

## **California State University, Fresno (03-2012)**

### **Special Education**

#### **Part III: Program Assessment**

##### **Introduction**

### **Special Education Teacher Preparation Program at California State University, Fresno**

California State University is one of twenty-three universities in the California State University system. The university began as a Normal School in 1911 and has a strong history of service and preparation of education professionals. The Special Education Credential Program is based on a clearly stated rationale that requires candidates to complete foundational classes and content-specific pedagogy coursework while concurrently practicing the application of these concepts and teaching skills in a field placement setting. Education Specialist has two areas of specialization: Mild/Moderate and Moderate/Severe Disabilities. These areas of professional emphasis distinguish the student population with which the candidate seeks to pursue a special education career. The program provides extensive opportunities for candidates to learn to teach using the state adopted K-12 academic content standards for all students; and is transitioning to utilization of Common Core Standards.

#### **Developing Program Measurable Goals/Objectives**

The goals/objectives of Special Education Program at California State University, Fresno are based on National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and the California Commission of Teaching Credentialing (CCTC) standards). These goals are as listed as the following:

The candidates of Special Education Teacher Preparation Programs will be able to:

Goal 1: use formal and informal assessment that addresses and values diversity including students' strengths and needs, cultural, ethnic and linguistic characteristics; as well as the environments used by the students and their families.

Goal 2: plan and implement curriculum and instruction.

Goal 3: implement classroom management and positive behavior supports.

Goal 4: communicate and participate in collaborative educational practices.

Goal 5: develop as a professional.

Goal 6: use technology for assessment, communication, and instruction.

#### **Designing and Conducting Valid and Reliable Assessment Measurements**

The Special Education Program developed and implemented an assessment model to control its quality. The model consists of four major components: (1) Developing program

measurable goals/objectives; (2) Designing and conducting valid and reliable assessment measurements; (3) Using results of assessments to improve teaching, learning and curriculum; and (4) Widespread faculty involvement in assessment activities.

### **Breadth and Depth of Assessment Activities, Including Direct Measures**

The Special Education Program is strongly committed to the mission: Recruitment and development of ethically informed leaders for classroom teaching and education administration. In preparing qualified special education teachers who will work with students with disabilities (K-12), the program has adopted 10 assessment measures. Four of them are considered by the program faculty as key assessment measures and will be described in detail. These measures are intended to be comprehensive in scope and thorough in content when they are used to examine teacher candidate learning and program effectiveness in meeting university, state, and national standards/requirements.

1. Evaluation and Needs Assessment Survey-Candidates (Preliminary Level)
2. Evaluation and Needs of Assessment Survey- Administrators (Preliminary Level)
3. CSU System Wide Survey (Supervisor - Principal)
4. CSU System Wide Survey (First Year Graduate)
5. Classroom Management Plan Rubric (Direct Measure)
6. Behavior Support Plan (Direct Measure)
7. Formal Assessment (Direct Measure)
8. Curriculum-Based Assessment Rubric (Direct Measure)
9. Portfolio Assessment (Direct Measure)
10. Candidate Dispositions Survey (based on NCATE Standards)

Special Education Program assessments are characterized by the following features: (1) Direct measures (e.g., performance-based student assignments) and indirect measures (e.g., surveys) are used. (2) Longitudinal and cross sectional designs are employed. Data are collected by semester, academic year, and biennially for longitudinal studies from student, alumni, and employers. (3) Surveys are used at multiple levels (e.g., program, school, campus, and CSU system wide surveys). (4) Summative and formative procedures are utilized in combination (e.g., four surveys are used as summative procedures). Four informal measures, such as portfolio and curriculum-based assessment report rubrics are used as formative procedures. It should be noted that the Special Education Credential Program utilizes surveys, but does not rely on surveys. Surveys are used to examine perceptions and perceptions can be subjective and, therefore, unreliable. Measures of teacher candidate competencies are currently the most credible tools. Direct measures are authentic assessments. They link evaluation and instruction by measuring teacher candidate performance in direct relation to what has been taught in the curriculum. Four measures of the above list are considered as key assessment measures in program evaluation. As required in this reporting to CCTC, only four of the following assessment measures will be described in this report.

### **List of Key Assessment Measures**

1. Class Management Plan

2. Curriculum Based Assessment Report
3. Special Education Credential Program Survey
  - (1) Evaluation and Needs Assessment Survey-Candidate (Preliminary Level)
  - (2) Evaluation and Needs Assessment Survey-Administrator (Preliminary Level)
4. CSU Systemwide Survey
  - (1) Evaluation Questions Answered by the K-12 Employment Supervisors Teaching
  - (2) Graduates of CSU Education Specialist Credential Programs
  - (3) Evaluation Questions Answered by the Programs' First-Years Teaching Graduates

### **Key Assessment Measure #1 Classroom Management Plan**

In SPED 125 (*Positive Behavioral and Social Support*), each student designs a classroom management plan for his or her classroom and specific student population. The plan includes the development of rules and expectations; relationship building with students, colleagues and family members; strategies for increasing student engagement and for providing quality instruction; appropriate response to minor misbehavior; interventions for students with challenging behaviors; and finally, a crisis management plan to respond to behavioral and medical emergencies (See [Classroom Management Plan Guidelines](#)).

Candidate Dispositions Addressed: Reflection, Critical Thinking.  
PS 12, MM 4, MS 6, TPE 11, 12 (CCTC).

This assignment is designed to examine teacher candidates' classroom management skills. Modifications have been made to meet the above new CCTC standards. To ensure validity of this measure, revisions will be made as necessary based on the feedback of teacher candidates, instructors, and site supervisors. Reliability checks will be conducted by the taking the following steps: (1) Assign one instructor to teach SPED 125 on a continuous basis to keep its consistency, (2) When co-teaching is applied, require two instructors to use the same rubric and calculate inter-rate reliability, and (3) Provide training if necessary when the instructor(s) has to be changed. Areas to be evaluated include (1) Classroom Rules, (2) Procedures & Expectations, (3) Reminders, (4) Relationships, (5) Student Engagement, (6) Quality Instruction, (7) Response to Minor Misbehavior, (8) Targeted and Tertiary Interventions and Supports, (9) Crisis Plan, and (10) Structure of the Plan (See [Classroom Management Rubric](#)).

### **Key Assessment Measure #2 Curriculum-Based Assessment Report**

This instrument is used to measure candidates' ability to design, administer and use results of assessment data to develop IEPs, and evaluate their instruction by using a certain curriculum (i.e., content taught to students at school). This instrument has four parts: (1) Student's Information; (2) Probe Design and Administration; (3) Data Analysis and Instructional Considerations; and (4) Developing IEP Goals and Benchmarks. Data are collected in SPED 130 (*Assessing Students with Special Needs*). Through this assignment, students learn the basic skills

of data-based instruction as an effective measure to increase accountability of special education in California (See [Curriculum-Based Assessment Report Guidelines & Rubric](#))

Candidate Dispositions Addressed: Reflection, Critical Thinking, Professional Ethics, Valuing Diversity, Collaboration, and Life-long Learning, Professional Ethics (NCATE). **PS 5, TPE 3, CCTC's M/M 2, M/S 2, 4 (CCTC)**

The Curriculum-Based Assessment Report been used as a signature assignment since 2006. Modifications have been made to meet the new CCTC. To ensure high validity of this measure, revisions will be made as necessary based on the feedback of teacher candidates, instructors, and site supervisors. Reliability checks will be conducted by the taking the following steps: (1) Assign one instructor to teach SPED 130 on a continuous to keep its consistency; (2) When co-teaching is applied, require two instructors to use the same rubric and calculate inter-rate reliability; and (3) Provide training if necessary when the instructor(s) has to be changed. (See [Curriculum-Based Assessment Report Guidelines & Rubric](#)).

### **Key Assessment Measure # 3 Special Education Program Survey**

The Special Education Program Survey consists of two parts:

- (1) Evaluation and Needs Assessment Survey-Candidate (Preliminary Level) and
- (2) Evaluation and Needs Assessment Survey- Administrators (Preliminary Level).

These assessments are designed to examine our teacher candidates and their and their principal's perceptions of how they have met CCTC standards.

#### **Evaluation and Needs Assessment Survey-Candidates (Preliminary Level)**

[Evaluation and Needs Assessment Survey-Candidates \(Preliminary Level\)](#)--This survey is designed to assess whether program graduates believe that goals and objectives of the program are met. It is an exit survey and was used as one of key measures in the 2008 and 2010 Biannual Reports. The instrument contains (1) a statement of purpose, (2) demographic information, (3) questionnaire examining the level of competency achieved by the Special Education Program graduates and (4) additional comments made by the graduates. This survey is conducted with each teacher candidate when the candidate exits the Special Education Program. Candidate performance is rated on a scale of 0-3, with 3 representing well prepared, 2 indicating moderately prepared, 1 being poorly prepared, and 0 being no knowledge. Data are used to identify program strengths and areas for improvement (See [Evaluation and Needs Assessment Survey-Candidates](#)). The following ten areas are examined in the survey:

1. Collaborates and communicates effectively with family members, school administrators, teachers, paraprofessionals, and other related service providers.
2. Knowledgeable of and able to conduct formal and informal assessments of pupils.
3. Communicates assessment information to parents and appropriate service providers, and makes instructional decisions that reflect both student needs and core curricula.

4. Collaboratively develops IEPs with parents and other service providers to include yearly goals and benchmark objectives that target the student's needs.
5. Selects appropriate instructional goals, strategies, and techniques based on individual student needs identified in the IEP.
6. Plans, adapts, and provides effective instruction that meets the needs of diverse learners across a variety of settings.
7. Maintains appropriate classroom management with positive behavioral support plans, proactive and respectful.
8. Demonstrates the ability to design and implement positive behavioral support plans and interventions based on observation and assessment data.
9. Utilizes technology for instruction, communication, and/or assessment.
10. Professional conduct is exhibited through open discussions of ideas, reflections on own practices, utilization of research based information and consideration of professional advice.

The data collected by this survey is aggregated by the assessment coordinator of the program in collaboration with other faculty members. Scoring of the quantitative data will be checked by a different faculty member as a second evaluation. Comments made by the respondents of the survey will be summarized and shared in the program meetings.

#### **Evaluation and Needs Assessment Survey-Administrators (Preliminary Level)**

[Evaluation and Needs of Assessment Survey- Administrators \(Preliminary Level\)](#)--This survey intended to examine the quality of the Special Education Program perceived by the administrators or supervisors who hire our graduates or provide sites for the candidates of our program to complete their final student teaching. It was used as one of the key measures in the 2008 and 2010 Biannual Reports. This measure consists of 4 sections (1) a cover letter explaining purposes of survey, (2) demographic information, (3) questionnaire, and (4) additional comments. Practicum Administrators are surveyed when the students have completed their final student teaching at their practicum sites. University supervisors are responsible for distributing this survey to district employers. Candidate performance is rated on a scale of 0-3, with 3 representing well prepared, 2 indicating moderately prepared, 1 being poorly prepared, and 0 being no knowledge. Data are used to identify program strengths and areas for improvement. Data collected are used to identify program strengths and areas for improvement. (See Evaluation and Needs Assessment Survey-Administrators). The following ten areas are examined in the survey:

1. Collaborates and communicates effectively with family members, school administrators, teachers, paraprofessionals, and other related service providers.
2. Knowledgeable of and able to conduct formal and informal assessments of pupils.
3. Communicates assessment information to parents and appropriate service providers, and makes instructional decisions that reflect both student needs and core curricula.
4. Collaboratively develops IEPs with parents and other service providers to include yearly goals and benchmark objectives that target the student's needs.
5. Selects appropriate instructional goals, strategies, and techniques based on individual student needs identified in the IEP.

6. Plans, adapts, and provides effective instruction that meets the needs of diverse learners across a variety of settings.
7. Maintains appropriate classroom management with positive behavioral support plans, proactive and respectful.
8. Demonstrates the ability to design and implement positive behavioral support plans and interventions based on observation and assessment data.
9. Utilizes technology for instruction, communication, and/or assessment.

The data collected by this survey will be aggregated by the assessment coordinator of the program in collaboration with other faculty members. Scoring of the quantitative data will be checked by a different faculty member as a second evaluation. Comments made by the respondents of the survey will be summarized and shared at the program meetings.

#### **Key Assessment Measure # 4 CSU Systemwide Survey**

CSU Systemwide Survey ---The purpose of the survey is to provide information that the Deans, other CSU leaders, and faculty can use in making improvements in teacher education programs (See [Guide to CSU Fresno's Evaluation Reports in 2011](#)). Graduates surveyed are asked to rate the quality and effectiveness of their CSU preparation. The Special Education Program CSU, Fresno has effectively utilized the data collected by CSU Systemwide since 2004 and will continue to use its results for program evaluation. This instrument has been adopted because it is a longitudinal and external survey. It not only enables us to evaluate and monitor our credential program in an objective and systematic way, but also let us compare our program to special education programs of other CSU campuses.

This survey examines how well graduates were prepared to begin (with intensive site support) to (1) teach in Special Education, (2) know and understand special education laws, issues, and practices, (3) adapt curriculum in reading-language arts and math, (4) prepare and implement Individual Education Plans in consultation with teachers, parents, and specialists, (5) be equitable and reflective in teaching, and (6) begin to be responsible for the education of students with disabilities and in inclusive settings. This is accomplished by asking both graduates and the graduates' employment supervisors to complete separate, but parallel, 110-item online surveys at the end of the graduate's first year of full time professional teaching employment. Evaluation participants respond to the evaluation questions by using the following measurement scale that has four valid values:

- The teacher was **well-prepared** in the topic or teaching practice specified in the question = 3
- The teacher was **adequately-prepared** in the topics of teacher in the topic or teaching practice specified in the question = 2
- The teacher was **somewhat-prepared** in the topics of teacher in the topic or teaching practice specified in the question = 1
- The teacher was **not-at-all-prepared** in the topics of teacher in the topic or teaching practice specified in the question = 0

#### **Validity and Reliability of CSU Systemwide Survey:**

How does the CSU Systemwide Evaluation of Teacher Preparation measure program effectiveness? In this survey, program effectiveness is conceptualized in the extent to which their prior coursework and fieldwork enable them to incorporate the professional core practices and concepts into their work at levels of proficiency and understanding that are appropriate and realistic for first-years certified teachers. Individuals who had participated in drafting and implementing California's accreditation standards for universities and its performance expectations for teachers were responsible for the alignment of the evaluation questions. The validity of this survey was also examined by Beare, Marshall, Torgerson, et al. 2010) in their article "[\*Toward a Culture of Evidence: Factors Affecting Survey Assessment of Teacher Preparation\*](#)". For further specific information of validity of the survey, see Validity of Evaluation Results.

Reliability is reported in this survey. Uncertainty about evaluation findings come from two principal sources: the number of evaluation participants and the extent their concurrence with each other. The evaluation findings become increasingly certain the extent that the CSU questions are answered by many, or by most or by all of the program's completers (or other employment supervisors). But there is a second factor that also affects the level of certainty about the evaluation results, that is, the extent that the participating teachers and/or supervisors agreed with each other in their responses. Specific information about reliability of this survey can be found in [Reliability of Evaluation Results in 2011](#).

For more specific information about the CSU Systemwide Survey, please see the following attachments in the Appendix:

- [CSU Evaluation Questions that Comprise Each Teacher and Supervisor](#)
- [Education Specialist Program Effectiveness Campus and System Composite Findings \(Level D\) in 2011](#)
- [Respondent Background Information](#)
- [ES Program Composite Graph in 2011](#)

### **Use of Results for Improving Teaching, Learning, or Curriculum**

**Establish a systematic assessment mechanism in the program.** To ensure that assessment results are used for program improvement, the program faculty hold program meetings at least once in each semester to discuss issues related to outcomes assessment. Retreats are held annually by the program to consider assessment results and recommend program changes. Results of assessment data and program changes are reported to the Program Advisory Board for its input and guidance in each semester. Assessment data is also share in the NCATE Unit Assessment meetings which are attended by the Director of Teacher Education (Dean of the Kremen School). Assessment activities, such as measurement development, data analysis, proposed program changes, and changes made based on the assessment results will be documented in meeting minutes for program review. Data collection is a meaningful routine and on-going process in the SPED Program for improvement purpose.

**Use data collected through assessment activities to improve teaching, learning and curriculum consistently and effectively on a continuous basis.** Program improvement through both formalized assessment, observations, and/or anecdotal input will be part of each

program meeting. Faculty discussions of data and program issues will be frequently put on the agenda in addition to the formally scheduled meetings to discuss the assessment system. Faculty members' knowledge will be updated by attending professional conferences and seminars, by encouraging them to conduct research in these areas, mentoring junior faculty to improve their instructional skills through peer review and co-teaching courses, etc.

**Actively engage program faculty in sustained learning assessment activities.**

Effort will be made to use biennial assessments to identify areas of strengths and weaknesses through a self-study (See [Fresno State Biannual Report SPED, 2010](#)). Assessment is a part of the culture of the Special Education Program. Changes to improve courses and the program are identified on a continual basis and specific attention is focused on particular assignments and experiences based on assessment.

In the Special Education Program, all faculty in the program are expected to be members of the assessment team. The assessment coordinator is expected to play a leadership role. The program objectives, curriculum map, assessment measures, action plan, and time frames are written by the program assessment coordinator and program coordinator based on the input from the faculty. The technical adequacies (such as validity and reliability) of the assessment measures will be monitored by the program assessment coordinator. The direct measures (i.e., course assignments) are graded and collected by program course instructors. Indirect measures (i.e. surveys) will be administered in class or sent out by mail. Returned surveys will be collected by the program assessment coordinator and program coordinator. The program assessment data will be aggregated by the program assessment coordinator. Assessment measurement development and revision, data analysis, proposed program changes, and changes made based on the results of assessment activities will be discussed at program meetings, part time faculty meetings, university supervisor meetings, and the program advisory board meetings. Plans of actions are led by the program coordinator. The program is currently redesigning the outcome assessment plan with fewer, but significant, outcomes and measures.