

1st Year Teacher Data

Feedback pulled Spring 2014 (grads from F2012/Sp2013)

Categories Surveyed:	RATING	
	ELEM	SECDY
Content Knowledge	2.77	3.47
Planning and Preparation	2.79	2.67
The Classroom Environment	2.64	2.67
Instruction/ Pedagogical Knowledge and Skills	2.93	2.73
Professional Responsibilities	3.29	3.07
Professional Dispositions	3.50	3.60
Student Learning	3.00	3.20
Differentiate Instruction	3.00	2.67
Overall success as a 1st year teacher	3.21	3.27

Key:

Distinguished - 4

Proficient - 3

At Standard - 2

Unsatisfactory - 1

14 Elementary Ed Student Teachers Responded

15 Secondary/K-12 Student Teachers Responded

Comments on following pages...

Comments from First Year Elementary Teachers:

- 1) I wish that I was more prepared and knowledgeable in Iowa Core. As a resource room teacher, It would also be nice to learn more tests/ways to assess student learning each quarter. I felt prepared to differentiate instruction for students, but more techniques would be even better!!

 - 2) Comparing my student teaching experience to my first year position the classroom environments have been completely opposite of one another of one another. When I student taught, I adopted the classroom teacher's expectations & behavior management which worked well for that experience. However, at my first year position, the classroom environment has been VERY different since the school uses the PBIS expectations. When I was a student I felt that classroom environment was a low-importance discussion and something that was talked about if time allowed. Every school system has different behavior expectations that they enforce and most often teachers have to adapt their classroom management skills to fit their student's needs. I don't know if this is something that is being done currently but I wonder if NW students would benefit from various role-play classroom behavior situations.

 - 3) In preparation of teaching in the general education setting, Northwestern does a phenomenal job of preparing teachers for different situations that may arise. My school year has been vastly different than any other teacher because I have a very unique situation that one would not learn about in an undergraduate program. This has been an extremely challenging experience, but as I reflect on my year I can see how much progress has been made and how much I have learned in my first year. My only recommendation would be to include more behavioral case studies/iep goals to the special education program, so teachers are familiar with FBAs and BIPs and what could go along with them.
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- 4) "Content Knowledge- I spend half of my day teaching writing. We spent very little time learning about writing and how to teach writing in any of my classes. I acknowledge that very few of my colleagues have experience with teaching writing either, but some basic covering of Six Traits and writing education philosophy would be very helpful. Although schools in Iowa have not been held accountable to their writing instruction before, the Core dictates much better what writing should look like and how we should teach it. I will not be surprised if a writing assessment for Iowa students is adapted in the next few years.

Planning and Preparation- I feel like I have learned everything I know about teaching with standards and aligning to the standards on my own. I grew up in Nebraska where standards-based education was somewhat of a norm. However, we did not look at the Core close enough in school. NWC students would be at such an advantage to their schools if they were coming out understanding and being comfortable with standards-based lessons, units, and philosophy. They are entering school systems with many teachers who don't know how and/or don't believe in the Core. Many schools have also not been able to align curriculum and resources to adequately aid teachers in aligning their classrooms. Having their opinion on these issues and also knowing how to do it on their own could really set new teachers above their colleagues very early on.

Professional Development- Teachers more and more are expected to and are excelling at building their own professional development. These skills should be recognized and rewarded at the college level. Students should get professional development from participating in EdChats on Twitter, Watching/Participating in Webinars (Think EdWeb), and should begin forming their PLN (Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest) before they even leave Northwestern. That being said, all of these skills will likely need to be taught AND expected in class before students will use them for themselves.

The IEP process. I think it would be very good at some point to have someone from the AEA describe the IEP process and Initial IEP process to your General Education students. They could introduce things like a Gen Ed plan, review some typical In-Classroom Interventions, and some ideas for how to document, organize, and present this information to parents, special education teachers, and the AEA. I went through this entire process for a student this year who needed an IEP, but I was not prepared in the least for what it would all entail. I knew what an IEP was, and I recognized the student's struggles, but I had to ask at every step how I would continue going through the process. This could be done, even, in one of the Reading Endorsement classes, as I feel this process would be even more a part of a Title I teacher's job. However, since most elementary teachers also receive their Reading Endorsement, most elementary teachers at least would understand this process a bit better. Although it's likely their school will do Tier 2 a little bit different, even having some basics down would have helped me a lot.

But anyway, there are some thoughts. I truly value the education I received at NWC, and I have felt very prepared in most aspects. But I also believe we use surveys to make ourselves even better. Hopefully I have shared something helpful. Thank you for everything!

5) I feel like most of my college classes prepared me for creating super detailed lesson plans which is helpful because some of that detailed-ness is done mentally as I plan, but those lesson plans are nothing like the lesson plans we use. I realize that professors said that those lesson plans were more work than required in a real classroom, that they were practice, but it wasn't a realistic skill to be practicing. I wish that I would have received more classroom management theories and ideas, but I realize that experience gained while teaching is the quickest way to build those skills. I also would have liked to learn more about popular/current curriculums being used - like high scope and creative curriculum. Observing and working in classrooms was the way that I learned the most so I support requiring extended hours observing. The education program mentally equipped me for the strength and creativity required I'm teaching, but I can't say that i took a lot of resources from it to use in the classroom. And perhaps that's the way it should be. Or perhaps I didn't take enough responsibility for my education or my learning style didn't match up. I'm glad I received my BA from northwestern, and I share these thoughts because they might strengthen the program even more.

Comments from First Year Secondary/K-12 Teachers :

- 1) One thing that I wish Northwestern would have done with teaching how to prepare lessons is focused more on starting with the standards. I feel like all of my education classes said, "Create a lesson, and be sure to have standards that relate to it." With common core math especially, I have to look at the standards and then create the unit/lessons. Having some classes/projects where there is no choice in the lesson you teach, but rather here is a standard, how are you going to teach it? would help a lot. Otherwise great!

- 2) Music is an incredibly unique teaching/learning setting. My successes here have been a result of the preparation/skills I received from the Music Department and my own expectations for student growth. Teacher candidates in music are not getting the training they need from the education department simply because of how different the music area is from a "normal classroom". These candidates need a separate program (or at least additional classes) that focus on the specifics of teaching music, rather than classes that focus on how to teach a 20 student history/math/science etc. class. The classes currently offered give a cursory glance into the music world, but can do no more than that. Our classroom management policies and challenges are wildly different (i.e. I have had as many as 120 students in the room at one time, and my "normal" class is over 50 students); our community visibility and involvement is significantly higher than teachers of other areas; we have a number of extracurricular activities that really aren't optional, which opens us up to a number of additional challenges; and we teach in an area that everybody else assumes they understand even when they haven't even the slightest clue what we're up against. The only way we learn this is by doing, so I say: Get the music students into MUSIC CLASSROOMS more often. Forget about casual classroom observation hours, multicultural hours, and all of those other hours (well, you can keep SOME of them), and get the music students into a music classroom where they can get the opportunity to participate and observe what they'll actually be doing. I'd be thrilled to open up my classroom to these students, and I know other music directors in the area would be happy to as well. To sum up, the education program might work perfectly well for other content areas, but it isn't really applicable to the music classroom, especially secondary. More music-specific classes, music-specific hours, and music-specific training would be an incredible boost for these teacher candidates. (And my "unsatisfactory" answer to #12 was related to the communicate with families area. I learned very quickly that parents will take comments out of context, even to the point of twisting a compliment you gave into something nasty, and then will lash out at you over the results. Yikes, they can be nasty sometimes.)

- 3) From the Physical Education or "specials" prospective I feel like I was lumped in with other specials classes during some of my instruction and was not able to really learn about my subject. I feel like I didn't have people to work with during some classes that made it really hard to do actual collaboration with teachers in my field which was frustrating. I felt that even though I was going to be a elementary teacher, I didn't fit in in a lot of discussions.

- 4) I think it would be good to get a little more exposure to how things work at a private school (especially in Special Ed).

It also would have been helpful to do a little more with lesson planning. It was kind of tough to figure out a realistic and effective way to organize my lesson plans. I think the Secondary Ed department needs to spend a little more time on this.

- 5) I think Northwestern does all that can be done to get a student prepared, besides the things learned by actually doing.

6) There should be a unit on behavior management in a required class (with all of the extra endorsements, etc., that most education students get it is often difficult to fit in the classroom management class). Lila should teach it. She is good at giving very specific, practical advice. This would be extremely helpful!

7) Overall, my training at Northwestern was incredibly valuable, but I do have a few suggestions.

The main one I can think of is differentiation. While the Survey of the Exceptional Individual class was helpful, I did not feel adequately prepared for working with Special Education teachers to make modifications and accommodations for individual students. While Survey was helpful in learning ABOUT various learning disabilities, I think the content of the class could be more focused on exactly HOW to accommodate individuals and work with special education teachers in doing so.

8) Couldn't be happier with how I was educated to become an educator. Planning and Preparation & Instruction/ Pedagogical Knowledge and Skills could be improved if a class is offered that is geared more towards teaching methods, assessment creation and writing, and activity creation. For instance: lecturing, class discussions, class questioning methods, activity creation, test writing, etc. This is stuff you figure out as you go through writing your own curriculum. However, it could be useful to address more of the "nuts and bolts" of teaching (especially in the first year).

9) I felt a bit unprepared in three major areas

1. Realistic use of technology in the classroom
2. Using the internet to build a PLN
3. Development of authentic assessment and AIW

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- 10) Northwestern taught me how to create a lesson plan that caters to several different learning styles. I feel like I understand how to be engaging while breaking content down into manageable chunks, coming at each one from multiple perspectives. I feel like being a compassionate and flexible educator was well taught.

However, I do not feel that Northwestern adequately prepared me for certain realities of inner city public school teaching. I felt overwhelmed by all of the extra demands placed on teachers (mandatory committees, IEP meetings, constantly filling out evaluation forms for monitored student performance, organizing/inventorying a science closet, figuring out how and from where I should order materials, etc.) beyond the heavy demands of planning every lesson and material, teaching it, then grading everything. I didn't have a real grasp of how to account for 10% of my student body being on extensive IEPs, while another 10% have consistent attendance issues, but you are expected to make every accommodation possible to make these students pass. I would have liked to leave with a better understanding of what a teaching union is/does. Classroom management was taught one strategy at a time, rather than a constant building of a skill and we only ever practiced on compliant classmates. Also, we focused on students who misbehave. We never addressed how to deal with students who simply opt out. I would like to have come away with a better method identifying and addressing suspected abuse, neglect, and mental illness. Basically, I feel prepared for the ideal basics, which may work for upper middle class settings, but that is not the reality for most American Schools. I wish that reality had been more accurately represented, for while this is still my passion, it was also a reality-slap in the face.

This was not meant to be a rant. I truly have struggled this year in many ways and wish I just would have known a few more things. Maybe some of these can be incorporated into currently required classes. Northwestern was fantastic in preparing me content-wise. I know how to design a lesson, execute it, analyze it, and modify it. Now I just needed some of the nitty-gritty realistic challenges addressed.

P.S. Grants: How/where to find them. How to write a decent proposal. I began this year as a Biology/Anatomy teacher with a \$100 budget and 180 students... we ALWAYS need money. haha.
