

## **Focus Group Interview Summary**

### **Question 1: What skills did you learn from Ozarks that assisted you in the pivot to digital learning during COVID?**

Summary of Results: Completers thought that the EPP created assignments that required them to use technology to share their understanding were the most helpful as they made the pivot to digital learning last year. The Compass Program (iPad for all students and faculty) provided completers with first hand experience with technology on a day to day basis making it easier for them to use other types of technology (Chromebooks, Google Meets, and Zoom) more efficiently and smoothly, than if they did not have that exposure. In addition, our completers expressed their perceived success with pivoting to digital learning with gaining skills and dispositions during their time in the EPP, such as adaptability, flexibility, calmness in overwhelming situations, and creativity. Completers felt comfortable trying new things to engage students. For instance, one completer described his experience making video-logs (vlogs) in education classes with implementing vlogs in his pedagogical practice. He reported that his students enjoyed the task and he felt students were more engaged in the learning process.

### **Follow Up: What skills did you wish you had that would assist you in digital learning?**

Summary of Results: Completers reported that they would have liked to have additional experience with other digital learning platforms (i.e. Easel, digital pictures, SeeSaw, Zoom). In addition, they would have liked to have more practice with the management and administrative side of these platforms. For instance, how to use Canvas as an instructor or how to start and manage a Zoom learning session. Others thought they had all the skills they needed to learn the digital learning platforms and felt confident in their ability to adapt and learn.

### **Question 2: What impact have you had on your students' learning? How do you know?**

Summary of Results: Completers discussed the importance of student engagement and motivation during the time of digital learning. Many of the completers thought motivating students was the most difficult part of their first year as a teacher. One completer started a new video log assignment in his business technology class to encourage student communication and engagement. Another completer advocated for purchasing microscopes for his classroom. In turn, he was able to engage students in microbiology labs and excite his students to enjoy Biology. Another completer worked with colleagues to encourage more outdoor running. He came up with a token system and a goal to run 100 laps as a class. He found that students responded positively to the system.

As a follow up, we asked about other assignments that the novice teacher cohort specialists are asking them to do to show student impact. We found out that they have completed a student impact assessment and a behavior management plan for their novice teacher courses. We are

following up to see if our completers will share this information with us. The state of Arkansas is also working on data sharing systems between the EPPs and the Education Cooperatives.

**Question 3: How have you advanced your skills or professional career?**

**Follow up: Have you recently earned/enrolled in an advanced degree, moved to a new building or grade level, added to licensure (content endorsement), have you taken any leadership positions, have you contributed to your local community?**

- Chemistry added to license
- Pre-AP courses (professional development) 200 hours
- Science of Reading state offered professional development
- Teach English to Chinese students (VIP kids) TEFEL (teaching online)
- Added CDL to drive a bus
- Added Computer Science to license
- Practicing Youth Pastor

**Question 4: In the next 3-5 years, what do you plan to achieve in your teaching career?**

There were a number of 3-5 year goals expressed. The pattern we see in the data is that completers are motivated to add a Master's degree to their license. Athletic coaching is also a key goal for this group of completers.

- Master's degree in something (Coaching)
- Obtain a coaching position somewhere
- Become more rooted in a place
- Master's in special education (kids in class, need background, only science teacher)
- Get a full time teaching position, applying for next year, Master's Educational Leadership
- Coaching, full time teaching position high school , maybe a Master's, state champion coach

**Question 5: What are the PGP goals that you are currently working on?**

**Follow Up: Did you select these or did your school/administrator/department? Explain why these were selected.**

Personal PGP goals

- Organized, learn to work with gifted and talented and other special education students more effectively, managing paperwork 4B
- Communicating with families
- Communicating with families and parents 4C
- Behavior management
  - Managing in class discussions

District PGP goals

- Being able to design instruction digitally
- Design instruction digitally
- Improve participation of online students

**Question 6: How can the EPP assist you in achieving your professional goals and PGP goals now?**

The completers asked that the EPP communicate job openings, provide letters of recommendation, and communicate when faculty are available for discussion.

In the discussion, we began to brainstorm ideas for easier and more efficient ways to communicate after graduation. We discussed a shared Padlet and a continuation of a shared Facebook page with Facebook Messenger as a communication option.

**Question 7: What other comments and/or questions do you have?**

One completer mentioned how the EPP prepared him to be an out of the box thinker and problem solver.