

Monthly Data Briefs from the Delaware Department of Education's Teacher and Leader Effectiveness Branch

Every year in Delaware, teachers enter a public school classroom after completing an educator preparation program. How well prepared are these teachers for the varied demands of teaching? In 2016, the Delaware Department of Education, in collaboration with six Delaware educator preparation programs, conducted a survey of 570 recent graduates and their supervisors to find out which are the teaching skills where graduates feel prepared, and which are the teaching skills where they don't feel prepared. 236 recent graduates and 136 supervisors responded, representing 37 different preparation programs in Delaware. The "bright spots" and "areas of concern" are contrasted here.

What did Teachers say about the "Bright Spots"?

Instruction

- "Differentiated instruction was something we talked about ALL the time."
- "We constantly discussed research proven teaching techniques, reviewed examples, and applied them to different disciplines."

Lesson Planning

- "We had to explain in lesson plans how we would be covering every state standard addressed."
- "There was a lot of reinforcement in designing lessons with a particular structure of going from one step to the next and how lessons are meaningful to students if you can relate it to something in their lives."

Reflection & Professional Development

- "Almost every lesson featured some form of reflection to help us consider what went right and what was less successful."
- "I think the benefit of my program is that it pushed me to continue to seek professional development opportunities that continue to positively impact my teacher actions and ultimately student outcomes."

Teachers rated whether they felt prepared on 23 teaching skills, using a 4-point scale to say if they felt "not at all," "minimally," "moderately," or "very" well-prepared.

The skills with the highest ratings were:

- reflect on teaching to improve practice
- ensure a safe and inclusive environment
- pursue professional development
- use content knowledge to design learning experiences

The skills with the lowest ratings were:

- Establish and maintain classroom procedures
- Work effectively with students from diverse communities
- Manage student conduct and behavior
- Set expectations with participation from students
- Communicate with families
- Integrate technology into instruction

What did Teachers say about Areas for Growth?

Working with students from diverse communities

- "I don't feel that my program prepared me to effectively work with students from impoverished backgrounds - while I am able to understand why some of these students have difficulty in school, I did not feel prepared to use effective strategies that will help them."

Technology in the Classroom

- "We did a lot with iPads and laptops during my courses, which was great, but when you get to a school that doesn't have any iPads or not enough computers for all students to be able to do their own thing, it is a struggle to know how to continue to incorporate technology into your classroom."

Differentiating Instruction

- "What I struggle with the most in my classroom is differentiating instruction. My class is mixed level, so they are placed with no relation to their abilities. This makes it difficult to keep the higher level students engaged while also supporting the lower level students, especially in math related lessons."

Classroom Management

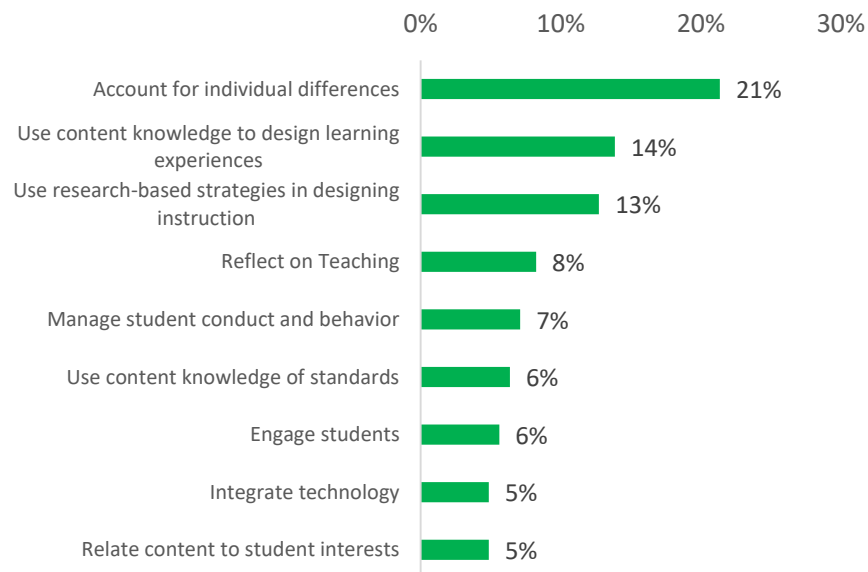
- "Classroom management was one class. This needs to be integrated more deeply as the root of all instruction. If there is none then likewise there will be no learning."

'The Set': Teacher-Rated Bright Spots & Areas for Growth in Educator Preparation

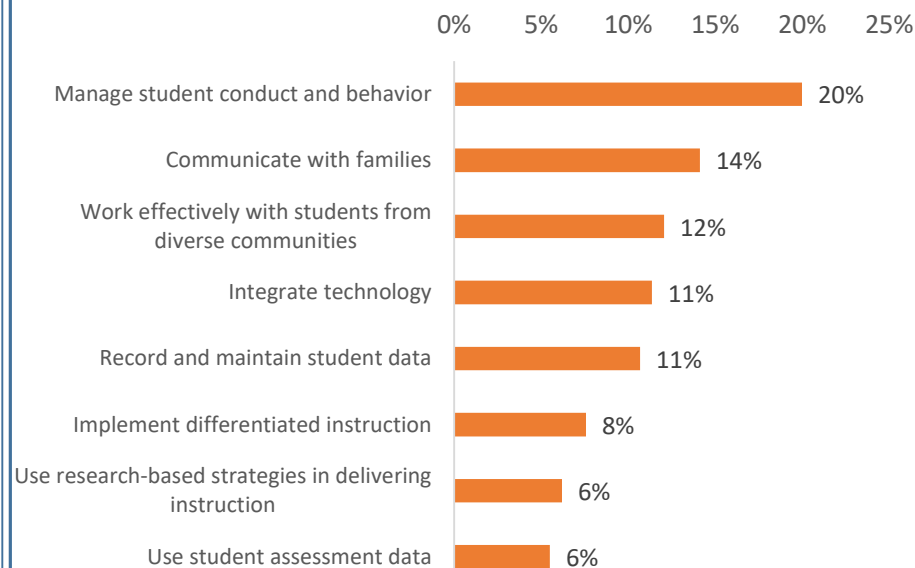
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Teachers told us about the areas where they felt most prepared and about the areas where they felt least prepared.

I Felt "Extremely" Well Prepared to ...



I Was "Not at All" Well-Prepared to...



Method: Teachers looked at the list of 23 teaching skills and indicate two skills where they felt "extremely" well prepared and two skills where they felt "not at all" well prepared. These graphs report the percentages for the most frequently mentioned teaching skills.

Some Key Takeaways:

- **Design yes, Deliver no:** 13% of teachers we surveyed picked **use research-based strategies in designing instruction** as a skill they felt extremely well-prepared on, versus only 2% who picked **use research-based strategies in delivering instruction**.
- **Recognize yes, Implement no:** 21% of teachers we surveyed picked **account for individual differences** as a skill they felt extremely well-prepared on, versus only 3% who picked **implement differentiated instruction**.
- **Prepared:** 14% picked use content knowledge to design learning experiences as a skill they felt extremely well-prepared on.
- **Classroom management:** 20% of teachers picked **manage student conduct and behavior** as a skill they were "not at all" well-prepared on. 7% picked it as a skill they felt "extremely" well-prepared on.
- **Not prepared:** 14% of teachers picked **communicate with families** as a skill they felt "not at all" well prepared on.
- **Not prepared:** 12% of teachers picked **work effectively with students from diverse communities** as a skill they felt "not at all" well prepared on.