

Tracking of Use of Data for Improvement: Program

Program: Reading Specialist and ESL Concentrations (Advanced)
Primary Data Set(s): Alumni survey; further data sets from PDE state review process

Qualitative data collected from the disaggregated (Lancaster site) alumni surveys in 2009 and 2010 indicated two areas of need: (a) further integration into coursework of diagnostic and assessment skills for the Literacy concentration and (b) need for EMU to add ESL and Reading Specialist as stand-alone certificate programs. Up to this point, EMU graduates obtained certification through a transcript review process in cooperation with Pennsylvania Intermediate Unit-13. Excerpts from the surveys include data such as:

“More assessment classes . . . formative assessments and how to use them to structure instruction (are needed).” (1st year alumni survey, 2009 graduates)

“Reading program should provide more instruction on diagnosis and most importantly, work with reading disabilities.” (1st year alumni survey, 2010 graduates)

“Adding certificate programs [Reading Specialist, English as a Second Language, School Nursing] would be a wonderful change.” (1st year alumni survey, 2009 graduates)

As a small institution, the unit is careful to attempt to triangulate data prior to making major programmatic changes. Thus,

Dr. Michael Young, a retired Conestoga Valley School District supervisor, in Lancaster, PA was commissioned by EMU during spring 2010 to conduct a needs assessment with Lancaster area administrators to identify professional development needs of area schools. Dr. Young issued in his report that “courses in data-driven decision-making and special education as well as program development in instructional coaching, reading specialist, early childhood paraprofessionals, English as a Second Language, school nurse certification, and school administration certification will be needed in the foreseeable future.” Several interviewees mentioned that career switcher programs for initial licensure might be considered. (*Report: An Initial Approval of New Programs for Eastern Mennonite University at Lancaster in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*, December 2010, p. 4).

In 2010 and 2011 the information was brought back to the MAED Lancaster Curriculum and Instruction Advisory Council an advisory body that includes EMU faculty and P12 professionals.

“Certification in 4 areas through EMU at Lancaster: Reading Specialist Certification including 6 semester hours of clinic (2 courses back to back); ESL Certification, Instructional Coaching and School Nurse Certification. . . We are not currently listed as an approved provider, and some school districts are having a

problem with allowing their teachers to take classes here for certification, due to this.” (October 15, 2010 minutes)

The decision was made to move forward with application with the Pennsylvania Department of Education for approval of certification programs in ESL and Reading Specialist; approval of programs was issued.

The curriculum for the Reading Specialist was revised to include Clinic I and Clinic II to provide further development of candidate skills in reading assessment/diagnosis for the purpose of improving student learning.

* The dossier of documents filed with the Pennsylvania Department of Education, program approval letters, and revised curriculum rating sheets are available upon request.