

Department of Education Credential Program Westmont College

Master Teachers

Review and quantitative analysis of evaluations from master teachers

Master teachers (those hosting full-time student teachers) from a range of local and international schools regularly evaluate Westmont's student teachers in 47 skill-areas identified in the TPEs. Of these 47 areas, elementary student teachers in 2006 on average were rated as between Very Good (4) and Outstanding (5) in 45 areas. Secondary student teachers in 2006 were rated between Very Good and Outstanding in all 47 areas.

Also, beginning in 2006, master teachers were asked to evaluate not only the individual student teacher, but also evaluate separately the program as a whole. Difficult as it may be to separate the quality of the program from the quality of a particular teacher-candidate, comments from experienced master teachers who have worked with multiple Westmont students do provide corroborating evidence of program quality.

Elementary master teacher (Costa Rica):

"I have always been extremely pleased with the program. The caliber of students I have received is excellent."

Secondary master teacher (local):

"The strengths of the Westmont teaching program are many. First, the program allows flexibility regarding the teacher's take-over... In other programs the take-over is often abrupt, being determined by a date versus a student teacher's readiness. In addition, the student teachers seem very well supported by Westmont personnel... There is a genuine respect and affection between student and staff as exemplified by the mutual praise and admiration during the student teachers' portfolio presentations."



Focus Question:

To what extent do graduates exhibit the 13 TPE's?

The basis for much of the Credential Program's assessment activity is the thirteen Teaching Performance Expectations (TPEs) defined by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC) in 2001.

1. Subject-specific pedagogical skills
2. Monitoring student learning during instruction
3. Interpretation and use of assessments
4. Making content accessible
5. Student engagement
6. Developmentally-appropriate teaching practices
7. Teaching English learners
8. Learning about students
9. Instructional planning
10. Instructional time
11. Social environment
12. Professional, legal, and ethical obligations
13. Professional growth

Evidence from a variety of sources is examined on an on-going basis to determine how well graduates of Westmont's Credential Program are able to demonstrate these performance expectations. A more complete discussion of available evidence and departmental response to assessment results may be found in the Department's Annual Report for 2005 and 2006.



External Review

In the most recent external review coordinated by the CCTC (March 1998), Westmont was found to be meeting all of the Commission standards then in place, and was commended in eight areas. No qualitative or quantitative concerns were identified. On the basis of the team's interviews with principals and master teachers, graduates of Westmont's program were found to "enter the classroom at a maturity level far superior to students the employers [had] encountered from other institutions" (Report of the Accreditation Team).

Employers

Review of first-year employer surveys

For the four most recent years on which data is available (2002-05), 44 of 55 (80%) of Credential Program completers had accepted full-time professional employment in K-12 education.

Employers are invited to evaluate graduates at the end of their first-year of teaching in the form of a written survey based on the TPE's. In addition to providing numerical ratings on each TPE, employers are encouraged to write an open-ended response. Selected summary comments from the most recent cohort are as follows:

Graduates completing first year of teaching 2005-06:

"[Your graduate] was a wonderful addition to our staff. She was extremely well prepared as indicated [on the quantitative scores linked to the State of California's 13 TPEs]. She possessed wonderful communication skills, has rapport with students, parents, and staff, and—overall—reflected in-depth preparation at all levels."

"[Teacher's] first year of teaching was remarkable. I often had to remind myself that she hadn't been doing this for years. Obviously Westmont did a more than adequate job of preparing her. Many thanks!"

"[Teacher] has demonstrated excellent skills in teaching during her first year. She is very energetic, loving, and creative in her teaching style. She has done a wonderful job of meeting the needs of her students."



Examination Results

Results from state-required examinations related to one or more of the TPE's

Reading Instruction Competency Assessment (RICA):

Since the beginning of California's Reading Instruction Competency Assessment in 2000, 100% of Westmont Multiple Subject (elementary) graduates have passed the exam.

Other examinations:

Two other state-required tests are relevant more to Westmont's educational program as a whole than the Credential Program specifically. Nonetheless both examinations speak indirectly to the academic preparation of Westmont-prepared teachers. In the last five years, not a single Westmont student applying to the Credential Program, Elementary or Secondary, has failed to pass the California Basic Educational Skills Test (CBEST—a test of basic literacy and numeracy) or the relevant California Subject Examination for Teachers (CSET—a comprehensive examination of content knowledge specific to the candidate's field). Analysis of scores from the CSET for students preparing for a Multiple Subject credential are included in the Department's Annual Report in the section under Liberal Studies Program.

The state Teaching Performance Assessment (TPA), based on the 13 TPE's, will be fully implemented in 2007-2008. Preliminary results indicate that Westmont graduates are well prepared on the portions of the TPA we have implemented thus far.

Alumni Voices

Review of alumni survey and other responses from alumni

Effective for graduates in 2004, the department modified its annual survey of first-year graduates to include a section specifically directed to the TPEs. For the cohort completing their first year of teaching in June 2006, graduates ranked their preparation in TPE 9 (instructional planning) highest (4.9 on a 5 point scale). Of the 13 TPEs, only in two sub-components under TPE #1 (Subject-specific instruction) did graduates' perception of their preparation fall below 4.0 (Very Good): (a) teaching the creative/performing arts; and (b) teaching physical education.

Free-response comments from graduates, on the alumni survey and other solicited or non-solicited response mechanisms, also attest to their level of preparation for teaching.

Elementary graduate, 2005 (unsolicited e-mail correspondence)

"I just wanted to send a brief note to reiterate the impact Westmont's credential program has had on my ability to teach. The other day, several of my colleagues and I were discussing the different credential programs we came from. It became obvious that the one I attended was able to prepare me for teaching much better than any of the others being compared...I am more ready than anyone I know to be a teacher, thanks to Westmont's credential program."

Elementary graduate, 2005 (unsolicited e-mail correspondence)

"Thanks again for a wonderful credential program and all the effort you put into your students. It is much appreciated. There were quite a few brand new teachers at my school last year, and after talking with many of them, I was even more convinced of how great and unique Westmont's program is."

Secondary graduate, 2006 (Senior Interview)

"The constant interaction forced on us due to such a small program (class size) helped me to find my voice. And being able to meet in small groups with principals, teachers, and my peers helped me become an active participant."

