran. Routledge. The task analysis, lesson planning, unit planning, and assessment analysis projects all focus on the specific grade level and content area of the students seeking certification. Guiding questions and in-class examples were created and provided at both the childhood and adolescence level.

2. *Review and redesign EDUC 226: Building Classroom Community to better reflect: current issues in today's classrooms; evidence-based practices to develop community and relationship building; and strategies for applying these practices in challenging systems.* (Continued from 2016-17)

Professor Levy sought to accomplish these goals in two ways: through text selection and through the use of guest speakers. Choosing texts that will resonate with student in the course (predominately sophomores who have not yet spent significant time in elementary and secondary classrooms as pre-service teachers) and that provide thoughtful, inclusive, culturally relevant insights into modern classroom life is a challenging task. One constant over the years has been Ruth Sidney Charney's *Teaching Children to Care: Classroom Management for Ethical and Academic Growth, K-8*, which is grounded in the Responsive Classroom philosophy. This text offers a wide range of suggestions about how to authentically build and maintain an inclusive, positive classroom community over the course of an academic year. Though the author purposefully and explicitly includes middle school aged students in this text, students seeking adolescent certification have consistently expressed a belief that this text cannot be applied to the secondary classroom (grades 7-12). Instructors of this course (primarily Professor Levy) have sought to make these connections explicit as well, with varying levels of success.

Two new texts were introduced in Spring 2018, one of which was chosen specifically to address the issue of more clearly including the secondary classroom in the course. Katy Ridnour's *Managing Your Classroom with Heart: A Guide for Nurturing Adolescent Learners* is clearly guided by the author's well-developed philosophy about working with adolescents and provides a balance between the theoretical or philosophical reasons for implementing certain policies and procedures with vignettes

from Ridnour's own classroom experiences and a variety of practical applications and suggestions for day-to-day classroom operations. Students generally responded positively to this text and seemed to be able to apply some of Ridnour's ideas to their own ideas about classroom community, as evidenced in their final projects for the course.

The next text, Carla Shalaby's *Troublemakers: Lessons in Freedom from Young Children in School* was chosen for several reasons. First, it is a highly readable, engaging, thorough piece of ethnographic research, which allowed students to read a high quality piece of scholarship in this field. Second, it provided a counterpoint to a troubling narrative often espoused by current classroom teachers and our own pre-service teachers – that there are some kids who are just “troublemakers,” “high flyers,” “problem kids,” and even “bad kids.” Shalaby's text explicitly seeks to understand what motivates students who often receive these labels, exposes how traditional models of school discipline only serve to further stigmatize and ostracize students from classroom communities, and concedes that there are no easy answers to these systemic and entrenched issues. Student response to the text was generally positive and written work (specifically, weekly reading responses) indicated that students were developing ways of thinking about students that are more nuanced than the existing good kids/bad kids narrative. As many of our students continue through student teaching, I believe the true strength of this text will be to provide a vivid and common text to which we can refer when they encounter children who have been assigned these labels in their future classrooms.

Tracy Bozeat from SAVAR spoke to the class about identifying signs of abuse in children, which provided students with an expert source of information about a sensitive and troubling subject. Katie Oliver, a middle school teacher at Lincoln Middle School in Duluth, MN spoke with the class via Google Meet about a home visit program she successfully started at her school. Both guests work daily with students, children, and families, and therefore can provide Wells students with insights that may be missed by course texts, as well as to corroborate that much of the theory students read about developing strong relationships with students is, in fact, what real teachers use on a regular basis.

3. *Increase opportunities for student engagement with technology.* (Continued from 2016-17)
  - Review the goals and outcomes for EDUC 225: Technology in the Classroom, and organize curriculum and learning tasks around utilizing technology for K-12 student engagement, instruction, and communication.

Professor Levy reorganized the course around three main themes: Digital Literacy and Citizenship, Empowering Students, and Empowering Teachers. These changes

were made after considering the new International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) standards, a review of current literature in the field, and observations/reports of technology use in the classroom. Students were therefore introduced to online curricula provided by organizations like Common Sense Media and the Newseum that focus on critical digital literacy and digital citizenship, online tools like Adobe Spark and podcasting that focus on empowering students to develop and share their own voices and perspectives, and how teachers can use social media sites such as Twitter to connect with and support each others' work. Throughout the course, students were introduced to these tools, Professor Levy modeled their use and guided discussions around advantages and disadvantages of each tool, and students then used the tool either during class time or as an outside assignment. A concern with this type of course is that if students do not themselves fully understand how to use and troubleshoot specific tools (for example, making a podcast), they will not use them in their own classrooms. Therefore, a significant part of the course involves Wells students doing all of the work we expect them to ask of their own future elementary and secondary students.

- Develop a culminating project and corresponding rubric to replace the current WebQuest project utilized as evidence of addressing Claim Four's Crosscutting Theme: Technology.

Professor Levy developed a final project for the course that focused on students designing lessons that incorporated four of the tools introduced in the course. The objective of the assignment was for students to demonstrate they could make decisions about which tools to use and to be able to explain why they made the choices they made. The assignment has four parts: the writing of lesson outlines including specific directions about how to use the chosen tech tools in context, the in-class presentation of one part of these lessons involving one tool (the final project included the use of four tools), the creation of one model that a teacher would show to students when using a specific tech tool (for example, a completed Adobe Spark poster), and a reflection paper detailing why the students chose the tools they did to teach specific content. Professor Levy developed a rough rubric to accompany this project and the program will continue to refine the project and rubric in the future. Generally, the students met the objectives. They were able to make logical decisions about why they would use specific tools and, importantly, demonstrated that they understood how to use the tools themselves.

4. *Explore changes to our program assessment plan in order to better serve the assessment of both student learning and our program in general. (Continued from 2016-17 with slight modification)*

- Build understanding and capacity to address the new CAEP standards and recently modified CAEP accreditation protocol. Attend CAEP accreditation workshops, conferences etc. (Sara Levy)

Work toward this goal is ongoing. Professor Levy completed the 2018 Annual Report for CAEP, which helped to familiarize her with the new standards. She will be attending the CAEP Conference in September 2018, which will further help prepare her for the upcoming self-study.

- Re-evaluate and modify the Portfolio Defense Rubric for clarity and alignment with other assessment tools. (Susan Wansor and Sara Levy)

Work toward this goal is ongoing. Small modifications were made to the rubric, but future work needs to be done.

- Submit key assessment tools and rubrics to CAEP for review and feedback.

This will happen in Fall 2018 as Professor Levy continues to familiarize herself with CAEP expectations.

5. *Provide instructional scaffolding to support candidate application of student-directed questions that address higher order thinking.*

- Provide more explicit instruction and guided practice for development and use of questions that promote higher order thinking.
  - Develop learning experiences and assessment opportunities in EDUC 405. (Marcie Belfi)

Work toward this goal is ongoing. Professor Belfi spent her first year at Wells familiarizing herself with our current curriculum and worked to identify areas where she can authentically work toward this goal in the future.

- Develop learning experiences and assessment opportunities in EDUC 302 and 332. (Susan Wansor)

Instruction and a project was added to EDUC 302 and EDUC 332 to help promote students' ability to ask and answer higher level questions. In class students were taught different levels of questioning based on Bloom's

Taxonomy. Then, they were expected to be able to categorized questions into the appropriate level and create their own questions at each level. This was assessed in a project that required them locate a reading from the NYS exemplars and write and answer different levels of questions that focus on what the text says, what the text means and how the text works. This project will be utilized in the future to gather data on higher level questioning.

- Develop learning experiences and assessment opportunities in EDUC 406. (Sara Levy)

Delayed to Fall 2018 since course did not run 2017-2018.

### **III. 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. In order to make this tool a useful source of data, it is imperative that we look across multiple years, therefore the data described in this section includes program completers from 2016-2017 and 2017-2018. This includes eight students, all of whom graduated from Wells with the Inclusive Childhood Education major. 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 sixteen scores per rubric item. 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 (13/18) of low scores fell under the categories *Assessment for Diverse*

*Learners and Instruction for Diverse Learners.* Both 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*

- *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. **Mean rubric score: 2.94**

#### *Content Knowledge:*

- *Knowledge of Content:* Demonstrates, through plans and practices, a solid understanding of the relationships among topics and concepts. **Mean rubric score: 2.88**
- *Academic Language:* Seizes obvious opportunities for integrating content as a way of deepening understanding. **Mean rubric score: 2.94**

#### *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. **Mean rubric score: 2.81**
  - Regularly uses varied formative tasks (informal and formal) to assess students’ understanding during instruction. **Mean rubric score: 2.81**
  - Regularly uses different types of summative tasks (more than traditional tests) to assess student learning after instruction. **Mean rubric score: 2.75**
- *Use of Assessment Criteria:* Established standards and criteria are regularly used as tools for student self-assessment and reflection. **Mean rubric score: 2.79**
- *Feedback:*
  - Students are regularly made aware of how they are meeting the established standards and criteria. Student questions regarding progress are few. **Mean rubric score: 2.88**
  - Student teacher regularly provides opportunities for students to reflect on and make use of feedback. **Mean rubric score: 2.8**
- *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. **Mean rubric score: 2.87**

#### *Instruction for Diverse Learners:*

- *Resources/Technology:*
  - Integrated relevant instructional technology into instruction. **Mean rubric score: 2.94**
  - Paraprofessionals and volunteers are used effectively. **Mean rubric score: 2.87**

- *Use of Questions:* Regularly provides probing, “higher level thinking” questions that seek clarification or elaboration. **Mean rubric score: 2.75**
- *Communication:* Directions are generally clear to students and contain an appropriate amount of detail. **Mean rubric score: 2.81**
- *Instructional Strategies that Support Literacy:* Regularly asks students to cite specific evidence when supporting their own points when reading and writing. **Mean rubric score: 2.94**
- *Responsiveness to Learners:* Regularly and successfully makes minor adjustments to lessons based on information gathered from active engagement strategies, observation and student questions. **Mean rubric score: 2.88**

*Learning Environment: Organization and Management:* Transitions are regularly directed efficiently with little loss of instructional time. **Mean rubric score: 2.94**

*Professional Responsibilities: Communication with Families:* Communicates as needed with parents about students’ progress. **Mean rubric score: 2.6**

Clearly, the data indicate that our students need more instruction and practice in developing and implementing assessments, as well as practice in analyzing assessment data. Additionally, the data indicate that there are some specific areas of instruction in which students would benefit from further practice, particularly in the areas of using classroom resources to the best of their capacity and in scaffolding their instruction to help their own students reach higher order levels of thinking. As a program, we have decided to focus on these areas over the following year, as they seem to be the most substantial in relation to our program goals and will help our student teacher provide the best possible education to the students with whom they will be working.

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 as (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 8 scores per rubric item were available from 2017-2018.

We analyzed the Portfolio Rubric data from 2017-2018 in the same way as the Student Teaching Rubric, and found the following areas in need of improvement, all in the area of the oral defense:

*Planning for Diverse Learners: Portfolio Defense:* The student teacher clearly explains his/her planning and decision making process.

- The student teacher reflects thoughtfully about the planning and decision-making process and is easily able to support his/her reflection with evidence from the portfolio. **Mean rubric score: 2.63**

*Content Knowledge: Portfolio Defense:* The student teacher reflects thoughtfully about content knowledge and is easily able to support his/her reflection with evidence from the portfolio:

- The student teacher clearly explains the application of content knowledge in the teaching process. **Mean rubric score: 2.63**
- Substantial, relevant evidence is provided to support the understanding of appropriate content knowledge. **Mean rubric score: 2.75**
- Evidence is easily located and the main points are clearly described. **Mean rubric score: 2.63**

*Instruction: Portfolio Defense:* The student teacher reflects thoughtfully about instruction and is easily able to support his/her reflection with evidence from the portfolio.

- The student teacher clearly explains her/his approach to instruction. **Mean rubric score: 2.75**
- Evidence is easily located and the main points are clearly described. **Mean rubric score: 2.88**

*Learning Environment: Portfolio Defense:* The student teacher reflects thoughtfully about her/his role in developing a positive, safe environment and is easily able to support his/her reflection with evidence from the portfolio.

- The student teacher clearly explains her/his role in creating a safe, positive classroom climate. **Mean rubric score: 2.63**

The data demonstrates that while students clearly have artifacts in their portfolios that demonstrate their ability to plan thoughtfully and their knowledge of grade-level content, they struggle to explain their decision-making processes in terms of planning and content knowledge. Anecdotally, we have also noticed this is an area where students struggle and we need to prompt them to step back from explaining what they “did” in a lesson and to start with a broader explanation of their process.

Our last piece of data comes from the New York State Educating All Students (EAS) exam. This exam assesses pre-service teachers’ knowledge of certain underserved and marginalized populations of students, including English Language Learners (ELL). While our students generally do well on this exam and pass it on their first attempt, their scores indicate that their knowledge of best practices about working with ELL students is weak. Of the two scores

reported from New York State related specifically to working with ELL students, Wells students (n=5) have averaged a 2.4 (on a 4-point scale). Therefore, this is an area that needs more attention in our program.

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

1. *Increase opportunities for students to engage in discipline-specific instructional methodologies.* (Continued from 2017-2018)

As noted earlier, 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 / 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 can be removed from EDUC 406, allowing more time to be devoted to content-specific methodologies and readings.

##### Action Steps:

- Re-develop the structure, materials, learning tasks and assessments of EDUC 406: Instructional Strategies for Secondary Education to focus more intentionally and thoroughly on varied content-specific methodologies. (Sara Levy)

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

As demonstrated in section III, 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.

##### Action Steps:

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

3. *Explore changes to our program assessment plan in order to better serve the assessment of both student learning and our program in general.* (Continued from 2017-2018)

- Build understanding and capacity to address the new CAEP standards and recently modified CAEP accreditation protocol. Attend CAEP accreditation workshops, conferences etc. (Sara Levy)
- Re-evaluate and modify the Portfolio Defense Rubric for clarity and alignment with other assessment tools. (Susan Wansor and Sara Levy)
- Submit key assessment tools and rubrics to CAEP for review and feedback.

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

As seen in the data from the Student Teaching Rubric in part III, student teachers are not proficient in several areas related to assessment. We are choosing 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 will also develop opportunities for students to practice giving useful feedback to students on assessments.

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 410 class sessions on assessment and feedback

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

As demonstrated in the data reported from the state test, our students would benefit from further instruction in working with ELL students. We understand that we will need to build our own capacity to provide this instruction. Therefore, our action steps here provide some direction in how we can most effectively move toward this change.

Action Steps:

- Identify areas in current course offerings where additional instruction could be added.
- Discuss the feasibility of adding a workshop or tutorial focused on working with ELL students.