

College of Saint Mary
Rule 24 Section 3:
Use of Related Data and Information for
Continuous Program Improvement of Endorsement Program

Endorsement Program: Middle Grades - Science

What did the data indicate and what endorsement program changes were made as a result of data analysis?

The data indicate that completers in the Science endorsement generally achieve high levels of performance on understanding learners, setting up positive learning environments, utilizing assessment strategies, planning and implementing instruction, gathering and evaluating evidence of student learning and engaging in reflective practices including self-evaluation. Data revealed that completers generally displayed professional and ethical behavior, modeled professional dispositions and collaborative skills.

In order to continue to have an impact on teacher candidate performance, the curriculum for the endorsement is constantly monitored to ensure compliance with Rule 24 guidelines and to stay up to date with current and emerging practices in the field. It was apparent that some completers will struggle at times during their program and in the clinical practice semester and it is critical that significant problems are identified early in the program and that teacher candidates who are challenged get the support that is needed to aid in their success.

Any changes include careful monitoring of professional dispositions by all instructors in the MAT program, and reflections are required on the dispositions by the MAT candidates in the course to course dispositions document that is maintained throughout the program. Dispositions are assessed as 10% of the final grade for each MAT course. If deficiencies are noted, concerns are expressed to the candidate in weekly feedback within the course. Instructors report any concerns to the program directors and an advising appointment is scheduled. An improvement plan is designed and progress is monitored carefully going forward. In rare cases, candidates have been dismissed due to significant dispositional concerns.

What other information was included in decision making?

The program directors continuously assess course evaluations, informal dialogue with candidates, and recommendations of the adjunct instructors. The program directors collaborate on a daily basis to use this feedback to make design program improvements. There is ongoing communication to department peers and opportunities to seek input as needed.

How were decisions made and by whom?

The program directors meet regularly to evaluate data and information received. There is an opportunity to meet with adjunct instructors at least once a semester to strategically plan for upcoming semesters and program adjustments. Additionally, we meet with the education department as a whole at least once a month and any program changes are proposed to the College of Saint Mary Graduate

Council for consideration for approval. Following approval from Graduate Council, program changes are sent to the VPAA's office for additional approval.

What has been the effect of these program changes?

The development of the NE Clinical Evaluation reflection process has resulted in stronger communication between all stakeholders on behalf of the teacher candidates, greater transparency, heightened awareness of expectations, and overall accountability. The addition of EDU 662 was a welcomed change by the fall 2015 cohort. The course evaluations were exceedingly positive.

What future endorsement program changes are planned?

With the updated Rule 24 changes for all middle level endorsements, transcript reviews for incoming MAT candidates will be guided by the updated content course requirements. An additional layer of content on middle school models will be added to EDU 560 Middle/Secondary Methods.

What implications for overall unit improvement initiatives to the endorsement program?

Several programmatic changes in the Unit have had an impact on the Science endorsement. These include use of the statewide Clinical Practice evaluation format, updated CSM Student Outcomes, the Case Study project requirement, CSM Lesson Plan Format revisions and ongoing reflection and feedback on dispositions.

As of 2016-2017, the course syllabi, field work evaluation and clinical evaluation will be revised to share the common dispositional standard language of the updated clinical evaluation from 2016-2017. This will align the expectations of professional dispositions throughout coursework to the same expectations of the clinical experience.

The use of the statewide Clinical Practice Evaluation had an impact upon this endorsement. The evaluation is built on InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards and CSM Student Outcomes are aligned with InTASC Standards. Each course in the middle level program was examined and the student learning outcomes were updated and aligned with InTASC Standards, NDE Guideline and CSM Student Outcomes. This alignment built on InTASC standards helps to ensure that candidates are developing the knowledge, skills and dispositions that will be assessed during Clinical Practice.

The addition of the Case Study project completed during Clinical Practice provides the use of multiple measures of student performance in assessing, planning, implementing and evaluating students. The demands of the Case Study will be continuously reviewed.

A general CSM Lesson Plan Format was developed in 2000 to be used across all teacher education methods courses. The Lesson Plan Format has been reviewed continuously. A more detailed review and revisions were completed in Fall 2013 and the Lesson Plan Format with Reflection Format was updated with more detailed instructions and links to resources including stronger attention to Accommodations and Modifications to be addressed in differentiating lessons for all learners. As part of increased attention to gathering and analyzing student data, a Lesson Plan with Evidence of Student Learning Analysis Format was developed in Fall 2013 to be used across methods courses program-wide when candidates are able to plan, implement and evaluate lessons in field experience settings.

There has been limited success in having candidates complete field experience teaching that allows for detailed analysis of student data due to restricted opportunities for candidates to take leading roles in classroom instruction. Teacher candidates placed in Fall semester field experiences are typically in the process of learning instructional design and not yet ready to conduct detailed data-driven assessments. During Spring semester field experiences, teachers hesitate to release control of instruction to students with the heightened focus on test preparation during the semester. Partnerships with specific schools and classrooms will be formed to allow candidates to complete at least one detailed Lesson Plan with Analysis as part of their preparation.