

VCSU used data to inform a decision for EDUC 240 Educating Exceptional Students to be increased from two credits to three credits in 2017. The narrative below displays how the data were discussed over time before the data-informed decision was finally made.

Minutes from a 2014 Teacher Education Committee Meeting display a concern for adding any credits and costs to teacher candidates in the professional education sequence.

This narrative continues to display data shared with P-12 stakeholders and faculty in 2017 before the decision for adding a credit was approved. The course began being taught for three credits in the fall of 2018. The narrative includes follow-up data as well.

Historic Perspective: Adding one credit to EDUC 240 was mentioned in 2014 to the Teacher Education Committee but did not come to a vote for approval in 2014.

October 14, 2014 Teacher Education Committee Meeting

Attendees: Dave Bass, Jessica Sanden, Jodi Shorma, Gary Thompson, Kim Knodle, Al Olson, Scott Westby, Mary Halverson, Chad Lueck, Angela Williams, Kristi Shanenko, Jamie Wirth, Emma Tufte, Irene Groth, Anthony Dutton, Amber Ussatis Aberle, Christopher Redfearn.

EDUC 240 Curriculum Changes

For the 2016-2018 catalog, a proposal is being considered to change EDUC 240 from a 2-credit to a 3-credit course. Data have indicated that candidates rate meeting the needs of special education students lower than many of their other teaching abilities. In addition, the Strategist Special Education Endorsement would benefit from a 3-credit course.

Discussion occurred about the receptiveness of adding another credit to the professional education sequence in terms of keeping majors under 120 credits. Redfearn expressed concern that another credit would be an issue for the Composite Music Education program (150 credits) which is already over the 120-credit university/credit recommendation. Scott Westby indicated that as a student, he would like additional preparation educating exceptional students in order to be prepared for the classroom. Jessica Sanden indicated that in her experience an additional hour each week learning about educating exceptional students would be helpful. In regard to Composite Business Education (124 credits), if a student adds the 12 credit CTE endorsement (which covers additional topics in diversity) the student goes over 120 credits. Anthony Dutton indicated that it might be in the students' best interest even if it's not in the program's best interest to add a credit. Chad Lueck indicated that 15% of students are on IEPs, so additional experience would be beneficial for candidates. Jamie Wirth indicated that as a pay per credit university, we need to be conscientious of the cost to students by adding additional credits. Amber Aberle added that the financial aid requirement as becomes a consideration so that students are eligible to receive financial aid (who begin to reach the 150-credit limit for financial aid, especially those retaking courses or changing programs).

Al Olson indicated that based on the data shared at various events, ELL & differentiated instruction have been two areas of lower ratings. Content knowledge has not been the biggest concern of administrators, whereas candidates' ability to work with all students has been highlighted in data and legislative hearings.

Information shared at the Annual Data Sharing Session in 2017: Survey Data from Exit Surveys (data gathered from student teachers), Transition to Teaching Surveys (from first year teachers), and Supervisor Surveys (from employers of first year teachers) identified many program strengths. The data also indicated the need to do more in the area of teacher preparation related to IEPs and 504 plans, as well as instruction for students who are English learners or gifted and talented, or those who may have mental health needs. VCSU faculty members responded to the data by integrating more opportunities for learning about differentiated instruction across the curriculum, but the data improved the ratings only slightly. The data indicated that student teachers and first year teachers felt they could have benefitted from more opportunities to learn about mental health and working with the diverse needs of their learners.

Data Sharing Feedback: In the past four years, K-12 educators have reviewed VCSU data and provided feedback at August data sharing work sessions. Comments have been made about the need for more training with English learners, mental health needs, differentiating instruction, IEP and 504 plans, and working with gifted and talented students. The topic of adding course credits related to these areas came up each year.

Another aspect that can impact teacher candidates and completers: Other Educator Preparation Providers (EPPs) in the state of North Dakota have a three-credit Educating Exceptional Students course as opposed to the two credits VCSU

requires for EDUC 240. Dr. Thompson mentioned how the two-credit course causes complications for VCSU teachers seeking endorsements that require a three-credit course on Educating Exceptional students.

Changing EDUC 240 from a two-credit course to a three-credit course will benefit the VCSU teacher candidates in their preparation as educators and benefit VCSU graduates in their pursuit of additional endorsements. The extra credit would allow more time for Trauma Sensitive School (TSS) training to address mental health concerns and allow more time for field experience related to special education.

The summary information below was shared at the August 9, 2017 data session. The summary explains areas of strength and areas of challenge for student teachers and teachers entering the profession.

I. Exit Survey Final Evaluation Summary:

Student teachers exiting the program marked some of their lowest ratings in the area of InTASC Standard 2 Learner Differences. The data indicated an upward trend over the past two years, but more progress needed to be made.

The student teachers were asked to respond using the following prompt: **“To what extent do you agree or disagree that your teacher preparation program gave you the basic skills to do the following?”**

Assessment Item	“Agree” ratings after 2011-2017 compared to 2011-2015
Design instruction for students with IEPs and 504 plans	Up to 33.3% after 2017 compared to 30.9% after 2015
Design instruction for students with mental health needs	Up to 28.9% after 2017 compared to 28.3% after 2015
Design instruction for gifted and talented students	Up to 36.4% after 2017 compared to 35.2% after 2015
Design instruction for English language learners	Up to 34.3% after 2017 compared to 33.2% after 2015

These areas of learner differences are challenging for teachers and teacher preparation programs. The table below compares VCSU mean score ratings with aggregate mean score ratings from the 14 ¹NExT institutions and a ²North Dakota aggregate.

The student teachers from VCSU were not alone. A comparison of VCSU data with other EPPs using the same Exit Survey indicated these areas were challenging for other teacher candidates as well. The teacher candidates responded to the following prompt: **“To what extent do you agree or disagree that your teacher preparation program gave you the basic skills to do the following?”**

Fall 2015-Spring 2016 Student Teachers – Exit Survey Results Assessment Item	VCSU mean score N = 107	¹NExT mean score N= 1708	²ND mean score N=305
Design instruction for students with IEPs and 504 plans	3.01	3.02	2.96
Design instruction for students with mental health needs	2.95	2.87	2.86
Design instruction for gifted and talented students	3.13	2.87	2.97
Design instruction for English language learners	3.08	3.03	3.00

Scale: 1 = Disagree; 2 = Tend to Disagree; 3 = Tend to Agree; 4 = Agree

¹ The 14 member institutions of the Network for Excellence in Teaching (NExT) initiative include the Valley Partnership (VCSU, NDSU, MSU-Moorhead), University of South Dakota, St. Cloud State, University of Minnesota – Twin Cities, Winona State, Minnesota State Mankato, and a consortium of six private universities in the Twin Cities (Augsburg, Bethel, Concordia St. Paul, St. Catherine’s, Hamline, and St. Thomas).

² Data were provided by Dickinson State University, Mayville State University, North Dakota State University, University of North Dakota, and Valley City State University. *(Only 5 of 12 institutions reported data to the aggregate. Data should be viewed cautiously.)*

II. Transition to Teaching Survey (TTS) Summary - first-year teachers (completers):

Data gathered from first-year teachers indicated many areas of strength, but mean scores that were among the lowest of all the items.

First-year teachers were asked to respond using the following prompt: **“To what extent do you agree or disagree that your teacher preparation program gave you the basic skills to do the following?”**

<i>First-year teachers, Fall 2015- Spring 2016 graduates, surveyed in the spring of 2017</i> Assessment Item	VCSU mean score N = 50	¹ NExT mean score N= 685	² ND mean score N=229
Design instruction for students with IEPs and 504 plans	3.12	3.04	2.94
Design instruction for students with mental health needs	3.00	2.78	2.77
Design instruction for gifted and talented students	3.16	2.84	2.83
Design instruction for English language learners	3.04	2.99	2.76

Scale: 1 = Disagree; 2 = Tend to Disagree; 3 = Tend to Agree; 4 = Agree

¹ The 14 member institutions of the Network for Excellence in Teaching (NExT) initiative include the Valley Partnership (VCSU, NDSU, MSU-Moorhead), University of South Dakota, St. Cloud State, University of Minnesota – Twin Cities, Winona State, Minnesota State Mankato, and a consortium of six private universities in the Twin Cities (Augsburg, Bethel, Concordia St. Paul, St. Catherine's, Hamline, and St. Thomas).

² Data were provided by Dickinson State University, Mayville State University, Minot State University, North Dakota State University, Turtle Mountain Community College, University of North Dakota, and Valley City State University. *(Only 7 of 12 institutions reported data to the aggregate. Data should be viewed cautiously.)*

III. Supervisor Survey (SS) Summary – employers of first-year teachers (most often principals):

The employers of first-year teachers were asked to respond using the following prompt: **“To what extent do you agree or disagree that your teacher preparation program gave you the basic skills to do the following?”** The mean scores are higher than the Exit or Completer surveys, but lower than most of the assessment items in the survey.

<i>Supervisors of first-year teachers surveyed in the spring of 2017</i> Assessment Item	VCSU mean score N = 45	¹ NExT mean score N= 526	² ND mean score N=151
Design instruction for students with IEPs and 504 plans	3.51	3.42	3.58
Design instruction for students with mental health needs	3.48	3.34	3.49
Design instruction for gifted and talented students	3.23	3.22	3.38
Design instruction for English language learners	3.43	3.36	3.48

Scale: 1 = Disagree; 2 = Tend to Disagree; 3 = Tend to Agree; 4 = Agree

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² Data were provided by Mayville State University, Minot State University, North Dakota State University, University of North Dakota, and Valley City State University. *(Only 5 of 12 institutions reported data to the aggregate. Data should be viewed cautiously.)*

VCSU invites P-12 Educators to view data and share in discussions each August. The educators saw to clips of data above, but these also had access to full reports and the program strengths were discussed as well.

P-12 and VCSU Educators at the August 9, 2017 data sharing session.

Educator	School	Academic Area
Heather Anderson	VCSU	SEGS and Special Education
Dave Bass	VCSU	SEGS Faculty (*TE)
Kristi Brandt	Valley City High School	Principal (*TE)
Kelly Callahan	Valley City High School	Art 7-12
Cheri Anderson	Valley City Public Schools	Art K-6
Cindy Creviston	Valley City High School	Special Education 7-12
Josh Johnson	Valley City Public Schools	Superintendent
Chris Bastian	Casselton Public Schools	Elementary Principal
Kathleen Horner	Valley City High School	English 12 th
Kristi Shanenko	Valley City High School	English 8 th and 11 th (*TE)
Misty Hokana	Valley City High School	English 9 th and 11 th
Dan Larson	Valley City Junior High	Principal

Kathy Lentz	Washington Elementary	5 th grade
Chad Lueck	Washington Elementary	Principal (*TE)
John Letellier	VCSU	Music Education – (*TE)
Troy Miller	Jefferson Elementary	Principal
Jill Kvilvang	Jefferson Elementary	2 nd grade
Alan Olson	VCSU	SEGS Faculty and Assessment (*TE)
Joan Klein	VCSU	SEGS Faculty – Field Experience
Tina Bryn	Barnes County North	5 th grade
David Hanson	VCSU	SEGS Faculty – Field Experience
Natalie Potratz	Jefferson Elementary	3 rd grade
Karen Aaskerooth	Jefferson Elementary	K-3 Music
Robert Rohla	VCSU	Elementary Methods -SEGS
Kim Knodle	VCSU	Director of Student Teaching (*TE)
Waylan Starr	Valley City High School	Social Studies – 10 th
Laurel Westby	VCSU	SEGS Faculty - Kindergarten
Kathleen Bennett-Zaun	VCSU	SEGS Faculty – Place and Support
Angela Williams	VCSU	Health and Physical Education Methods (*TE)
Jessica Sanden	Washington Elementary	Elementary Library Media

Feedback from these EPP faculty and the P-12 stakeholders attending the session made a difference when the Teacher Education Committee had its next meeting. A decision was made to approve an additional credit to EDUC 240.

Remember this Exit Survey data? Increases were small and the data remained low.

The student teachers were asked to respond using the following prompt: **“To what extent do you agree or disagree that your teacher preparation program gave you the basic skills to do the following?”**

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Please notice the improved trajectory of the differentiation data. The changes for adding a credit to EDUC 240 Educating Exceptional Students and attention shown to this concern in other professional education sequence courses is making a difference. The percentage of “Agree” ratings are up from the 20 and 30 percent range to the 40 and 50 percentage range.

Criteria and Term Improvement through Spring 2019, Fall 2019, and Spring 2020	Agree	Tend to Agree	Tend to Disagree	Disagree	Does Not Apply	Total Count
Spring 2020 Differentiate instruction for students with mental health needs.	54.22 %	31.33 %	12.05 %	2.41 %	0 %	83
Fall 2019 Differentiate instruction for students with mental health needs.	51.02 %	36.73 %	12.24 %	0 %	0 %	49
Spring 2020 Differentiate instruction for English-language learners.	56.63 %	32.53 %	7.23 %	3.61 %	0 %	83
Fall 2019 Differentiate instruction for English-language learners.	44.90 %	36.73 %	16.33 %	2.04 %	0 %	49
Spring 2020 Differentiate instruction for gifted and talented students.	57.83 %	30.12 %	8.43 %	3.61 %	0 %	83
Fall 2019 Differentiate instruction for gifted and talented students.	48.98 %	42.86 %	8.16 %	0 %	0 %	49