

Program Assessment 6: Additional assessment that addresses CED standards.

Program Assessment Alumni Survey:

A survey was sent to all current teachers of the deaf in the state of Kentucky via an employee of the Kentucky Department of Education. The subject line of the email indicated that the survey was intended to past graduates of the Education of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program at Eastern Kentucky University. Given the large number of graduates who have remained in the state over the years, this survey had the potential of reaching between 100 and 200 eligible recipients. The email indicated that the program was seeking feedback from alumni as part of a self-improvement and reaccreditation effort and ensured participants that their responses would be anonymous.

Description of the Assessment:

The survey consisted of 5 questions that were rated on a 5-point Likert Scale (**Extremely well-prepared, Well prepared, Mostly well-prepared, Somewhat prepared, Not prepared at all**).

The 5 questions that were rated are as follows:

- How prepared were you to recognize and meet the individual learning needs of students who are deaf or hard of hearing?
- How prepared were you to collaborate with general educators and other professionals to develop instructional practices to meet the needs of students who are deaf or hard of hearing?
- How prepared were you to identify and/or utilize specialized content and curricula for use with students who are deaf or hard of hearing?
- How prepared were you to recognize and address bias in the administration of assessments to students who are deaf or hard of hearing?
- How prepared were you to select, adapt, and use evidence-based instructional strategies to advance the individual learning needs of students who are deaf or hard of hearing?

In addition, there were 2 open-ended questions.

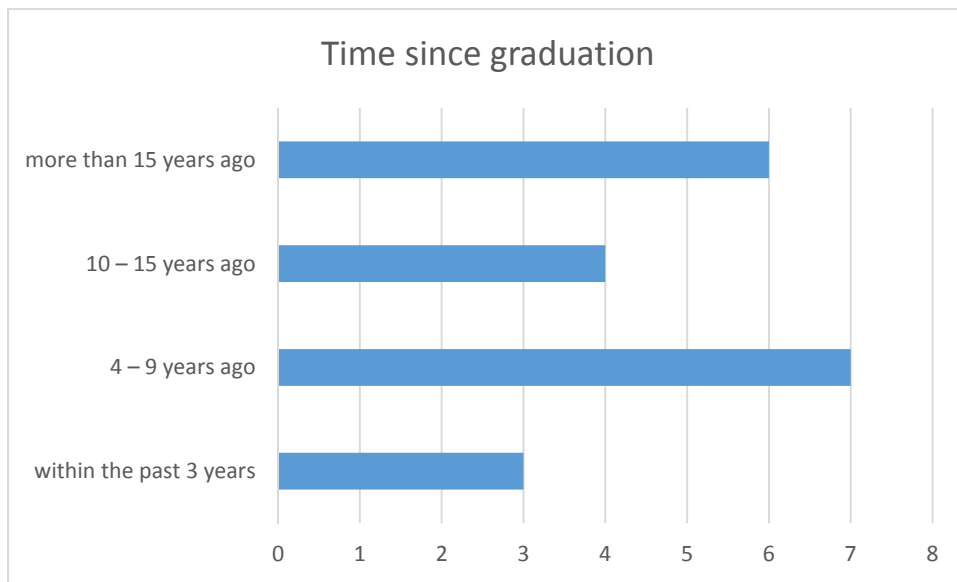
- Identify at least one significant strength of the EKU Program in the Education of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.
- Identify at least one significant area for improvement for the EKU Program in the Education of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

Finally, participants were asked to indicate how recently they had graduated from the program: within the past 3 years, 4 – 9 years ago, 10 – 15 years ago, or more than 15 years ago.

Standards Addressed by this Assessment: 1,3,4,5,7

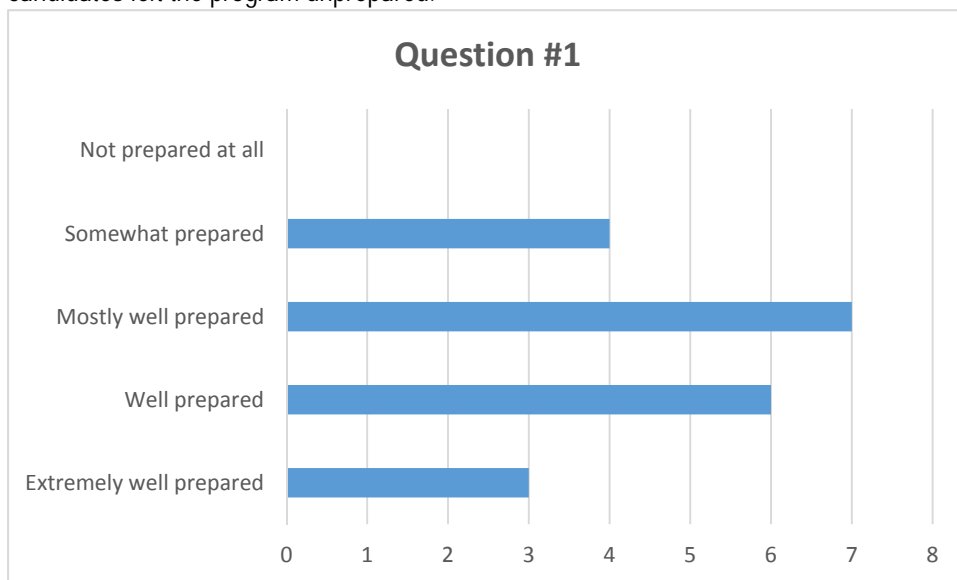
Summary of Findings:

Twenty teachers responded to the survey. Response to the survey indicated that 10 of the participants had graduated within the past 10 years and 10 had graduated more than 10 years ago. See specific graduate distribution in the graph below:

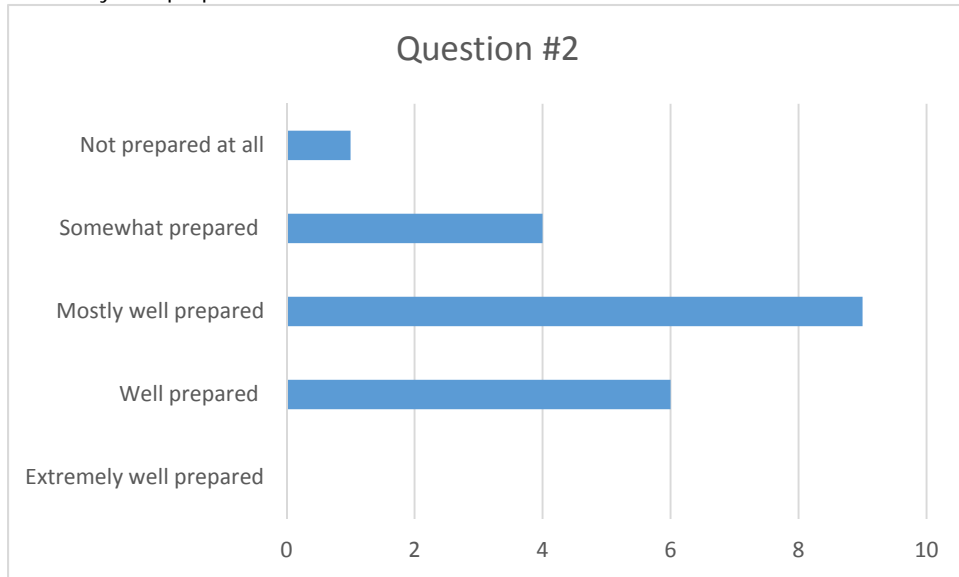


The data gathered from the 5 Likert scale questions, then, provides perceptions about the Education of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in a broad perspective.

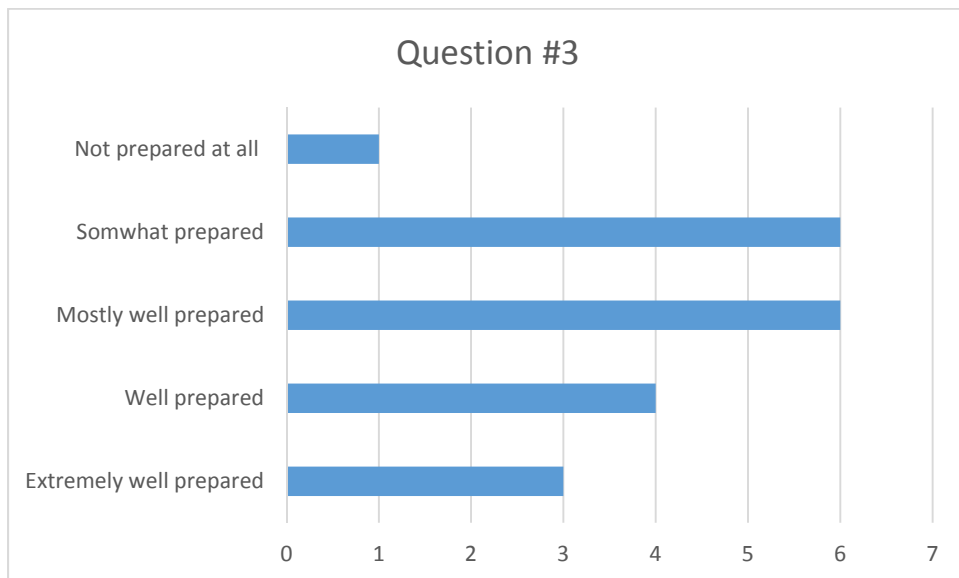
- 1) How prepared were you to recognize and meet the individual learning needs of students who are deaf or hard of hearing?
 Responses to this question indicate that 80% of students felt mostly-well, well, or extremely well prepared to meet the individual needs of students who are deaf or hard of hearing, with no responses indicating that candidates left the program unprepared.



- 2) How prepared were you to collaborate with general educators and other professionals to develop instructional practices to meet the needs of students who are deaf or hard of hearing?
Responses here indicate that preparing candidates for collaboration with general educators and other professionals is an area in need of improvement. Fifteen of the 20 respondents indicated they were mostly or well prepared. However, one participant felt not prepared at all, and no one responded that they were extremely well prepared.

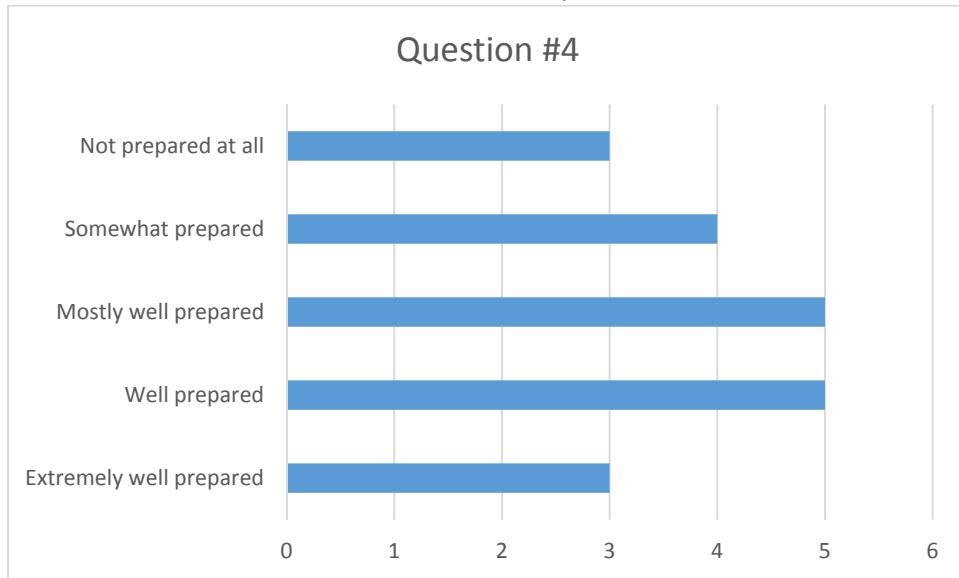


- 3) How prepared were you to identify and/or utilize specialized content and curricula for use with students who are deaf or hard of hearing?
A wide range of responses is evident for knowledge of specialized curricula, with one respondent feeling not prepared at all, 7 feeling extremely well or well prepared, and the remaining 12 being mostly or somewhat prepared.



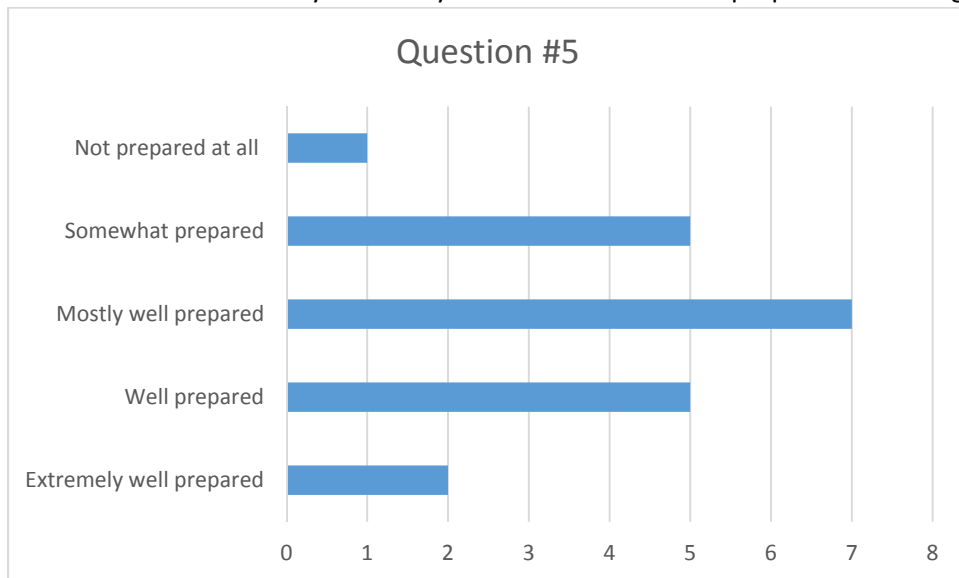
- 4) How prepared were you to recognize and address bias in the administration of assessments to students who are deaf or hard of hearing?

Three graduates responded as being unprepared and extremely well prepared. Further analysis will be attempted to factor in years since graduation, but even without additional analysis it is clear that assessment is an area for needed improvement.



- 5) How prepared were you to select, adapt, and use evidence-based instructional strategies to advance the individual learning needs of students who are deaf or hard of hearing?

Responses for the ability to select, adapt and use evidence-base strategies are quite similar to those for meeting individualized needs. This appears to be a relative area of strength, though 30% still indicate that they were only somewhat or not at all prepared in this regard.



Summary and Follow Up:

Based upon the responses to the first 5 questions in this survey, the Education of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing program can draw some basic conclusions and recommend a course of action for the future. First of all, the program

will continue to provide content addressed at understanding the unique characteristics of deafness which allow for the development of individualized instruction. The need to provide opportunities for collaboration within the program is recognized. The clinical experiences that are built upon throughout the program are being redesigned and a new course is being developed built around a Professional Learning Community (PLC) design. In addition to the clinical experiences, a number of courses have been revised to include explicit instruction in collaboration but more importantly require candidates to describe components of collaboration in lesson plans. Specialized curricula still provide a valuable resource for teachers of the deaf and these are introduced in each of the main DHH courses within the program. An effort is made to provide opportunities to use these curricula within courses. However, through additional collaboration with current classroom teachers across the state, newer resources can be identified and introduced in courses. Perhaps the best way to understand potential problems or biases related to assessment is through practice in administering them. Recent revision of courses is providing opportunity for this practice. In addition to practicing with one another, the methods and the practicum class will be incorporating assessment administration and interpretation with actual students who are deaf and hard of hearing. It is believed this will increase the understanding of potential bias as well as proper and permissible accommodations and/or modifications. Finally, with regard to being able to identify, adapt, and use evidence-based instructional strategies, a concerted effort will be made to expose candidates to the most recent research finding, to direct them in critical interpretation of that research, and then to provide them with examples of the implementation of these strategies, either through the use of video or classroom experience.

The open-ended questions provided the opportunity for respondents to relate specific suggestions for improvement as well as recognition of areas of strength. General strengths included preparing candidates to deliver specialized instruction, providing quality hands-on practicum and student teaching experiences, helping candidates understand different ways and languages with which to communicate to students, Two typical statements are provided as examples:

“This program gave me a broad view of Deaf Education in a residential setting all the way to itinerant setting. I was able to experience how deaf ed varies across settings; which greatly prepared me to be an itinerant teacher my first year of teaching.”

“Strong awareness of Deaf culture and the relevance of issues related to the Deaf community. Focus on respecting and working with families as partners. Field experiences in a variety of educational placement options. Knowledge of the student as a learner.”

The areas for suggested improvement tend to reflect the questions that were rated earlier in the survey with assessment and IEP experience being mentioned by a number of respondents. The fact that 3 ASL courses is not sufficient for proficiency and the need for content vocabulary in ASL were also noted. Interestingly, there was also the mention of the need to be able to meet the needs of children who are hard of hearing as they make a large portion of the public school setting. Additional suggestions addressed this as well”:

“Focus on the 'oral' aspect of Deaf Education”

“With so many students receiving cochlear implants and using hearing aids, the program needs more emphasis on hearing rehabilitation: how to assess listening skills, understand the hierarchy of listening development, and create IEP goals based on listening skills needed.”

“ classroom technology, ie. Hearing Assistance Technology, how to inspect hearing aids, keep them clean, etc.

Some of the strengths and areas for improvement have been identified already. Efforts will focus on preserving the quality of the identified strengths, including quality practicum experiences. A number of changes have already been put into place to address areas of improvement. Guest speakers have been brought in to provide additional work with IEP development and exposure to hearing aid and cochlear implant technology, and additional collaborative efforts are seeking to improve ASL communication as well as skills in listening and spoken language instruction. Together with comments and feedback from current candidates these comments will be used to continue to inform revisions in the program.