

Impact of WOU Teacher Education Program Graduates on Elementary Student Learning

Executive Summary

In the Fall of 2021, Western Oregon University (WOU) sought the assistance of the Willamette Education Service District's (WESD) Center on Education Innovation, Evaluation & Research (CEIER) to conduct a pilot study of the impact of the graduates of the WOU Teacher Education program on student learning. WOU provided a list of 333 Elementary/Multiple Subjects Teacher Education graduates from the past five years (2016-17 to 2020-21). After matching teachers to those in our database, removing students who did not have two formative assessments and removing teachers with a total of fewer than five students with paired formative assessments, 86 teachers (25%) remained in the set. These teachers conducted assessments with 8,657 elementary students. The impact of teachers on student learning was evaluated through reviewing student progress from their first to second (Fall to Winter) administrations of formative assessments in reading and math. The scores evaluated were Total Scores for each domain. Subskill scores were not available. Thus, findings are based on a macro-level of evaluation.

The findings are as follows:

1. On average, 85% of students either maintained grade level learning (70%) or gained grade level(s) (15%).
2. Reviewing data related to student outcomes on their first assessments reveals that 63% of students (n=987) with an initial result of high risk maintained that level. Seventy-nine percent of students first assessed at a low risk level (n=2644) maintained that level. Excluding those maintaining a high-risk status (987, 11%) and those who lost ground (n=1298, 15%), 74% (n=6408) made gains in their assessment results.
3. The range of students at least maintaining grade level varied each year from 73% to 85% in math, and 73% to 90% in reading.
4. The greatest loss from one year to the next was from 2019-2020 to 2020-2021. The percent at least maintaining grade level dropped from 90% to 83% in reading, and from 85% to 73% in math. The 2020-2021 school year was heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.
5. Trends were similar in the Reading Spanish results, but student progress was greater. Overall students maintained or gained from 86% to 96% (average 91%) in this area. There was a drop from 2019-2020 to 2020-2021 as well, but to a lesser extent. The percent at least maintaining grade level dropped from 91% to 85% during that timeframe. The one area where students performed more poorly in the Spanish Reading assessments was for the group of students who started at the high risk level: 72% of Spanish Reading students maintained this level compared to 63% of all students taking Reading assessments.

6. Overall, for 79% of teachers, at least 80% of their students gained or maintained their learning level.
7. For 76% of teachers giving reading assessments (65 out of 85), 80% or more students maintained or gained in their assessment level. This was true for 67% (56/69) of teachers giving math assessments.