

2019 Principal Feedback Survey Results

College of Education, Grand Valley State University

Background

GVSU participates with a number of MI teacher preparation programs to annually administer a survey to school principals in which GVSU teaching candidates are placed. The mailing list is updated annually based on school placements over the past three semesters.

On August 5, 2019, post cards were sent to 242 principals, announcing the survey, providing the survey link, and a request to complete it before September 15, 2019. Five postcards were returned as undeliverable. On August 26, 2019, reminder post cards were sent to the remaining 237 principals, again reminding them to take the survey before the September due date.

GVSU received a total of 10 responses; however, not all 10 respondents answered every question. Thus, the findings of this survey are based on a very small sampling of principals as the return rate was less than 24%. This response rate is not acceptable to our accreditors who wish to see an 80% return rate. GVSU is currently soliciting ideas from the field on best ways to increase the involvement of our stakeholders in evaluating our candidates.

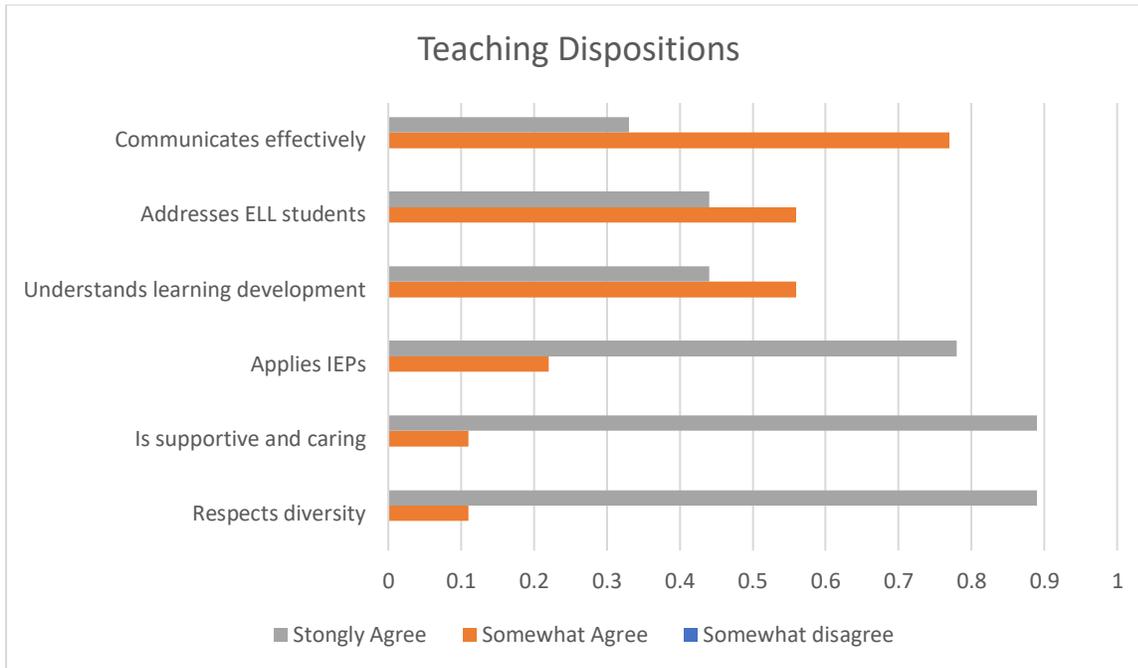
Survey Content

The survey asked principals to keep GVSU candidates with whom they have worked in mind while responding to each item. There were four categories of questions:

- Teaching Dispositions
- Teaching Content
- Using Assessment and Technology
- Professionalism

The categories of questions align with Michigan required InTASC standards (2013) for professional teacher certification. InTASC stands for the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium.

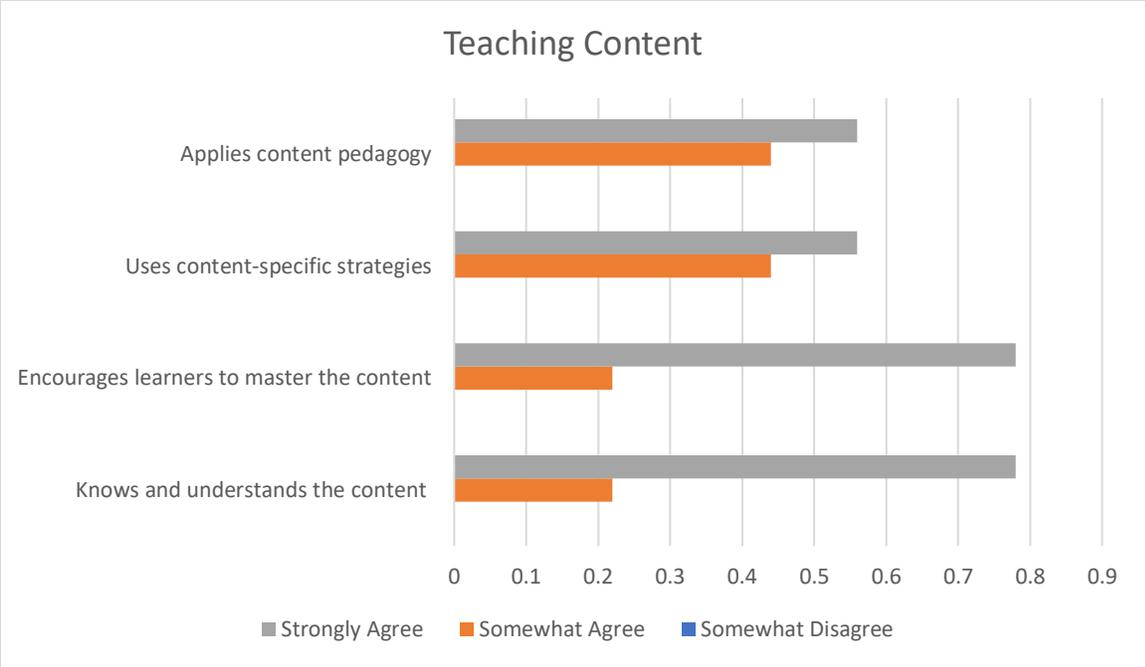
Survey Findings



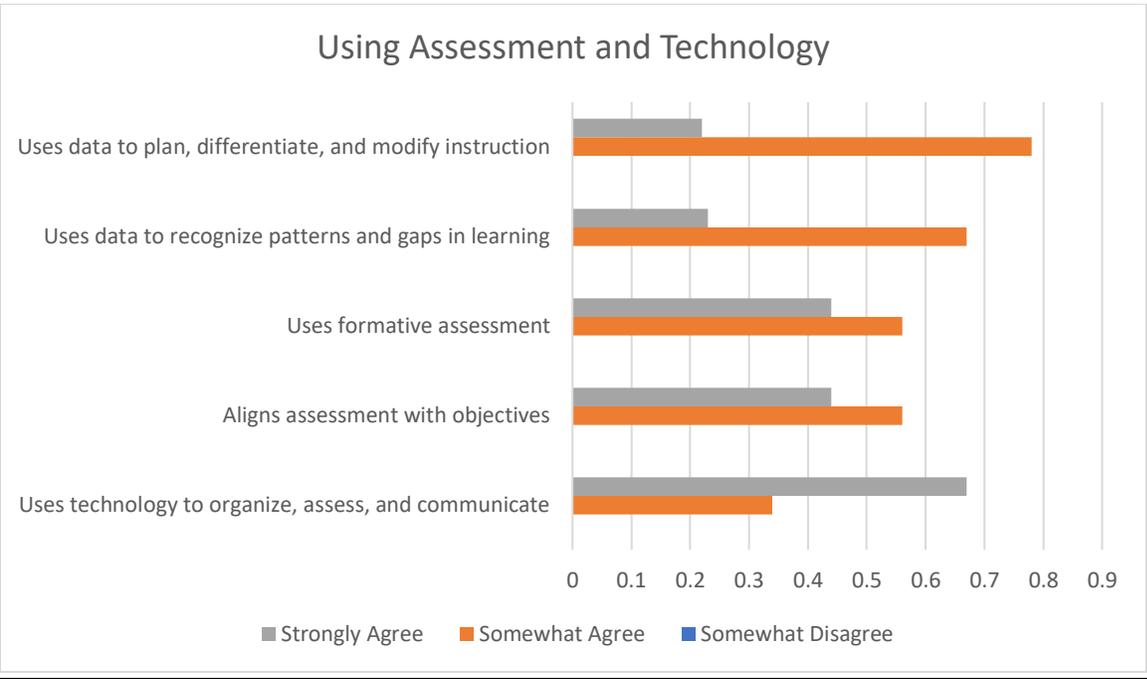
The survey indicated GVSU teacher candidates have a high level of respect for diverse learners, and they are capable of creating a supportive and caring classroom environment.

GVSU teacher candidates could improve in their ability to clearly and effectively communicate with others. Candidates need more support on how to address the needs of ELL students as well as have a better understanding of learning development.

Currently, plans are underway to significantly revise the GVSU teacher preparation curriculum due to changes required by the Michigan Department of Education. More emphasis will be placed on practical activities that encourage teacher candidates to have a deeper understanding of how learning develops as well as opportunities to clearly articulate that understanding.



Survey results indicate GVSU teacher candidates know and understand the content for which they have instructional responsibility. Likewise, candidates have a commitment to encouraging learners to master the content. The preparation program could improve by placing more emphasis on applying content pedagogy by using content-specific teaching strategies. Currently all GVSU teacher candidates complete a content major as part of their teacher preparation; however, recent changes in the certification structure no longer requires a content major for elementary candidates.



Results indicate GVSU teacher candidates are adept at using technology to organize the classroom, to assess student learning and his or her teaching, and to communicate with others. Candidates would benefit from a curriculum that emphasizes collecting and using instructional data to make daily decisions in the classroom. More practice in using and applying assessment outcomes when planning for instruction is needed.



The survey indicates principals believe GVSU teacher candidates are adept at practicing and demonstrating professional ethics and conduct. Teacher candidates are less adept at communicating their expectations with others in order to promote student growth. The teacher preparation program should continue to emphasize opportunities for candidates to reflect on their learning and their teaching as well as increase opportunities for candidates to communicate the school community at large.

Conclusions

Principal feedback indicates GVSU teacher candidates would benefit from a greater emphasis on the application of content specific pedagogies in the classroom. Moreover, candidates need to have a deeper knowledge of the learning process especially as it relates to the ELL student. Practice in using actual school data to make decisions about instruction as well as opportunities to communicate the rationale for decision making needs increased throughout the program.

Responding principals indicate a strength of the GVSU teacher preparation program is the level of candidate preparedness when entering the classroom. Principals value the wide array of experiences candidates encounter when developing their educational philosophies. Candidates are capable of working independently, and are open to feedback about their teaching. To summarize, “GVSU students are prepared to work with a variety of students. They have a good understanding of the whole student. They are prepared and confident in the classroom and it shows in their lessons. “