

Synopsis of Employer Satisfaction Interviews

In the Spring 2022 semester, eight administrators, who have hired University of New Orleans graduates, were interviewed regarding their satisfaction with the preparation provided by the School of Education. Of those interviewed, four are secondary administrators and four are elementary administrators. Of the eight interviewees, four are principals and four are assistant principals. The interview questions were written to triangulate data from Compass and VAM scores as well as the employee satisfaction survey. This document provides a brief summary of each of the main topic areas in the interview as well as direct quotes from school leaders.

Administrators were asked how satisfied they were with the preparation that UNO graduates received in terms of their ability to use a variety of **effective teaching strategies**. Overall, administrators felt that the candidates who they hired were prepared to use a variety of teaching strategies. One principal stated, "UNO graduates are solid when it comes to using a variety of effective teaching strategies. Having them work with our mentors and university supervisors for a year of residency allows them time to improve and gain confidence in trying these strategies they learned about in class."

Administrators were then asked how effectively the unit prepares educators for **content knowledge** needed to adequately perform teaching responsibilities, specifically to use Tier I curriculum. Overall, administrators reported that the candidates are very prepared for content. They noted that graduates do understand the curriculum, but they are not as prepared to purposefully plan. One administrator said, "They know the content, but the transition for the kids to do the heavy lifting is problematic. They are hesitant for the kids to do the thinking." Another administrator said, "Our UNO hires have come in knowing content and working hard to prepare annotated lessons using Tier I curriculum every day."

Interviewees asked how well the unit prepared teachers for **data analysis**. Overall, the responders were somewhat satisfied. One principal said, "They know how to analyze the data, but they don't know what to do with it next." Another principal said, "The struggle is not looking at the data, but then what to do with it is the problem. They don't know how to link the data and the purposeful planning. They need to know what interventions to use once they analyze the data. They don't know how to teach what the data shows the students are lacking." School leaders recognized that graduates had the initial skills in data analysis but not how to thoroughly use the data to drive instruction. Upon completion of residency, principals would like to see residents more prepared to use the data to improve instructional practices.

Administrators were then asked about the preparation of UNO graduates in terms of their ability to meet the needs of **diverse learners**. Everyone interviewed was extremely satisfied with the unit's preparation of the candidates' ability to meet the needs of diverse learners. One principal said, "Our UNO hires are excellent with students with disabilities. A strength of the UNO program is the ability of our teachers to teach students with disabilities." An assistant principal said, "The ability of UNO graduates to reach diverse learners is a beautiful thing. We are very impressed with the level of preparation in terms of their ability to teach to different learning styles and abilities."

Interviewees were asked how prepared UNO graduates are in terms of their ability to use **technology** to enhance instruction. Overall, responders felt that the unit's graduates were extremely well prepared.

One principal said, “UNO graduates are the best ever when it comes to their use of technology in instruction.”

Administrators were then asked about their satisfaction with UNO graduates’ ability to set **instructional outcomes**. Overall, respondents felt that UNO graduates were prepared to set instructional outcomes. One assistant principal said, “Our UNO hires are all able to come in writing strong objectives and understanding the importance of those objectives.” Several administrators were concerned with the teachers not being fully prepared to annotate lessons when they began residency, but they all agreed that they worked on this with their mentor throughout the year-long residency to develop this skill. One principal said, “They have to come in ready to annotate manuals, but they are not. They do work very hard with their mentors to do this throughout residency.”

Interviewees were asked how well-prepared UNO teachers are to **manage the classroom**. Overall, those interviewed found the candidates to be prepared to manage the classroom. They noted that all of the UNO teachers enter the profession with a calm disposition and do not yell at or disrespect students. One principal noted, “None of the UNO former students ever yell at students or lose their patience. They seem to have been taught effective management strategies.” Half of the administrators interviewed did provide meaningful feedback that suggested a greater focus on the whole child and trauma informed education within classroom management. One principal commented, “The management class needs to be more focused on the whole child. There needs to be trauma-informed education in management. They need to be taught conscious discipline.”

Administrators were then asked about the preparedness of UNO graduates to use **questioning and discussion techniques**. Overall, responders reported that UNO hires were prepared, but that they could use more practice and assistance prior to residency. One elementary school principal said, “They could use some help with questioning and discussion prior to residency. They don’t use Talk Moves, turn and talks, etc.” Another principal noted, “Coming out of residency, their questioning is pretty good. They do too many surface level questions. They need to improve with student dialogue and Socratic practices.”

Next, employers were asked about the preparedness of UNO graduates to **engage students in learning**. Overall, respondents said that the graduates of the unit were very prepared to engage students in learning. More than half of the administrators noted that residents understand that they must have a good relationship with students to both have strong classroom management skills as well as have high levels of engagement. One principal said, “When the residents come out of residency having had a year to observe and work with high quality mentors, they are able to start from day one with high levels of engagement.”

Finally, administrators were asked about their satisfaction of UNO graduates in their ability to **assess for learning**. Administrators felt that UNO graduates were somewhat prepared to assess for learning. Everyone who was interviewed indicated that formative assessment is challenging for new teachers. They did note that all candidates do understand and use exit tickets as a means of formative assessment, but formative assessment throughout the lesson is missing. All administrators also indicated that there is a disconnect between the formative assessment and how it is used to drive instruction. One assistant principal said, “Everyone we have hired uses the exit ticket, but they don’t know how that should shape their instruction for the next day.” A principal noted, “Formative assessment is still a struggle. They know how to do it, but they don’t know what to do with it. They need to be able to read the room. They need to not just keep going if the class isn’t ready.” Another

principal noted, “They need to learn to do more checks for understanding. They need to know that you can reteach. The UNO teachers could use peer grading to enhance learning. They need to do more peer assessment.”

The interview process yielded valuable feedback from stakeholders of the unit. This information has helped the unit to identify strengths and areas of further development. This high-quality feedback will allow us to improve our practice by improving the teaching and practice of annotating lessons, data analysis, and formative assessment. This interview yielded results that aligned strengths and weaknesses to both the employee satisfaction survey and completer interviews. The feedback will also allow us to continue our practices that are valued by both our completers and those who hire them.