



Willamette
EDUCATION SERVICE DISTRICT

Study of Western Oregon University
Teacher Education Graduates' Impact
on Elementary Student Learning



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Impact of WOU Teacher Education Program Graduates on Elementary Student Learning

Executive Summary

Western Oregon University's College of Education (WOU COE) sought the assistance of the Willamette Education Service District's (WESD) Center on Education Innovation, Evaluation & Research (CEIER) to conduct a study of the impact of the graduates of the WOU Teacher Education program on student learning. The Willamette ESD provides services to 21 school districts in a three-county area: Marion, Polk, and Yamhill-Carlton. Most of the school districts in the region are relatively small and it was agreed that the Salem-Keizer Public Schools (SKPS), the second largest district in the state, would provide the largest pool of WOU teacher education graduates. SKPS has a large diverse student population with more than half of the students for whom English is not their first language.

WOU provided a list of 257 Elementary/Multiple Subjects Teacher Education graduates from the past three years (2021-2022, 2022-2023, 2023-2024). After matching teachers to those in WESD's proprietary database, 26 teachers (10%) remained in the set. These teachers conducted assessments with 294 elementary students. The impact of teachers on student learning was evaluated through comparing statewide assessments for the 2023-2024 school year for each of the three graduation years. The Oregon Statewide Assessment System (OSAS) for English/Language Arts and Math was used to assess impact. This system evaluates students' mastery of Oregon's content standards through annual summative assessments.

Unlike prior years, we were only able to obtain summative scores for the end of year administration of the OSAS ELA and Math assessments. Therefore, we were unable to measure student growth between Fall to Winter administrations of the formative assessments. The scores evaluated were Total Scores for each domain. Scores range between Level 4 Subskill scores were not available. Thus, findings are based on a macro-level of evaluation.

OSAS Scoring

OSAS scores range between Level 1 to Level 4. Interpretation of scores is as follows:

A Level 4 on the OSAS assessment indicates that the student has:

- **Exceeded grade-level standards** in Mathematics or English/Language Arts.
- Demonstrated **advanced mastery** of the skills and knowledge required at their grade level.
- Shown the ability to apply concepts to more complex problems beyond standard expectations.

A student scoring Level 4 is performing **above proficiency** and is considered to have a strong, in-depth understanding of the content for their tested grade.

A **Level 3** on the OSAS assessment indicates that the student has:

- **Met grade-level expectations** in Mathematics or English/Language Arts.
- Demonstrated **proficiency** in the skills and knowledge required at their grade level.
Shown a solid ability to apply concepts accurately in typical contexts.

A student scoring Level 3 is considered to be performing **at standard** and has the skills necessary to succeed academically.

A **Level 2** on the OSAS Math assessment indicates that the student has:

- **Nearly met** grade-level expectations but has **not yet reached full proficiency**.
- Demonstrated a **partial understanding** of the concepts and skills required at their grade level.
- Shown the ability to apply some skills correctly, though they may need additional support and instruction to become fully proficient.

In essence, a Level 2 student is **approaching the grade-level standards**, but additional practice, intervention, or support may be needed to achieve proficiency.

A **Level 1** on the OSAS Math assessment indicates that the student has:

- **Not met** the grade-level expectations.
- Demonstrated **minimal or limited understanding** of concepts and skills required at their grade level.
Struggled significantly with applying concepts accurately or consistently.

Students scoring at Level 1 typically require **intensive support, intervention, and targeted instruction** to build foundational skills and to move toward grade-level proficiency.

Analysis: English/Language Arts

OSAS English/Language Arts (ELA) scores for the 2023-2024 school year were examined. Overall, 60% of Salem-Keizer Public School third grade students either met or exceeded state standards in English/Language Arts (Table 1). While students in the three WOU COE graduate cohorts did not score at this level, it is likely that, as teachers newer to the field, they are in more diverse elementary schools in which more students are learning English. For the 2022-2023 cohort, 95% of their students were English as a Second Language (ESL) students. ESL programs serve students whose primary language isn't English, providing specialized instruction designed to help them achieve proficiency in English listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These programs aim to support English learners (ELs) in successfully accessing the broader academic curriculum. The impact of ESL instruction becomes more apparent when reviewing the OSAS scores of the 2023-2024 COE grads teaching fourth grade. While still slightly below the SKPS district average, these students' scores are more aligned with the overall average (Table 2).

Table 1: OSAS Scores ELA, Grade 3

Scores (3rd grade ELA)	Level 4	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1
All teachers	29%	31%	14%	27%
2021-2022 WOU COE grads	na	na	na	na
2022-2023 WOU COE grads	5%	5%	10%	80%
2023-2024 WOU COE grads	0%	0%	40%	60%

Table 2: OSAS Scores ELA, Grade 4

Scores (4th grade ELA)	Level 4	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1
All teachers	29%	24%	21%	26%
2021-2022 WOU grads	0%	8%	19%	73%
2022-2023 WOU grads	na	na	na	na
2023-2024 WOU grads	12%	16%	21%	52%

Analysis: Math

OSAS math scores for 2023-2024 students were examined. Less than half (38%) of students met or exceeded state standards in math. SKPS students in each of the cohorts performed close to the average with 20% of the 2021-2022 WOU COE cohort's students exceeding or meeting state standards, 23% of the 2022-2023 cohort, and 26% of the 2023-2024 cohort. As noted above, a large percentage of students are learning English while also learning mathematical concepts.

Table 3: OSAS Scores Math, Overall

Scores (Math)	Level 4	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1
All teachers	16%	22%	25%	37%
2021-2022 WOU grads	5%	15%	24%	66%
2022-2023 WOU grads	5%	18%	0%	77%
2023-2024 WOU grads	5%	21%	15%	59%

Conclusion

Without being able to measure student growth from the beginning of the year to the end of the year, it is difficult to extrapolate teacher impact. However, reviewing OSAS ELA and Math scores for all students in comparison to students in WOU COE graduates' classes does allow us to assess how aligned these students' scores may be. Overall, the WOU COE graduates we were able to locate have a large percentage of students who are English as a Second Language learners. We would anticipate that scores on standardized assessments would likely be lower for these students than for students for whom English is their first and primary language. As we examine the scores, this assumption holds, especially for ELA assessments. However, for Math assessments, the relationship is weaker with more ESL students meeting or exceeding state standards in math proficiency. While this analysis does not yield a strong confirmation of WOU COE graduates' impact on student learning, it does provide a window into the difficulty that teachers new to the field face. Even with these difficulties, WOU COE graduates have been able to positively impact the student learning in their classrooms.