

Follow-up Survey of Graduates in First Five Years of Teaching

Spring 2008

Rate how satisfied you are with the teacher education program at Austin Peay State University.
Rate each item on a 3-point scale with 3 = Very Satisfied, 2 = Satisfied, 1 – Not Satisfied.

Item	Number	Standard Deviation	Average
1. Establish instructional goals that address student needs at appropriate instructional level.	51	0.493	2.608
2. Evaluate how to achieve learning goals by planning learning experiences that are developmentally appropriate and relevant to students.	51	0.505	2.51
3. Design instruction that addresses the individual needs of students with diverse cultural and language backgrounds.	51	0.627	2.255
4. Demonstrate a thorough understanding of your content area.	51	0.644	2.471
5. Implement appropriate teaching and learning strategies to engage students in active learning opportunities.	51	0.606	2.412
6. Link learning with students' prior knowledge, experiences, and cultural backgrounds.	51	0.658	2.353
7. Use assessment strategies, instruments, and information appropriate to the learning expectations being evaluated.	51	0.619	2.235
8. Interpret aggregated and disaggregated assessment data appropriately and uses this information to evaluate student learning and for making data driven instructional decisions.	50	0.755	1.96
9. Use a range of strategies to create a learning community where students are encouraged to assume responsibility for themselves and others.	51	0.658	2.353
10. Use classroom management techniques that foster self-control and self-discipline	51	0.698	2.412
11. Demonstrate productive leadership and team membership skills that facilitate a positive school environment.	51	0.575	2.431
12. Maintain accurate and up-to-date records.	50	0.751	2.26
13. Communicate student achievement and progress to students, their parents, and appropriate others.	51	0.638	2.412
14. Design communication appropriate to the audience, while using correct grammar and organizing information logically	51	0.61	2.549
15. Reflect on teaching practice through careful examination of classroom evaluation and assessments.	51	0.644	2.529
16. Use technology to enhance both teaching and professional performance.	51	0.503	2.549
17. Overall, how would rate your satisfaction with your preparation to be a teacher?	51	0.564	2.373

1. What do you see as the major strength(s) of the Teacher Education Program at Austin Peay State University?

- The diversity
- When I was at APSU, we completed classes called the "block". I found that experience to be most helpful, being able to see different levels of students as well as how different teachers manage their classrooms, plan, etc.
- Content area, teaching class management, and field experiences.
- Implementing a program that fosters many opportunities to be hands-on in the classroom.
- The many opportunities for learning and growth through field experiences.
- The number of hands-on teaching opportunities provided through field experiences in the school system.
- The availability of the professors and resources was comforting. I always found that there was assistance when I needed it. The information received was useful.
- The collaboration with the local school district for real-world practice.
- Content area classes; I thoroughly enjoyed my content area classes and I felt completely comfortable in discussions with students of all concepts in my area during my first year of teaching.
- Creating quality lesson plans, developmentally appropriate practices
- I really enjoyed and learned the most from all of the field experiences that were required. Nothing prepares you more for the classroom than actually spending time and being in the classroom.
- I felt prepared for my future in the classroom. I had a firm basis and depth of knowledge to feel confident. Most of the instructors I had at APSU were very knowledgeable and imparted that information to me. I feel as though the good instructors at APSU were the strength.
- The link to and collaboration with local school district. Students with degrees from APSU are highly valued in the local community.
- teacher candidates were taught that the standards are what drives the curriculum and required them to be included in all lesson plans. I thought the lesson plan template was too detailed, but when I began my classroom teaching, I found that it helped prepare me to be more thorough in my planning, especially when it came to properly writing objectives and desired outcomes.
- It provided me with extensive knowledge in classroom management. I felt very prepared in how to arrange my classroom and set student expectations and procedures.
- I feel that one of the strengths of the APSU program is the way technology has been incorporated into every class. The use of technology is a vital part on my own classroom, and Austin Peay helped me to become more comfortable with the computer and various programs that I am able to utilize on a daily basis.
- Intelligent, caring, knowledgeable professors taught the courses we needed to be successful in the program and receive our degree. I really like the observation and "teaching" opportunities we were given throughout our program.
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- I personally found the Classroom Management class to be the most helpful out of all of the classes I took. In my teaching career thus far, I have found
- The strengths were when we were doing actual things that a real teacher is required to do. Classroom management, establishing procedures were the two I remember the most about. I also enjoyed Dr. Flynt's reading class. I still use his

notes on building reading skills. Literature is also important. we used technology to create a lesson plan and it was also beneficial.

- The placement of the teacher candidates into the everyday classroom before student teaching begins is the best way for teacher candidates to fully understand the scale of how they will need to plan a lesson
- The fact that all of my professors' philosophies reflected the belief that their goal was to make sure that all students were successful. They had high expectations that were challenging, but not unreasonable. The professors were also clear with their expectations, and very supportive.
- The use of technology is an increasingly integral part of education. APSU both integrates and adequately prepares teachers for use of technology.
- The smaller class size was great. There were multiple classes that addressed how to differentiate in small group to reach individual needs in the classroom. The opportunity to visit and observe in multiple schools was wonderful.
- I have found that I am extremely capable of using various types of technology to enhance learning in my class and also to help keep track of grades and important documents. Oftentimes, I am called on by my colleagues to help them do these tasks as well and I credit much of that success to the projects required of my by APSU's education program.
- I feel that the major strength of the program is designing and creating instructions with various teaching strategies and learning styles. I also feel as if another strength of the program was being taught how to communicate with parents effectively, whether it was an academic concern or a positive praise.
- small class sizes, individualized advising, and technology availability
- Convenient class offerings
- One of the strengths is the wide range of information given to students, including field observations and assignments. This helps students to observe and participate in "real teaching" so they may make a better choice about their professional future.
- A variety of strategies are present by different instructors that benefit aspiring teachers.
- It is nice that there is such a strong partnership with the local school system.
- The ability to have a hands on experience before teaching.
- small class size; close working relationships with professors.
- teaching reading in the content area was good (Dr. Flynt taught this class).
Teaching math in the content area was good (Dr. Merriweather taught this class).
- The professors are very approachable and always willing to give extra help when needed.
- classroom management
- Allows you to work in the field in a variety of ways throughout the program.
- First off, the community at APSU would be considered a huge strength for me. As a special education major, all of my professors knew most of classmates and myself. We did a lot of team building which remind me of PLC's now. Dr. Richard's diversity course was awesome.
- I really enjoyed every member of the faculty and staff in the education department.
- The diversity of the program touches on all aspects of teacher education.
- The professors of the education program are the finest educators I have ever encountered. They encouraged and modeled professionalism, and they inspire greatness.
- Good instruction, prompt attention to solving any problems.

- The university professors go out of their way to make sure students are prepared when they enter their first job.
- Classroom management strategies and thematic planning
- The availability of the teachers for questions and support.
- The standards base teaching and instruction on how to use standards.
- Their willingness to go the extra mile to help a student and make the learning environment the best possible.

2. What do you see as the major weakness(es) of the Teacher Education Program at Austin Peay State University?

- The APSU lesson plan. It's not like that in the teaching world.
- This may have changed since I graduated in 2002, but I did not feel that I received enough practical experience. Also, new graduates are not prepared to write lesson plans or keep grade books, etc. Lesson plans are detailed but they are not pages long, as we were required to write them at APSU. It makes the task of trying to size them down difficult, as well as the time it takes to write them. New teachers are overwhelmed and burnt out with in the first few years due to being unprepared for the "real" world.
- The program should make sure that everyone gets a good foundation in literacy and technology. Especially literacy in the grades that they are licensed for.
- Special Education. Regular classroom teachers need a special education class that does not just talk about IDEIA, etc., but gives them strategies for instruction and behavior for students with special needs. the reality is that even though a teacher may not major in special education, she/he will encounter full inclusion.
- Livetext - The terminology used was difficult to understand thus making it difficult to understand what information was to be placed there. I found it very frustrating to use.
- The disconnect between certain requirements in the program versus requirements in the school system. For example, writing detailed multiple page lesson plans for one lesson does not provide students with experience in writing the types of concise plans that principals look for in the schools.
- SPED program was lacking in method courses. we learned a lot about disabilities and modifications; but we were not given enough information or practice with planning appropriate lessons, especially for students with sever disabilities. I am now working towards my Masters in Elementary Reading and Math and am amazed by the strategies I am being taught. I feel that many of these should have been included in my Bachelors.
- A weakness would be the change in portfolios during the program, causing confusion for both students and professors.
- I did not feel prepared to deal with all the situations that came up during my first year of teaching.
- Introducing Marzano strategies and DIBELS
- I found it hard to believe that we did not learn much about Marzano, especially since our school system really focuses on the Marzano strategies. this was a shock for me in the classroom. I also did not understand why I did a field experience in high school, while I was a K-6 major. I would have like to have stayed in the grade levels that were possible for me to teach.
- Livetext had zero benefit for me as a student or a teacher. I believe the program is worthless. I am beginning my second year of teaching and I have never looked at, or thought about my Livetext portfolio. We were told this was an important part of our graduate degree. I believe that statement to be false.

- More time spent in a real world teaching environment. Observation time should be incorporated from day 1 in the program. Ramping up in volume and intensity until the actual student teaching phase. Include familiarization with local school district programs in use i.e. Language x and other enrichment programs.
- There are all kinds of how-to-teach classes in the blocks for math, social studies, science, and reading, but when I was in the blocks (2005-06), there was NOTHING for language arts-especially writing skills. there was absolutely nothing offered as far as pedagogy in this area at APSU. essentially, that content area was ignored. Writing literacy is now a big push across the entire country and it is a separate assessment when state testing is done. Language Arts, as a content area, is not the same as Reading - if you will look at the standards (national and state) for grades K-8, you will find that they are in separate sections. In many cases, students have a reading class and a Language Arts class - they are not grouped into one content area until high school.
- There needs to be more practical experience. In my blocks, we only spent a total of 1 week per semester in the classroom. We did do about 50 observation hours prior to that and wrote reflections, but observation hours are not the same as practical experience. I suggest less lecture/on-campus work and more hands-on experiences.
There should be more emphasis about how to make data-driven instructional decisions.
- I feel I was not prepared adequately for the responsibilities a teacher must perform outside of the classroom. My training at Austin Peay did not supply me with the knowledge and background needed to successfully carry out the duties expected of a teacher when the students are not present.
- I felt that I would have benefitted from more time spent in an actual classroom and less time talking about "ideal situations". Since being in the school system, I feel that APSU should require more special education classes for the General Ed. Licensure.
- I did not feel prepared for the first days of school. Sometime during my last year of training, I would have liked the opportunity to observe a good teacher's classroom management the first 2 weeks of school. In addition, I did not feel prepared to correctly assess my students' reading level. My first year, I knew practically nothing about running records, DIBELS, cold reads, etc. and their assessment benefits. I believe the variety of assessments help us to create a more defined and accurate picture of our students' reading strengths and weaknesses.
- There were a large amount of "stuff" we did that I have not yet experienced at the professional level. The stuff encompassed mostly classes not dealing with the realities of teaching to today's kids.
- Not teaching us how to be real teachers. Not sharing assessments and having us determine new strategies to help those weaker students, making us use a grade book, writing appropriate notes to parents...all the essentials that are required to be a teacher.
- the portfolio requirements do not allow students to put enough focus on how to actually teach. It seems as though we spent more time working on a portfolio requirement than actually developing lesson activities that we actually enjoyed teaching.
- My experience was perfect, but I do regret that so many of my classmates did not fully understand the demands of teaching until the last course requirement in which we had to complete 30 hours of observation prior to enrolling to student teaching. Some dropped out of the program, and changed their majors after

investing 4 years of their time and money. I think it would be helpful if somehow, "separating the wheat from the chaff" could happen much earlier in the program.

- Classroom management and Linking prior knowledge.
- I felt that I was not prepared to handle all the paper work that goes along with teaching. The first year was very difficult to just manage the bookkeeping aspect of teaching. When I attended I felt that there was not enough information on how to analyze the data from ALL the testing that you will be required to do in the classroom.
- After completing my second year of teaching and looking forward to my third, I see that I could have benefited from some more training on how to deal with disruptive children in the classroom. There are an increasing number of students with major behavioral problems that are expected to function in a regular education class. I did not feel like I really had the training to know how to effectively work with these children to minimize disruptions and maximize classroom learning time. So much of teaching is being able to help students control their behavior, and for the typical student I do feel prepared. However, in both of my years teaching I have encountered children with extreme behaviors that left me feeling bewildered. I would love to see APSU meet this need by providing an intense course targeting how to deal with the difficult children in a given classroom.
- I feel as though the program had a weakness of preparing future educators for being apart of School Improvement Plans. I remember learning about such plans but did not recall the specifics. While I am sure the instructional literature for school improvement plans had changed, I feel as though this was a weakness to the Program.
- classroom management preparation - less theory, more relevant/applicable strategies.
assessment creation instruction - more focus on test writing with standards alignment, less reliance on "teacher kit" materials/more focus on creating formative assessment, rather than on summative.
differentiated instruction strategy development - more focus on adapting instruction for high ability and low ability learners (rigor and relevance)
English education program - focuses primarily on reading, but fails in addressing composition pedagogy (especially to middle school teachers)
- More practical exposure for novice teachers; felt overwhelmed and ill prepared when I first stepped in the classroom.
- The only weakness I would comment (although I believe this has changed since my graduation) on would be the range of grades in the program. I went though the K-8 program. A more specific program would be helpful.
- Many of the professors were not knowledgeable with the program requirements. Professors would give conflicting information and requirements.
- none
- Some faculty members at the time of my enrollment in the program did not seem like they wanted the students to succeed.
- Some material and thoughts need to be adjusted to meet new struggles in teaching today's students.
- I would have benefited more and served my students better if I would have had more background/knowledge in differentiation and strategies in working with gifted students.
- I was not prepared to teach in the classroom. I was fortunate to have great teachers on the team to help me along with classroom management, teaching strategies and grading.

- There is always great confusion over what the professors in block expect of each class and it would help if those professors were on the same page and communicated as a group to the students and cooperating teachers
- literacy stations/6+1 writing traits
- Variety of classes offered that related to the degree.
- Assessment courses and how to use that data to correctly form accurate student goals, along with driving that information and future assessments.
- I thought the use of Live Text was more of a burden and hassle than useful. I was not required or asked for any of the information on my portfolio.
- I think more student teaching time should be required, as that is where you really learn the most.
- Students need more hands-on training. I also think that there is a need for more realistic expectations from students.
- Timing of notices for teacher observation and student teaching, sometimes the assignments to schools came awfully late.
- Student teachers are not always held to a high standard by their cooperating teachers.
- Using data from assessments to differentiate teaching
- The inconsistency from year to year in certain requirements. More teaching scenarios that relate to this county's school system as well as surrounding school systems should also be incorporated.
- The limited number of professors, the lack of organization in getting student teachers in the schools.
- Some professors are easily distracted and I felt did not stay on the curriculum as much as they should have.

Add any comments you would like to make about the Teacher Education Program at Austin Peay State University?

- Overall my experience at APSU was a good one. I felt that I was prepared for teaching in a real situation, and my student teaching experiences filled in the instructional gaps that I needed to be successful.
- I had an excellent experience at APSU while I was obtaining my BS in Education.
- I feel more instruction should be directed toward ELL instruction, autism, ADD, ADHD, etc. Several of these topics are discussed in Intro to Special Ed., but I feel more in depth instruction would have been beneficial. I would also have liked more instruction on literacy centers. This is a major area of focus at my school, and I don't feel it is an area I was adequately prepared for.
- Austin Peay's teacher education program prepared me for my teaching career as much as possible. Additionally, Austin Peay provided me with both professors and professional mentors who were consistently willing to help me achieve my education and career goals.
- It was non-traditional student friendly
- Overall I had a really good experience at APSU in the education department. I learned a lot and have carried it over to the classroom. I believe that APSU helped me complete a successful first year of teaching
- It was a good experience overall. Dr. Carlette Hardin is one of the best professors I have ever had. She is willing to work with students and take time out of her day to help students individually.
- Expand on-line opportunities for non-traditional students to maintain contact with and pursue Master's degree at APSU.

- I feel overall the program was beneficial in preparing me for the teaching profession.
- I feel that APSU has a great relationship with the surrounding education community, and that this positive relationship benefits all students who graduate from this program.
- I enjoyed my time at APSU in the Teacher Ed. Program. However it was primarily for the classroom management techniques and nothing else.
- I have been a teacher now for 3 and 1/2 years. As you can see the things that I remember most are the classes that taught us what it takes to be a teacher....I don't need to understand what metacognition means as much as I need to know how to address a student who has weaknesses and adding to my toolbox of teaching strategies to help them. My assessment class was a waste of time as I did not learn anything...hardly used the book.
- It was an excellent, empowering experience for me. I look forward to beginning my Masters program in special ed at APSU. Hopefully I will have the option to do all or most of it on-line.
- Despite mentioning two areas of weakness this is not a negative reflection on the program. Instead, it simply points out two opinionated areas of needed growth. No program I believe can obtain 100% at all levels. When there is no room for improvement the program stagnates and therefore cannot become better for future students.
- I feel that Austin Peay has a great program.
- I truly enjoyed my time at APSU and soon as I can decide what area I would like to pursue for my master's degree I plan to enroll as a graduate student.
- Since I completed the program five years ago, the trends in education have shifted and I feel certain that instruction at APSU has adapted to address the shift in focus. The areas of weakness identified above are based on my observation of recent graduates from the program. The new teachers tend to lack conflict resolution/problem solving skills where classroom management is concerned. In addition, they tend to rely heavily on pre-written summative assessments rather than writing their own, and they use summative more often than formative. Ultimately, instruction is directed at those students in the middle ability level range; more must be done to address the needs of the high and low ability level students in a regular classroom: these are students now being "left behind".
- APSU did not teach many of the major strategies and requirements for teaching for CMCSS
- I would like to see APSU offer a certification in Early Childhood.
- I highly recommend it!
- I enjoyed my education experience at APSU and the instructors.
- I also think more emphasis should be put on classroom management because this seems to be where most 1st year teachers have problems.
- I entered the teaching world feeling prepared, and for the most part, I was. I am thankful for the amazing preparation that APSU gave me.
- more strategies for linking learning to cultural backgrounds
- Overall, I was very pleased.