

FOLLOW UP STUDIES OF GRADUATES AND DATA TABLES OF RESULTS:

In January 2011, FSEHD initiated efforts to gather feedback from recent initial teacher preparation and advanced program graduates on their preparation and professional experience. Electronic surveys were sent to a list of college graduates from at least the last ten years generated by RIC's Office of Institutional Research. Additionally, survey invitations and links to the survey were posted on Facebook, on the pages for the ED@RIC, RIC Young Alumni, RIC Alumni Association, and Rhode Island College groups.

Following multiple survey reminders, 69 respondents had answered the survey as of April 28, 2011. These respondents represented FSEHD graduates from 1973 to 2010. In order to keep data from this study consistent with the timeframe in FSEHD's recent survey of graduate employers, only the data for 2008, 2009, and 2010 graduates (n=34) were analyzed for the purposes of the present report. Of the 34 recent graduate survey respondents, 47% (n=16) were graduates of initial teacher preparation programs (BA, BS, MAT degrees). Fifty-three percent (n=18) were graduates of advanced program awarding graduate level endorsements, MA, MS, MEd, CAGS, and PhD degrees, and Certificates of Graduate Study.

Figure 1 portrays the initial teacher preparation programs from which recent graduate survey respondents had graduated. Most initial program graduate survey respondents (56%) had graduated with a degree in Elementary Education, followed by 19% who had graduated with degrees in Middle/Secondary Special Education and Early Childhood Education. Nineteen percent indicated that they had completed "other" programs, listing them as: Elementary Education, Elementary Education: K-6-BS, English, Master of Arts in Teaching, Special Education, and middle level endorsement.¹

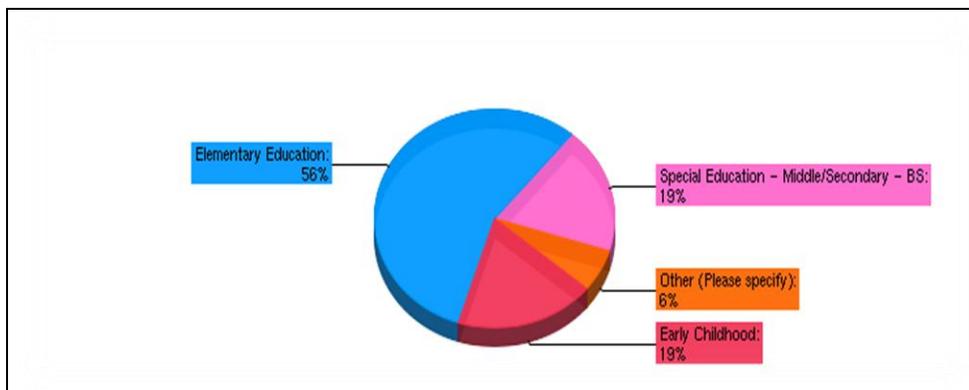


Figure 1: Initial Teacher Preparation Programs of Graduate Survey Respondents (n=16)

Figure 2 displays the advanced programs from which recent graduate survey respondents had graduated. Twenty-eight percent had graduated from the Agency Counseling program, followed by 17% from the Advanced Studies in Teaching and Learning MEd program, 17% from "other" programs, and the remaining respondents from Mental Health Counseling (CAGS), TESL (Med), Special Education Certification (Med), Reading (MEd), Mental Health Counseling (MA). "Other" programs indicated by advanced program graduates were listed as Cohort I Autism Education, CGS, or blank.

¹ It is not clear why the respondents who selected "other" did not choose from the available options.

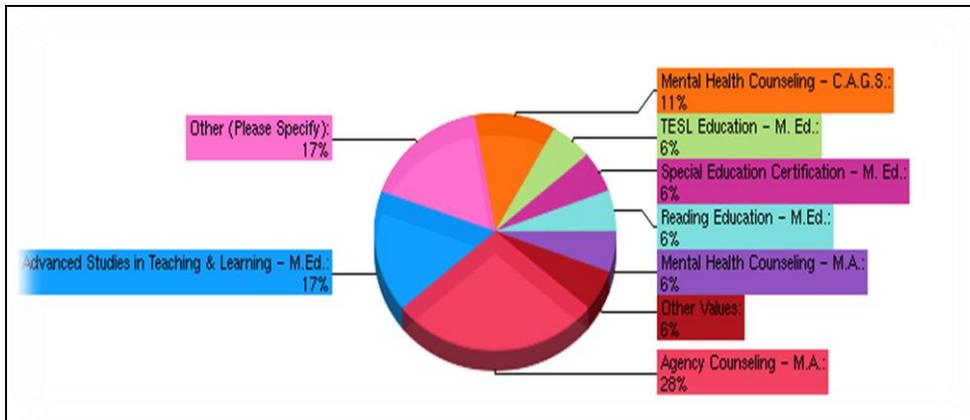


Figure 2: Advanced Programs of Graduate Survey Respondents (n=18)

Due to the relatively low survey response, the reader of this report should bear in mind that the views expressed by graduate survey respondents do not necessarily reflect the opinions of all FSEHD graduates.

Results

Overall Feedback

When asked to rate how well they were prepared for their professional roles, almost all initial graduates (94%) responded “well,” “very well,” or “excellent” (see Figure 3). Similarly, 89% of advanced graduate employers gave the same ratings to the quality of their preparation.

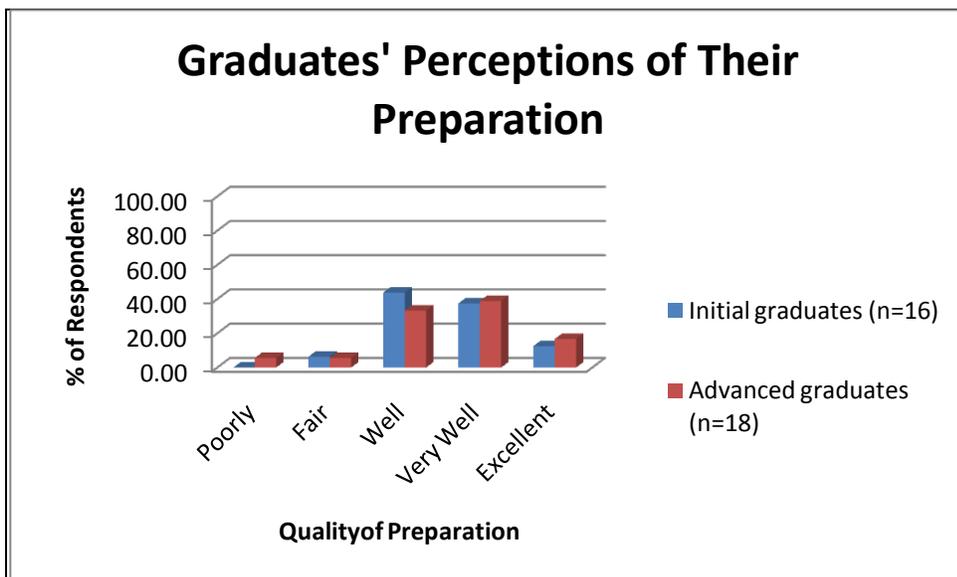


Figure 3: Graduates' Perceptions of How Well They Were

Eighty-seven percent of initial graduates indicated that they would recommend their school hire graduates of FSEHD initial teacher preparation programs “with confidence,” “with high confidence,” or “absolutely, without reservation” (see Figure 4). Among advanced program graduates, the vast majority

would recommend their program “with high confidence” (72%) or “absolutely, without reservation” (33%). However, 22% (n=4) reported that they would only recommend their advanced program “with recommendation,” and one respondent would “not at all” recommend his/her advanced program.

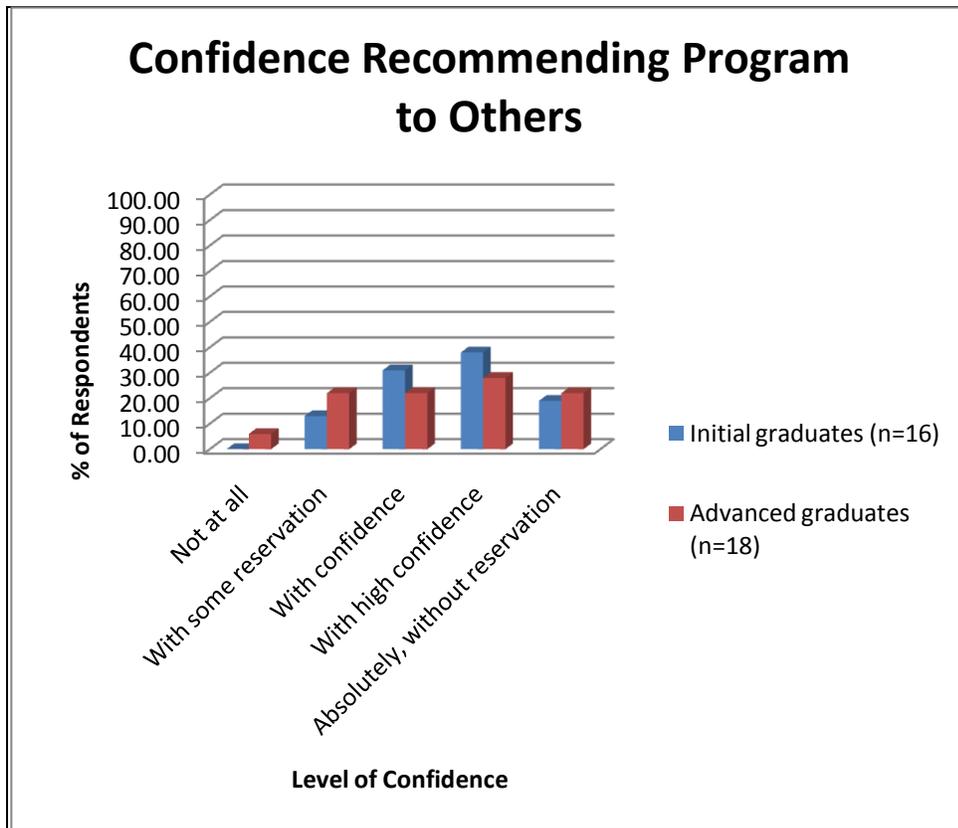


Figure 4: Graduates’ Confidence in Recommending Their FSEHD Program to Others

Detailed Feedback on Initial Programs Preparation

The follow up survey asked respondents to evaluate their initial teacher preparation in several areas, using the following scale: 1=Not at all prepared; 2=Somewhat prepared; 3=Adequately prepared; 4=Very well prepared. Table 1 displays these results in descending order according to mean rating on each question. Ratings ranged from 2.25 to 3.75. In general, initial programs graduates rated themselves highly in all areas, with mean ratings hovering at or above “3” or “adequate.” FSEHD graduates rated themselves lowest in areas related to Pedagogy, specifically as it relates to classroom management (RIPTS 6; CF: Pedagogy) and working collaboratively with families to create a professional learning community and environment that supports the improvement of teaching, learning and student achievement (RIPTS 7; CF: Professionalism) , with mean ratings of ranging from 2.69 to 2.25, respectively, on a scale of one to four.

Table 1: Initial Graduates' Ratings of Their Preparation

Preparation Area (n=16)	Level of Preparation				Mean
	Not at all	Some-what	Adequately	Very well	
9. Reflect on their practice. (RIPTS 10; CF: Professionalism)	0	0	4	12	3.75
2. Maintain professional standards guided by legal and ethical principles. (RIPTS 11; CF: Professionalism)	0	0	5	11	3.69
15. Use appropriate informal assessment strategies with individuals and groups of students to determine the impact of instruction on learning, to provide feedback, and to plan future instruction. (RIPTS 9; CF: Pedagogy)	0	0	6	10	3.63
8. Assume responsibility for their own professional development by actively seeking and participating in opportunities to learn and grow as professionals. (RIPTS 10; CF: Professionalism)	0	1	5	10	3.56
10. Have a deep content knowledge base sufficient to create learning experiences that reflect an understanding of central concepts, vocabulary, structures, and tools of inquiry of the disciplines/content areas they teach. (RIPTS 2; CF: Knowledge)	0	1	7	8	3.44
11. Create instructional opportunities that reflect an understanding of how children learn and develop. (RIPTS 3; CF: Pedagogy)	0	1	7	8	3.44
4. Create instructional opportunities that reflect a respect for the diversity of learners . (RIPTS 4; CF: Diversity)	0	1	7	8	3.44
17. Create instructional opportunities to encourage all students' development of critical thinking, problem solving, performance skills, and literacy across content areas. (RIPTS 5; CF: Pedagogy)	0	0	9	7	3.44
12. Create a supportive learning environment that encourages appropriate standards of behavior, positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation. (RIPTS 6; CF: Pedagogy)	0	2	7	7	3.31
16. Use appropriate formal assessment strategies with individuals and groups of students to determine the impact of instruction on learning, to provide feedback, and to plan future instruction. (RIPTS 9; CF: Pedagogy)	0	1	5	9	3.31
3. Create learning experiences using a broad base of general knowledge that reflects an understanding of the nature of the communities and world in which we live. (RIPTS 1: Knowledge)	0	0	8	7	3.25
14. Create instructional opportunities that reflect an understanding of how students differ in their approaches to learning. (RIPTS 4; CF: Diversity)	1	0	9	6	3.25
13. Use effective communication as the vehicle through which students explore, conjecture, discuss, and investigate	0	1	10	5	3.25

Preparation Area (n=16)	Level of Preparation				
	Not at all	Some-what	Adequately	Very well	Mean
new ideas. (RIPTS 8; CF: Pedagogy)					
6. Work collaboratively with the broader community to create a professional learning community and environment that supports the improvement of teaching, learning and student achievement. (RIPTS 7; CF: Professionalism)	0	4	6	6	3.13
5. Design or adapt relevant learning experiences that incorporate digital tools and resources. (RIPTS: 8; CF: Pedagogy)	1	4	4	7	3.06
1. Work collaboratively with all school personnel to create a professional learning community and environment that supports the improvement of teaching, learning and student achievement. (RIPTS 7; CF: Professionalism)	0	5	6	5	3.00
18. Demonstrate effective classroom management strategies. (RIPTS 6; CF: Pedagogy)	1	5	8	2	2.69
7. Work collaboratively with families to create a professional learning community and environment that supports the improvement of teaching, learning and student achievement. (RIPTS 7; CF: Professionalism)	1	9	3	2	2.25

Scale: 1=Not at all prepared; 2=Somewhat prepared; 3=Adequately prepared; 4=Very well prepared

When asked to describe the greatest strengths of their initial teacher preparation programs, graduates overwhelmingly praised the quality and duration of their practica and other field experiences. Some also mentioned the quality of instructors and their preparation as reflective practitioners. All open-ended responses on this topic included:

- *-creating a well balanced classroom for my students through using the PAR model.*
- *A lot of support offered. Time to prepare work for classes was offered too.*
- *Hands on Experience. Plenty of Reading instruction*
- *Leslie Sevey, math and science. FANTASTIC PROFESSIONAL EDUCATOR!*
- *Practicums helped prepare for student teaching.*
- *variety of settings and observations available*
- *From the very beginning of my college career I constantly heard how attending RIC for ELED was a poor choice because no one ever graduated on time and it took forever. I graduated a semester later then I should have, however, that was my choice. The practicum classes were all very beneficial; getting the in-class experience from the very beginning was a great opportunity. All of the ELED professors I had did a wonderful job of tying all aspects of teaching together in a way that "clicked." I felt very well prepared in all aspects, including reading/writing, math, and science.*
- *I feel that I was prepared in regards to differentiating instruction, being a reflective teacher, being student-centered, and teaching in the various content areas, though some more than others. I learned how to write thorough lesson plans, but not necessarily as a unified part of a unit. I came out knowing how to use assessment effectively.*
- *Most instructors were excellent educators, role models and supporters of students in the MAT program. Small class size was an advantage.*

- *The amount of time spent with students during practicums was excellent. We got to go into the classroom by our sophomore year...really lets you know if you will like it before you get too far in. Most professors were very helpful and wanted you to succeed.*
- *Practicum experiences - multiple opportunities working with different backgrounds (academic, socio-economic, etc.)*
- *Hands-on experience during practicums, developing our own lesson plans, experience in a variety of schools.*
- *Being able to work in schools through practicum experiences early into the program, so that I had experience in a variety of classrooms before graduating.*

Twelve survey respondents offered recommendations for FSEHD to better prepare initial teacher preparation candidates. Suggestions were quite varied, and overall themes were not evident. For example, three respondents suggested improved communication about due dates and expectations in programs. Two respondents complained of inexperienced, disorganized, or inept instructors. Two respondents reported that extended assignments (e.g., portfolios, Work Sample) were too involved. Other ideas were suggested individually, as well. Actual comments included:

- *-Help graduates find qualified positions in their field.*
- *Communication between the early childhood/elementary education programs and students.*
- *Letting students know what's in store for them in the program.*
- *More notification of due dates for different assignments, especially to get into FSEHD.*
- *Some projects...especially SPED courses were very lengthy.*
- *I would have liked to have more experience with working with student with special needs, and particularly with students with IEPs or who have been recommended to RTI. I don't feel as if the one special education course I took was enough to prepare me for working with these students. I also feel that I was entirely unprepared for the political, legal side of teaching. I didn't feel prepared for the paperwork that I have to do, or now for the evaluations that are coming up for teachers.*
- *Some instructors were too inexperienced (never taught a college-level course) and it showed. Having an inexperienced, unorganized instructor in a field I was new to did not make me feel confident in my learning. So, screening potential MAT instructors should be done more carefully, and applicants should be required to have prior college-level teaching experience in the area of teacher education. Some practicum school locations were difficult to get to, and all seemed to be in urban settings; it would be nice for future teachers in the program to be able to train in urban, "urban ring", and suburban classroom environments before graduating. Students in all teacher prep programs should have to take at least two special education courses (when I was in the program, only one non-practicum course was required): one with a practicum component, and one without. I felt underprepared for working with and assisting special needs students after graduating. I also think job assistance and honest talk about how difficult it currently is to obtain a full-time teaching position locally should play a role in the MAT program. Lastly, advisors for MAT degree candidates should be willing and able to assist and be there for their assigned students.*
- *I decided early that I was not going to choose SPED as my content. I ended up deciding English would be a better fit for me; I enjoyed most of the classes I took for that part of my certification. However, I wasn't going to school to be an English major and think maybe what classes are required for ELED/English majors should be reconsidered; more focus on classes that would connect ELED to English and vice versa. Also, seeing that I was not a SPED major, I found the one*

SPED class I was required to take a complete waste of time. I have learned more about all aspects of Special Education in my every day experience since graduation. I spent most of my time in my SPED class working on a differentiated unit of instruction. Yes, I believe DI is a major part of SPED, but I felt that was more common sense and something I was already getting from my ELED courses. I would have found it more helpful to have learned all of the different aspects of special education; such as the different acronyms (IEP, 504, etc.), ways in which resource and special education teachers work hand in hand with regular education teachers.

- *less BUSY WORK- i.e...reflections, portfolios...practicums need to be more meaningful (more time in the classroom, more work with diverse learners, behavior management strategies)*
- *personally I felt that the student teacher work sample was a big BLACK cloud hanging over my head. The pressure to fulfill the specific requirements for the sample did not allow me to ENJOY being in the student teaching position. I was always thinking about GETTING the student samples, or worrying about the subsequent lessons of my unit. I wish I could have BEEN IN THE MOMENT with the students instead of worrying about MY LESSONS..... Now that I have been substituting, I can see how natural teaching is and how lessons develop from the experience with the students. I feel TOO much time was spent preparing lessons ahead of time and then editing them instead of allowing one lesson to flow into the next one .*
- *The terrible reading professor XXX who had my class writing letters to the dean, has GOT to go if she is still there. She put so many of us through hell with her condescending . Bringing down work by a full letter grade because tabs in a binder were not typed. My final report was returned with coffee spills EVERYWHERE. Returned 3 of my papers with blood stains from her nose bleeds. Terrible.*
- *I think there should be more student teaching done in urban areas because I feel like the classes we took that involved practicum work did not prepare us for enough behavior interventions. Everything was always nice and fluffy.*

Detailed Feedback on Advanced Programs Preparation

The advanced programs graduate follow up survey required respondents to rate their preparation in areas related to FSEHD's Advanced Competencies, using the following scale: 1=Not at all prepared; 2=Somewhat prepared; 3=Adequately prepared; 4=Very prepared. Overall, ratings were quite positive, ranging from 2.56 to 3.39. Advanced programs graduates rated their preparation highest in areas related to Evidenced-Based Decision Making (see Table 2) and understanding diversity. Lowest rated indicators included clearly focused on Technology Use, with mean ratings of 2.72, 2.72, and 2.56 in selecting and using technology effectively in information collection analysis and management; selecting and using technology effectively in research based activities; and selecting technology effectively in collaborative work environments. Advanced graduates also felt they were less than adequately prepared to incorporate considerations of other professionals and/or stakeholders when determining a plan of action (mean=2.78) and create plan to further their own professional growth (mean=2.78).

Table 2: Advanced Graduates' Ratings of Their Preparation

Competence Area (n=18)	Level of Preparation				
	Not at all	Somewhat	Adequately	Very	Mean
17. Examine own emerging, developing or acquired professional knowledge, skills, communication, and dispositions (Professional Identity Development)	0	2	7	9	3.39
5. Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of diversity as it relates to field specific content. (Contextual Perspective)	0	3	5	10	3.39
8. Collect and analyze data. (Evidence-Based Decision Making)	0	3	7	8	3.28
16. Use knowledge of diversity about self and others to design effective practice. (Diversity of Practice)	0	4	6	8	3.22
9. Use data to inform decision-making. (Evidence-Based Decision Making)	0	3	9	6	3.17
4. Locate, interpret, and evaluate relevant information. (Information Literacy)	1	2	9	6	3.11
7. Define problems clearly. (Evidence-Based Decision Making)	2	1	8	7	3.11
1. Demonstrate conceptual mastery of subject matter, literature, and theory in field of professional practice. (Domain Specific Knowledge)	0	4	9	5	3.06
10. Address target population dynamics. (Evidence-Based Decision Making)	1	5	4	8	3.06
6. Exhibit an understanding of the standards of one's chosen profession (Professional Awareness)	2	1	5	9	3.06
2. Demonstrate conceptual mastery of methods in field of professional practice. (Domain Specific Knowledge)	2	2	9	5	2.94
3. Recognize when information is needed. (Information Literacy)	3	1	8	6	2.94
12. Select and use technology effectively in presentation of information. (Technology Use)	3	2	8	5	2.83
11. Incorporate considerations of other professionals and/or stakeholders when determining a plan of action. (Evidence-Based Decision Making)	3	4	5	6	2.78
18. Create plan to further their own professional growth. (Professional Identity Development)	2	5	6	5	2.78
14. Select and use technology effectively in information collection analysis and management. (Technology Use)	3	2	10	3	2.72
15. Select and use technology effectively in research based activities. (Technology Use)	3	2	10	3	2.72
13. Select and use technology effectively in collaborative work environments. (Technology Use)	3	4	9	2	2.56

Scale: 1=Not at all prepared; 2=Somewhat prepared; 3=Adequately prepared; 4=Very prepared

The greatest strength attributed by graduates to their advanced program was clearly the quality of the professors who had taught them. Responses on this topic included:

- *Courses offered, times of classes, instructors*
- *Fantastic teachers, relevant classes and resources that have come in handy in my career*
- *Great teachers*
- *Increased self-confidence and pride in my accomplishment at this point of my life.*
- *Instruction was effective; professors were well rounded and knowledgeable.*
- *It ended.*
- *Knowledge of the professors.*
- *Quality, caring professors*
- *Some excellent teachers.*
- *The full time faculty members are excellent -- Monica Darcy and Charlie Boisvert, especially.*
- *The small classes enable seminar type discussions and close relationships with the professors.*
- *The strong commitment professors had to students.*
- *Very little to say here (see next item)*
- *knowledge of instructors and professors*
- *This would have to be the media & literacy class as well as the one of the first research classes. It taught me how to look at other researchers work, evaluate it and conduct my own.*
- *feeling challenged by the course work and internship, small community of professors and students where respect of utmost importance*
- *the program gave a good overview of what you need to know to be an effective counselor as well as what goes into the research side of counseling. good clinical feedback, good class interaction and discussion*

The sixteen recommendations to improve advanced preparation were quite variable. A few themes that emerged included updating curriculum to make it more consistent and to better reflect current initiatives in the field, improving instruction and relying on fewer adjunct instructors, and adding more sections of classes. Responses were as follows:

- *Course on all the spec. ed. paperwork*
- *Enforced internships with state or local agencies*
- *I suggest more practical experience(s) or field work requirements.*
- *More sections of classes*
- *learning to write treatment plans*
- *parking*
- *May I suggest an increase in total credits in the Agency counseling by another three credits or internship with outside agencies.*
- *This was a horrible program from start to finish. First...there should not be two professors (XXX & XXX) teaching all of the classes involved. There needs to be some change between each course. This is true, especially since Dr. XXX is so out of touch with the reality of today's education. Each week was torture to sit through. The curriculum is outdated and the professors are not aware of what's going on in RI's schools with regard to curriculum, graduation, GSE's, etc. They are very out of touch.*
- *Many of the classes were taught by adjunct faculty. Some were excellent. More classes taught by full-time faculty would be a good improvement.*

- *maybe adding a class where you explore specific interventions that have been proven to be effective with specific illness. (ie. best methods of dealing with anxiety, depression, personality disorders, etc).*
- *Stop repeating what most of us learned in undergraduate studies. As practicing teachers, we KNOW a lot of what was included. We wanted new strategies, new technology, new ways of reaching our students & motivating them. Too much emphasis was placed on diversity (we already took these classes and deal with this every single day) and strategies we had learned in undergrad - we even read some of the same articles. Professors get stuck on their "favorite" topic and are not connected to the things we deal with in the classroom. Nothing at all was included that we deal with daily - standards, curriculum writing, testing, NCLB agenda, etc. RIC seems out of touch with what we are dealing with today in our classrooms and with the State.*
- *I had at least 3 adjunct faculty members that I feel I did not learn enough from. I wish I could remember their names!!!! My suggestion to resolve this would be to require each course to be taught more consistently -- I think that it was a lack of structure in organizing the course that caused these professors to be so disappointing.*
- *Provide some experience with remedial reading programs that are widely used such as Orton Gillingham and Wilson. I understand that these are not considered best practice, but they are widely used. I felt very uncomfortable in my position because I did not know much about these programs.*
- *The politically correct nonsense could be eliminated. Too much leftwing baloney. For example, I was told in class that the word "blackboard" is racist. Are you kidding me?*
- *assignments should be more "user friendly" as we were all full-time practitioners; I don't like feeling like I was helping to do "research"for someone else*
- *This program's curriculum needs to be redesigned with the input of current teachers. It was amazing to me how little "real world" material was actually covered.*

Conclusions

Overall, graduates of initial teacher preparation and advanced program graduates indicated that had been well prepared by FSEHD. Furthermore, they would recommend their preparation program to others with confidence.

In general, initial programs graduates reported that their preparation was adequate or better in all areas except classroom management and working collaboratively with families to create a professional learning community and environment that supports the improvement of teaching, learning and student achievement. They cited the quality and duration of their practica and other field experiences as the greatest strength of their initial preparation program. Some also mentioned the quality of instructors and their preparation as reflective practitioners. Suggestions for improving initial teacher preparation were quite varied, with some recommending improved communication about due dates and expectations in programs, replacement of inexperienced, disorganized, or inept instructors, and fewer extended assignments.

Advanced programs graduates rated their preparation highest in areas related to Evidenced-Based Decision Making and understanding diversity. Lowest rated indicators included clearly focused on Technology Use, including: selecting and using technology effectively in information collection analysis and management; selecting and using technology effectively in research based activities; and selecting

technology effectively in collaborative work environments. Advanced graduates also felt they were less than adequately prepared to incorporate considerations of other professionals and/or stakeholders when determining a plan of action and create plan to further their own professional growth. The greatest strength attributed by graduates to their advanced program was clearly the quality of the professors who had taught them. A few themes emerged in terms of improving advanced program preparation. These included updating curriculum to make it more consistent and to better reflect current initiatives in the field, improving instruction and relying on fewer adjunct instructors, and adding more sections of classes