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A Deep Dive into Accreditation: Using Action Research to Assess and Evaluate a Teacher Education Program

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Abstract

Continuous assessment in the fields of teaching and education is a must for faculty in higher education as well as the teaching candidates they instruct. Such assessment requires a deep dive into practice and policy along with a willingness to evaluate program delivery models objectively. Although accomplishing this degree of evaluation is not an easy task, it does provide a rich opportunity for determining program strengths and areas in need of improvement. Spearheaded by accreditation guidelines and a collaborative action research project, the authors highlight the lessons they learned and explore application possibilities within a literacy education program. From the importance of accountability from all stakeholders, (i.e. university administration, faculty, and students), to the role technology integration plays, to the significance of diversity and the implementation of field experiences throughout, they share their discoveries and insights in a forthright and reflective manner. As university faculty working with those seeking teaching certification at an advanced level (Masters and/or Educational Specialist), the authors examine the influence CAEP, the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation, has not only on their program but, ultimately, on their individual pedagogy and methodology. Reconciling the need of maintaining accreditation with their own desire for autonomy in teaching, they look critically at ways to merge the two.

Keywords: program-assessment, action-research, accreditation, Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP)