

Pre-/Post- Diversity Practicum

Teacher candidates in the EDUC 352 practicum are assigned to complete a survey prior to their diversity practicum field experience and then shortly after. The assessment asks candidates to share their perceptions of their own knowledge and comfort level in four areas.

Diversity Pre-Trip & Post-Trip Self-Assessment

- 5: Very knowledgeable and comfortable
- 4: Fairly knowledgeable and comfortable
- 3: Somewhat knowledgeable and comfortable
- 2: Little knowledge and uncomfortable
- 1: Unaware and uncomfortable

Pre-trip	Mean	5	4	3	2	1
The demographics of your classroom will impact the lessons you teach.	3.54 / 625	12.48%	37.76%	40.96%	8.64%	0.16%
You will be able to exhibit an attitude of fairness and respect toward all learners in your classroom.	4.39 / 625	51.52%	37.92%	9.12%	1.28%	0.16%
You will adapt instructional materials to match student needs.	3.74 / 626	20.77%	38.98%	34.66%	5.11%	0.48%
You will manage your classroom to promote equity and tolerance.	4.22 / 627	42.58%	39.55%	15.63%	1.91%	0.32%

Post-trip	Mean	5	4	3	2	1
The demographics of your classroom will impact the lessons you teach.	4.49 / 528	55.30%	39.39%	4.55%	0.76%	0%
You will be able to exhibit an attitude of fairness and respect toward all learners in your classroom.	4.79 / 528	80.30%	18.37%	1.14%	0%	0.19%
You will adapt instructional materials to match student needs.	4.56 / 529	59.74%	36.67%	3.21%	0.38%	0%
You will manage your classroom to promote equity and tolerance.	4.77 / 529	80.15%	17.77%	1.51%	0.38%	0.19%

Analysis: The data indicate that teacher candidates tend to feel least knowledgeable and comfortable in the areas of understanding how classroom demographics will impact the lessons they teach and understanding how they will adapt their instructional materials to match the needs of their students. The confidence level of the candidates appears to increase substantially after the trip. The mean score totals and the percentage of “5” ratings are much higher in each of the four selected areas. The data also indicate that approximately 84% of those candidates who complete the pre-trip survey follow-up through to finish the post-trip survey.

Action: The diversity field experience continues to be rated as students as one of their memorable and meaningful learning opportunities. Selecting four areas of focus on for assessment gives the students four things to think about while they are observing or co-teaching. The areas do not limit their learning, but they do add direction increase awareness, focus and learning related to those areas. Realizing the context for learning and demographics of a classroom, having an attitude of fairness and respect, being able to see the need to adapt instruction, and ideas for managing a classroom. Each of these four areas is worthy of special attention during this field experience. On a less significant note, the data indicate that assessment coordinator and the course instructors can communicate about a solution for an even higher percentage of follow through on the post-trip ratings.

Examples of student responses to the following request after the post-trip ratings:

Please list modifications you will make as a teacher to assist diverse learners in your classroom.

My cooperating teacher had seemingly very good relationships with many of her students and was respected as an educator and role model. Watching her interact with her students, I learned the importance of a balance between these two aspects and the importance of treating all students fairly according to the institutions rules and standards. By observing many classrooms of different demographics and learning levels, I also realized just how difficult adapting to different learning styles and levels can and may be in my future classroom. I think this realization as a pre-service teacher will only enhance my ability in the future by helping me consider different techniques before I enter the classroom. My teacher stressed the importance of keeping contacts close and referring to her or other teachers I observe in the future for ideas and lessons.

As a teacher I want to be as effective as I can to reach a majority of my students. In my introduction to elementary education I learned that in order to be effective teacher I have to reach 80% of my students 80% of the time. I feel that in order to reach this level of effectiveness I have to adapt my methods of teaching. 1. Arrange students in the classroom according to their needs; high needs students will have "quicker" access to myself, based on where I seat them. 2. Accommodate the students by teaching them on the level at which they are currently at, while still managing to challenge them to exceed their goals. 3. Meeting any IEP goals. 4. Encourage the use of native language, while still maintaining the growth of their English vocabulary. 5. Being sensitive to the differences in socioeconomic statuses of my students; making sure that all of the students have access to the same supplies needed to complete their work effectively. 6. I will be mindful that not all students come from a stable home environment that has a mother/father resource available to them. 7. Being available to my students on the level at which they need me.

The biggest thing I learned from my field experience is no matter where a person goes to teach, kids are going to be kids no matter what their cultural background is. The second most valuable thing I learned was work hard to relate material to the diverse student population because the more material you can relate the more learning can take place.

All students have great potential as long as educators take the time to help them bring it out in themselves. - Other cultures may have different customs or beliefs and those customs and beliefs must be protected and promoted in the classroom. - All students must be given the chance to build their self-confidence and must be given chances to develop leadership among their peers instead of being stifled by the instructor.

I will adapt my lessons to fit the need of the students. If I have a student who is struggling with a topic I will make sure to change my methods of teaching so I break the lesson down into smaller steps. I will also try and keep my learners active and engaged in class by using many different learning styles. I will try and include activities for auditory, visual, and hands on learners.

I learned the importance of parent-teacher communication and differentiating instruction. By including the parents, the teachers will understand the student's background and the parents will be more aware and willing to help their children. Teachers need to put extra time and effort for the communication, such as through weekly behavior and academic reports. Also, because many students will be at different levels in different content areas, the teacher should be willing to work with each student and build off what each student already knows.