

**UCA Middle Level Education  
Spring 2020 Advisory Board Meeting  
May 6, 2020  
Minutes**

**Participating Members in Spring 2020 Online Meeting:**

CHARLES GERMAN	Carl Stuart Middle	Teacher
Beth Lasley	Carl Stuart Middle	Teacher
Faith Jones	North Little Rock Middle	Teacher
Sheila Dean	Carl Stuart Middle	Teacher
Elizabeth Harness	Carl Stuart Middle	Teacher
Bryce J Bennett	Greenbrier Middle	Principal
Amy Jordan	Courtway Middle	Principal
Amy Evans	Greenbrier Middle	Teacher
Naomi Sexson	Courtway Middle	Teacher
Brandy Milburn	Carl Stuart Middle	Teacher

**1. UCA Dispositions Rubric**

**From your perspective as a school partner, what about the rubric seems effective? Please be specific.**

- All of the areas that are being assessed are crucial for all teachers, not just interns. Additionally, how concise the rubric is gives the interns an idea of how they should perform as a professional.
- The descriptions on each aspect are clear and expectations are clearly stated.
- The categories give evaluators and prospective teachers an opportunity to view important components involved in developing excellent teaching. The prospective teacher is given a roadmap for which to understand how to become a classroom/ student ready educator.
- The section on completing work on time and the section about policies and norms. Those are the two areas where interns seems to struggle and mentors need to be able to include that in any observations. Also I am so happy with the wording regarding oral and written communications. I've had too many candidates in my classroom that struggle with grammar and syntax.
- Target Goals all seem very appropriate for each candidate to strive toward. Will allow candidates to be ready to enter the teaching profession.
- The Target language for performance and Self-Assessment/Reflection are fantastic. The more student teachers show initiative and solve problems the more valuable they are to administrators. I also like that the candidates have to be reflective. As an administrator I give student teachers feedback and how they handle the news goes a long way towards how they are perceived as team players and teachers willing to grow.
- I think that the rubric is not just the Danielson model with the four domains. While that is a good tool to use for practicing teachers to improve instruction, interns need more detailed and direct feedback in multiple areas. Your rubric does that!
- I feel that students have a good grasp on Pedagogy. They understand the importance of diversity in students and how important it is to develop a rapport with students and structure lessons that are engaging. It has also been my experience that UCA students have been very respectful of both the school policies and my classroom norms. They have had a willingness to be a team player and be an

active member of our school culture.

- The rubric is effective because it has specific criteria over a variety of areas to use in identifying a candidates strengths and weaknesses and use the criteria to improve weaknesses. To be honest I have used it myself in evaluating areas I may start slacking in. The longer I teach there are areas which start to seem routine and mundane and I start slacking. Something I don't want to happen.
- I appreciate how the rubric grows through the three stages and is detailed to allow students to know what is expected and where they stand.

**From your perspective as a school partner, what about the rubric could be improved (add, remove, revise)?**

**Please be specific.**

- I think the rubric is really solid and representative of how professionals should conduct themselves from day 1. I do not see any need for improvement at this time.
- It is clear and I see no areas to revise.
- I'm not sure at this moment
- Actually, I think it's a pretty great rubric.
- In Performance category, Unsatisfactory box, it states that candidates might "distract others". Wouldn't that fit better in the Self-Control/Self Aware or Collaboration category?  
In the Communication category, Progressing box, should the word "correct" be "incorrect"? I question how the candidate is to make improvements on already correct grammar. Or are you meaning that the grammar is correct but basic and unvaried?
- Maybe add a component on teaching students who experience childhood trauma and/or poverty.
- I have had a few instances where interns did not submit their work on time so that we could make corrections and/or additions to the lesson before it is presented. Also, sometimes they come without specific content knowledge to fully understand the "whys" behind the content being taught. Most have been very receptive to feedback, but when lessons are submitted late it is really hard to make corrections.
- Adding something more specific about outside resources, it can be part of collaboration, but include working with people outside of the area they are interning in for cross curriculum connections.
- At this time, I don't see any specific changes that need to be made.

## **2. Middle Level Portfolio**

**What, if any, strengths do you see in the program's inclusion of the portfolio assessment?**

- I think the main strengths of the portfolio are that it requires students to think outside the box and push them out of their comfort zones. The requirement of artifacts ensures that they can't fake anything. From what I can tell, it follows most of what is required on TESS (which we may not use anymore) but the skills of collecting artifacts and looking at each domain is very helpful for the teacher observation process required for 3 years of novice teachers. I don't have anything specific, just overall the portfolio is solid.
- The portfolio is a very good way to check for understanding of the students about what is required to be a good teacher. It is similar to what they will have to do in formal observations.
- This is an excellent opportunity for prospective teachers to find their best practices as they work through the portfolio task. This will also prepare them for the teacher evaluation process (TESS).
- I feel like including the portfolio assessment makes up for the fact that the Praxis III is no longer required.
- It ties what they have been learning throughout their years of study all together.

- Loved the emphasis on authenticity in evidence submitted, as well as the inclusion of AMLE standards. The portal they upload all this through looks sleek, and I like that it encourages them to think about aesthetics and presentation. I also love the interdisciplinary piece, as this is a huge push for us right now.
- This experience of creating a portfolio is not unlike what teachers have to do once they enter the workforce. I like that it requires them to be reflective and to examine what would be good evidence for their work.
- I love the portfolio because the students can showcase their accomplishments and growth. It also gives them practice with TESS components and artifacts.
- The online portfolio is a great introduction to using technology in education. It is an excellent visual of everything the intern has accomplished, demonstrating competency in all areas of teaching.
- I appreciate how similar this is to the National Board. The reflections and evidence collection is so difficult for many teachers. This is setting these students up to be great at reflecting on their teaching which creates great teachers. I love that a resume is included.

**What, if any, concerns do you have? What could be improved for the benefit of our candidates?**

- I understand that the portfolio process is helpful in assessing a student's ability to gather evidence and further deepen their own understanding of teaching. It seems to be an overwhelming amount of information, and I understand if it is required for accreditation of your program. I might suggest shortening the length of the portfolio or allowing an artifact to be used for several domains as it seems this is stressful and student interns have so much to do during their internship anyway.
- My only concern is that some of these students wait until the last minute and this sometimes puts pressure on the mentor teacher to help their intern complete the assignment.
- One thing that might be explored/encouraged more actively in the young adolescent development section is how to watch for early indicators of mental health distress in students. We are finding more and more students with anxiety, depression and a whole host of problems that explain why the DSM is considerably thicker than it used to be. This may be covered elsewhere.
- I do not have any concerns.
- The portfolio is excellent. A great introduction to a teacher website.
- I don't see specific concerns. When working with students, I have seen that they struggle to know what they are looking for, but when you work with teachers on their National Board, they have the same issues.

**Some candidates use the final product as a professional portfolio when applying for teaching positions. Do you think this is a valuable product to share in an application or interview for a teaching position? Why? Why not?**

- I think that bringing or showing parts of the portfolio might be handy to have to prove you have done what you are saying, but not necessary. The experiences used to build the portfolio are invaluable and would be helpful in answering questions during the interview process. I have sat on several interview committees and interviewed 1st year teachers and we never asked to see any proof.
- As a teacher who has helped with interviews, I feel that it should be shared before the interview so that we can understand the candidate beforehand. Or it could be shared when there is a second interview. It is helpful because you can see the work ethic of the candidate.
- This is a great resource to use in seeking employment as a teacher. The portfolio gives the prospective employer an opportunity to evaluate the components of the portfolio to make sure the candidate is placed in the correct school, grade level...that benefits both the students and the prospective teacher.

- Yes, it's an authentic snapshot of a candidate's capabilities and proves their willingness to work toward a goal. Slackers typically don't have great portfolios.
- Yes, it would be interesting to see, but when you are interviewing 10-20 people for a position, I would feel this would be a lot to look at. It would get skimmed over at best.
- Absolutely. It would set them apart from other candidates. I think it should be shared prior to the interview though.
- I personally do not have time to look at such a lengthy document \*during\* an interview, but it would certainly be nice to have as a supplemental uploaded document/link for applicants. They could mention it in their cover letter or in the interview itself. Then, the committee could review on their own time.
- This is absolutely important. I have been on many interview committees and we were impressed with candidates that came in prepared with ways to showcase their skills and accomplishments.
- It would be great to share in an application process. If done right everything should be clear enough to not need explanation, while still showcasing the intern's abilities.
- When you walk into an interview with a lack of experience, I think that this is a great way to show your strengths and how you have reflected on your teaching.

**From a hiring/working with first year teacher's perspective, what do you think of this choice? Should the portfolio be organized according to the TESS domains instead of the AMLE standards? Should the portfolio include both? Or do you think the current AMLE focus is appropriate considering the degree of TESS aligned lesson and observation already included in the program?**

- As a former coach, I fully believe in "practice like you play". The experience of building a portfolio is very helpful, but organizing it around how the candidates would be expressly evaluated would be even more helpful. That way, they are familiar with how they will be evaluated and can play accordingly and even be more comfortable with the process. As teacher evaluation changes at the state level, so should how candidates be evaluated for teaching preparation programs. Experience is the best teacher.
- I think the portfolio should include both.
- I think the portfolio is a great balance between TESS and AMLE
- I feel like the AMLE focus is appropriate for the portfolio, anyone viewing the portfolio is more than capable of seeing how the work aligns to TESS and therefore TESS specific language isn't needed.
- I think the portfolio should be aligned with TESS domains. I think it will be more meaningful in the long run, plus they are evaluated with the TESS domains at UCA and will be in their future teaching positions.
- No. I think when I say feedback and growth all teachers hear sometimes is TESS. The way TESS is set up we have 3 years for teachers to learn it and show proficiency. I would rather them come into my building thinking about all the places they can turn to for growth experiences instead of thinking in terms of evaluation only.
- I see benefits to both!
- Since AMLE standards and TESS are so similar I feel that this is an easy transition. It has been my experience that interns are still very familiar with TESS components even though the portfolios are organized according to AMLE standards.
- Education is always changing, so tying everything to TESS may not be wise, in case it changes later on, even though the TESS rubric is an excellent assessment tool.
- As a teacher that has been around for years, it seems that whatever evaluation that is being used for teachers changes so often that it would not be beneficial to use that exclusively. I believe as long as the main components that are important in TESS are included then that would be more important. It seems that the ideas stay the same but the way they are evaluated change.

### 3. General Feedback

#### **From your observations and experiences with our students and faculty, what are we doing well?**

- From my experience, the candidates I have interacted with are professional and seem eager to please.
- I feel that the communication with the supervisors and faculty is superb. I was in constant communication with the supervisor and it was very professional.
- The components used to prepare perspective teachers to come into the classroom environment are very well done. Also, the communication and support given to the Interns as well as the cooperating teacher are excellent.
- The rigor of the internships and portfolio is fantastic!
- Getting them out into classrooms to observe.
- A lot! UCA interns are usually on the ball and prepared to jump right in. Most are ready to step into classrooms and are generally considered for hire with the district. UCA faculty has been great to work with on the extremely rare occasion that a problem has arisen.
- Students coming to us in Internship I and II seem very well prepared for the classroom. I have hired several, and they have been outstanding!
- Students come with great pedagogy. Most have a willingness to serve in any capacity. Most are receptive to feedback. I can not say enough about UCA faculty! If I have ever had a concern about an intern, their supervisor has been approachable, with great suggestions to help our intern grow.
- Preparing excellent candidates for the teaching field
- UCA students come in prepared and ready to interact with students. They are ready to work hard and want to learn. The students are always open and willing to accept help and direction when given. I have never had to speak with the faculty about a student but I feel comfortable with the faculty if this was needed.

#### **From your observations and experiences with our students and faculty, what could we improve?**

- I think giving candidates more experience in dealing with classroom management or taking over teachers classes in order to actually teach would be beneficial. The ones that I have had seemed hesitant to "take the reins". I would love to give pre-service teachers the opportunity to work on classroom management through my classroom and see what would work for them
- I would love to have a meet and greet before the candidate comes to the school. I feel that a formal get together would help to ease some of the expectancy from the teacher end. I had requested a meet and greet with my intern, but she did not respond, so the first time that I met her was when she was in my room the first day. She was late, so I really did not get to talk to her.
- There is always room for improvement for life long learners. With our ever changing society, it is important to make sure the teacher education programs are in tune with the needs of students. Perspective teachers need as much preparation as can be given to understand how their role as a teacher impacts students beyond the classroom.
- Enforcing due dates. It amazes me how lackadaisical some of these candidates can be.
- Possibly a bit more communication with cooperating teachers as to what is expected of the intern to be accomplishing during their time in the classroom.
- n/a
- If you could find time, I think they need to practice interviewing a little more. The quick interviews and panel discussions we do are great, but I'd love to spend an hour or so with a smaller group to allow us to better give feedback and answer questions.

- Every intern that I work with has difficulty with my SMART board. They have been willing to learn, but at first they don't want the students to know that they don't know how to do something. So, we practice beforehand. I also wish they had more knowledge of the "whys" behind mathematics, not just "here's how you do this problem".
- Nothing, you are doing AWESOME
- I have not seen any improvements that need to be made at this time.