

# Results of Assessment of Special Education Student Teaching Portfolio

Following is a summary of the 2016-2017 biannual evaluation of student teaching portfolios by the Special Education faculty.

## A. Assistive Technology Section

### 1. Strengths

- All specializations had similar scores – the program appears to be equally effective for all.
- Most preservice teachers are able to identify and implement effective AT devices to improve student outcomes.
- Broad understanding of low tech, mid tech, and high tech AT devices
- Most preservice teachers are able to implement an AB design
- Most preservice teachers were able to effectively train students, staff, and/or family on the use of an AT device.

### 2. Needs were addressed in the portfolio requirements in the following ways

- Specific rationale and description of the students AT needs seemed to be very similar so we provided clarification for each
- Several entries lacked any explanation of diversity or would just list diversity is n/a. Additional information was added so that students will carefully and thoroughly consider all aspects of diversity
- Required students to include a goal earlier in the report
- Added to information about the role in related services providers, teachers, AT team members etc. in the selection and acquisition on the AT device
- More description was needed for the training and implementation of the device
- Data collection, data-based decisions, and evaluation of effectiveness were lacking. A graph was not required and pattern of effectiveness over time was missing. Changes and updates have been made to all of these based on an AB design

### 3. Suggested program changes based on needs

- Preservice teachers need practice during their coursework on implementing an AT device using an AB design, describing in detail the training and implementation of the device and making data-based decisions based on the effectiveness. This will be addressed in SPED 5530.
- Preservice teachers need experience during their coursework to learn about diversity of families and how it plays a role in assistive technology training, implementation, and follow-up. This will be addressed in SPED 5530 and SPED 5060.

## B. Professional Interactions Section

### 1. Strengths

- All sections were complete. There were a few errors within the reports (quality) but all pieces were complete.
- Content completion
- Functional projects

## 2. Needs were addressed in the portfolio in the following ways

- Clarification of lessons learned. We decided it was a matter of consistency across supervisor's expectations more than a student issue or lack of understanding.
- After review of the portfolios, this committee determined that there were variations in scoring by individual reviewers on this committee. Scoring differences led to a discussion about the process being used by individual supervisors. It was determined that individual supervisors had slightly different interpretations, and ways of describing requirements to students. Changes were made that clarify expectations for students so that there is less interpretation needed on the part of the student/supervisor. The proposed changes also help to make the process for scoring this section of the portfolio more consistent between supervisors.

## C. Education Planning Section (Teacher Work Sample)

### 1. Strengths

- Most samples were strong in this area. There were a few differences across programs but there were no big holes.
- Lesson plans

### 2. Needs were addressed in the portfolio in the following ways

- B-5 students showed poor understanding of guided practice; the instructor has already addressed this in the specialization course
- Diversity and Assistive Technology: For both of these areas, students frequently indicated "not applicable", i.e., they indicated there was no diversity in the student group and there were no needs for assistive technology. The committee discussed changes in the assignment prompt that would push the student to address in a more meaningful manner. The edits made were primarily to improve clarity of the directions/expectations because the committee did see some variability in the work products reviewed. At the undergraduate meeting, the majority of time was discussing two main areas of revision: the description/expectation of how students would address issues of diversity and the description/expectation of how students would address students' needs for accommodations or assistive technology.
  - The changes to the diversity expectation align with what previous groups in portfolio review have indicated. In many work products, students were indicating that diversity was not an issue that needed to be considered. The committee felt that this was likely not accurate, and that changes were necessary to get students to more fully consider diversity. They took away the "state if diversity was not an issue" component and replaced it with "describe at least 3 aspects of diversity that you considered in developing this lesson." A bigger definition of diversity is being introduced into SPED 5060 (Consulting with Parents and Teachers). *"Individual and family diversity may include: families who speak a language other than English, families who do not identify with mainstream American culture, families who have a low SES, families who have low levels of education (and may not read), families with non-traditional family structure (e.g., same sex parents, extended family living in home, etc.), families with religious beliefs, and any other*

defining feature that may be different from the **instructor's culture/background.**" They briefly discussed changing the part in bold above (instructor's culture/background) to "mainstream American culture."

- Similar changes were necessary for the accommodations and assistive technology requirement, because they saw almost all of students indicating that assistive technology was not applicable. They changed this requirement so that students would need to explain why assistive technology was not applicable if they felt that was the case. Students need to at least reference the AT that is included in pupil's IEPs. The committee also discussed making changes in instruction (e.g., talking about applications/considerations of assistive technology; broadening discussions of diversity, etc.) to help prepare students to complete these portions of the portfolio. The assistive technology instructor will meet with individual instructors about how to integrate assistive technology.
- Confusion for number of lesson plan reports required. Changed language to two lesson plans per placement.

## D. Functional Behavior Assessment Section

### 1. Summary of Committee Discussion

- Selected FBAs exhibited multiple and recurrent problems, particularly those associated with the hypotheses regarding the function of the problem behavior and selection of replacement behaviors (particularly those behaviors that were not associated with the problem behavior's function). ***The group noted that these same issues have been identified in evaluation of student teaching portfolios in previous years.***
- FBA inaccuracies in portfolios may be related to broader, systemic problems regarding lack of knowledge of supervisor and/or cooperating teacher.
- When FBA was inserted into the portfolio 15 years ago, there were no BCBA's or behavior specialists working in schools. ***The USU teacher graduate was considered a behavior analysis expert.*** In some school environments today, the teacher is better represented as a contributor to behavior assessment and intervention and a team member. Regardless of whether a BCBA is present in schools today, the teacher is expected to be more of a contributor than an interventionist.
- In our current masters BCBA program, ***learning FBA technology is a key target for masters-level behavior analysts*** and requires multiple exemplars, supervision, etc.
- ***Student teachers should have basic FBA skills (Tier 3), but must also show skills in behavior assessment and basic intervention (Tier 2).***
- Today's special education teachers have a more finite, circumscribed role in school-based behavior analysis. ***They should be able to (a) identify, define, and measure a problem behavior; (b) if applicable, identify an appropriate, alternative behavior; (c) apply contingencies to decrease problem behavior and increase alternative behaviors; (d) display graphed baseline data on the problem behavior and describe it accurately; and (e) communicate assessment information and intervention recommendations to a BCBA or designated team/individual.*** (Although the committee is changing

requirements for the FBA student teaching portfolio, it recognized that new expectations (“a – d” above) will still challenge many student teachers.

2. Needs were addressed in the portfolio in the following ways

- Renamed the section “Behavior Assessment and Intervention.” Eliminated the term “Functional Behavior Assessment.”
- Made changes in FBA Portfolio Evaluation Form to reflect new requirements: to (a) identify, define, and measure a problem behavior; (b) if applicable, identify an appropriate, alternative behavior; (c) implement an individual or group intervention to decrease problem behavior and increase alternative behaviors; (d) display graphed baseline data on the problem behavior and appropriate, alternative behavior.
- Made corresponding changes in Student Teaching Handbook.
- Updated supervisors on new expectations of student teachers.
- Made associated adjustments and updates (e.g., communicate changes to ATP Advisory Board, change course content in SPED 5050, etc.)

E. Comprehensive Educational Assessment Section

1. Strengths

- Most samples were complete
- Students accurately summarized information from previous assessments.

2. Needs were addressed in the portfolio in the following ways

- The main changes to the CEA included no longer requiring the students to scan assessment and IEP documents, but instead more clearly describe their analytical process and decision making. The standardized assessment piece was wrapped into the report of information from previous assessment.
- No one completed a standardized assessment (all marked N/A). The description of instructional arrangement and level of support in the Curriculum Schedule did not inform the reader of what the instructional arrangement or level of support was. The group proposed to change ‘Information from previous assessment’ to ‘Relevant information from standardized assessments’ and take out the section on standardized assessments. Previously, the section read that standardized assessments are only reported in that section if they were administered by the student teacher otherwise mark as not applicable. This change is meant to clarify that all relevant standardized assessments (both past and in the current assessment period) should be included in the report.
- Observation questions were changed to observation targets and students are required to operationally define observation targets. Along with this a requirement to include a visual display of observation results when appropriate was added.
- The IEP Development section was changed significantly. In the past, student teachers were only required to write a rationale and curriculum schedule and then scan and include the IEP on district documents. Many did not create the IEP themselves, but instead scanned in documents written by the cooperating teacher. Supervisors would then need to prompt them to change elements that they were not able to within the districts IEP systems (especially Goalview and IEPpro). The changes made to this section would not require the students to scan the IEP documents but would instead require them to type in PLAAFP’s, goals, and objectives, identify and justify accommodations, and then describe special factors to consider for all IEP’s.
- In the curriculum schedule, the term ‘level of supports needed’ was

changed to instructional and behavioral supports needed.