



Southern Connecticut State University

**CCSAR – Center for Community
and School Action Research**

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Academic Year 2005-2006

SCSU Educator Preparation Program Evaluation

An Analysis of Principal Survey Responses

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SCSU is very interested in learning the thoughts and opinions of principals regarding the quality and level of preparation of recent SCSU graduates. The *Principal Survey* is designed to evaluate graduate performance in relation to the State of Connecticut Common Core of Teaching (CCCT) and the Interstate New Teachers Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) standards. The purpose of this study is to assess the quality and level of preparation of recent SCSU graduates through an analysis of responses provided on the *Principal Survey*.

The specific goals of this study:

- to determine principals' assessments of the level of performance competencies displayed by SCSU students and SCSU prepared teachers relative to NCATE, INTASC and State of Connecticut standards;
- to gather ideas and suggestions for improving the quality of the educational and field experiences that SCSU provides students; and
- to meet the needs of Connecticut schools for highly trained and well-prepared classroom teachers and other professional educators.

Method

Participants

One hundred ninety five principals were invited to complete and return a *Principal Survey*. Principals were identified by the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) BEST program database that listed the names of SCSU graduates and the names of the schools where they were working when they submitted their BEST portfolio. Seventy-two principals completed and returned a survey to CCSAR. These principals represented a cross-section of Connecticut's schools to include: (1) all grade levels pre-K through high school, and from urban and suburban communities; and (2) public and parochial schools.

Apparatus

CCSAR created a double-sided *Principal Survey* (see Appendix) to reflect the state of Connecticut Common Core of Teaching (CCCT) attributes and indicators. The CCCT attributes and indicators also align with the Interstate New Teachers Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) standards and reflect the School of Education's conceptual framework known as S.A.I.L.S. (Scholarship, Attitudes and Dispositions, Integrity, Leadership, and Service). S.A.I.L.S. "*represents the SOE's principled*

approach to teacher preparation, informing practice and connecting coursework, field experiences, and faculty-student-teacher interactions”.

The survey consists of 21 items, each with three possible responses: ‘Met+’, ‘Met’, or ‘Met-’. Space is also provided at the end of the survey for additional comments. Principals rate SCSU graduates using the following three-point scale:

- 1 = *Met -* professional educator has failed to meet the standard
- 2 = *Met* professional educator has met the standard
- 3 = *Met+* professional educator has met and exceeded the standard.

Procedure

In December 2005, 195 survey packets were mailed to school principals that had been identified as employing recent SCSU Educator Preparation Program graduates. Survey packets contained a cover letter, a *Principal Survey*, a confidential information sheet, a report request form, and a stamped self-addressed envelope (see Appendix). Changes to this year’s cover letter included the identification of the student(s) who was working at the respective school when they submitted their BEST portfolio in the spring 2005. This revision was made to ensure that principals reflected only on recent SCSU graduates as opposed to other SCSU graduates employed at their school. This mailing produced 66 completed surveys as of January 16, 2006.

CCSAR then sent reminder post cards in an effort to increase the response rate. This method yielded an additional six surveys for a final count of 72 completed surveys.

Data Analysis

Data were entered into SPSS and frequency analyses conducted. Item responses are presented in Table 1 and include the mean score and standard deviation for each individual item response. This table also includes the mean score and standard deviation for each INTASC Standard and the items that collectively measure this standard. The ten INTASC competency standards are: 1. Knowledge of subject matter, 2. Knowledge of human development and learning, 3. Instruction adapted to meet diverse learners, 4. Use of multiple instructional strategies & resources, 5. Effective learning environment created, 6. Effective communication, 7. Lesson planning, 8. Assessment of student learning to improve teaching, 9. Reflection and professional development, and 10. Partnership with school and community. The Appendix also includes bar charts that show the percentage of met+, met, and met- for each item.

Results

Responses indicate that the majority of principals believe that graduates of SCSU Educator Preparation Programs are well prepared in their specialty areas. All of the survey items have a mean score above **2.00**, indicating that the *professional educator has met the standards* in all areas. The highest mean score received was **2.56** on survey question #16 - *Generally speaking, the educators prepared at Southern Connecticut State University conduct themselves as professionals in accordance with the code of Professional Responsibility for Teachers*. The lowest mean score was **2.16** on question #20 - *Generally speaking, the educators prepared at Southern Connecticut State University serve as leaders in the school community*. Mean scores for INTASC standards were also high. Standard 5, *An Effective Learning Environment is Created*, received the highest mean score at **2.47** while standard 10, *Partnerships with School and Community*, received the lowest mean score at **2.20**.

Table-1 Mean scores for survey items

Principal Survey: INTASC Standards and Accompanying Survey Items	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
INTASC Standard 1 Knowledge of Subject Matter	M=2.42	SD=.476
3. Demonstrate proficiency in reading	M=2.47	SD=.557
4. Demonstrate proficiency in writing	M=2.43	SD=.554
5. Demonstrate proficiency in mathematics	M=2.38	SD=.521
6. Understand the central concepts and skills, tools of inquiry and structures of the disciplines they teach	M=2.35	SD=.593
INTASC Standard 2 Knowledge of Human Development and Learning	M=2.30	SD=.607
1. Understand how students learn and develop	M=2.30	SD=.607
INTASC Standard 3 Instruction is Adapted to Meet Diverse Learners	M=2.33	SD=.643
2. Understand how students differ in their approaches to learning	M=2.32	SD=.675
8. Recognize the need to vary their instructional methods	M=2.34	SD=.736
INTASC Standard 4 Use of Multiple Instructional Strategies and Resources	M=2.28	SD=.590
12. Create instructional opportunities to support students' academic, social and personal development	M=2.37	SD=.638
14. Employ a variety of instructional strategies that enable students to think critically, solve problems and demonstrate skills	M=2.20	SD=.651
INTASC Standard 5 An Effective Learning Environment is Created	M=2.47	SD=.602
11. Establish and maintain appropriate standards of behavior and create a positive learning environment that shows a deep commitment to students and their success	M=2.40	SD=.689
16. Conduct themselves as professionals in accordance with the Code of Professional Responsibility for Teachers	M=2.56	SD=.629
17. Share responsibility for student achievement and well-being	M=2.46	SD=.652
INTASC Standard 6 Effective Communication to Foster Inquiry and Collaboration	M=2.33	SD=.607
13. Use effective verbal, nonverbal and media communications techniques which fosters individual and collective inquiry	M=2.33	SD=.607

INTASC Standard 7 Lesson Planning	M=2.35	SD=.626
7. Know how to design and deliver instruction	M=2.29	SD=.644
9. Plan instruction based upon knowledge of subject matter, students, the curriculum, and the community	M=2.39	SD=.669
10. Create a structure for learning by selecting and/or creating significant learning tasks that make the subject matter meaningful to students	M=2.39	SD=.708
INTASC Standard 8 Assessment of Student Learning to Improve Teaching	M=2.25	SD=.691
15. Use various assessment techniques to evaluate student learning and modify instruction as appropriate	M=2.25	SD=.691
INTASC Standard 9 Reflection and Professional Development	M=2.37	SD=.618
19. Seek out opportunities to grow professionally	M=2.39	SD=.623
21. Demonstrates a passion for improving their profession	M=2.37	SD=.705
INTASC Standard 10 Partnerships with School and Community	M=2.20	SD=.598
18. Continually engage in self-evaluation of the effects of their choices and actions on students and the school community	M=2.24	SD=.669
20. Serve as a leader in the school community	M=2.16	SD=.673

Qualitative Findings

Comments provided at the end of the survey were tallied to determine the frequency of a response, and then similar responses grouped together to define a theme or key concept. These findings were then summarized as programmatic strengths or areas in need of improvement.

Programmatic Strengths

The majority of these comments (69%) reflect principals' satisfaction with SCSU graduates. Many of the comments are very broad in nature, such as "*I have been very pleased with the preparation and performance of SCSU graduates.*" Yet, specific areas of strength were mentioned. Several principals indicated strong attributes in planning and delivery of instruction, and that the ability to establish rapport with faculty and students was evident. One principal commented on a student's strong "*cognizance of multiple intelligence,*" while another was "*particularly impressed with teachers who have backgrounds in Physical Education, Counseling, and Special Education.*"

Areas in Need of Improvement

The remainder of the comments (31%) expressed various concerns with SCSU graduate abilities and/or competencies. Several principals felt that teachers required more training in behavior management, "*teachers should have more of a problem-solving approach to discipline.*" A few comments also indicated that schools are looking for teachers that are more "student-centered" rather than "teacher-centered." Concerns were also mentioned about BEST practices. Universities should "*practice BEST practices, modeling what they*

must have teachers handle in the classroom” and “most [graduates] are very limited in their ability to complete a BEST portfolio.” Suggestions were also made to add more “opportunities to increase application of skills to a variety of educational settings,” to “attach a one year internship to the Education certification programs”, and to increase collaboration between SCSU and area schools to offer opportunities “wherein professionals [could] share experiences and expertise” with current students.

Discussion

Survey scores indicate that principals who responded are satisfied with the level of performance from SCSU graduates. Item mean scores of **2.16** and above point to the fact that the “professional educator has met the standard[s]” measured by the *Principal Survey*. Moreover, the majority of comments (69%) reflect an overall satisfaction with SCSU students and their abilities to perform as effective educators.

Comments that point to areas in need of improvement (31%) represent some common trends that have been seen throughout previous *Principal Surveys*, such as behavior management concerns, the desire for more collaboration between SCSU and area schools, and the need for more training regarding BEST practices and portfolios. In addition, a few comments indicate a need for more graduates to be “student-centered” rather than “teacher-centered.” These remarks should be considered when reflecting on future changes or additions to improve the SCSU Educator Preparation Programs.

Appendix

Connecticut's Common Core of Teaching

Please use the following scale in evaluating educators who are SCSU graduates. Indicate your response to each item by placing an 'x' in the appropriate space.

SCALE	
Met +	Professional educator has met and exceeded the standard
Met	Professional educator has met the standard
Met -	Professional educator has failed to meet the standard

Generally speaking, the educators prepared at Southern Connecticut State University:

	MET -	MET	MET +
1. Understand how students learn and develop			
2. Understand how students differ in their approaches to learning			
3. Demonstrate proficiency in reading			
4. Demonstrate proficiency in writing			
5. Demonstrate proficiency in mathematics			
6. Understand the central concepts and skills, tools of inquiry and structures of the disciplines they teach			
7. Know how to design and deliver instruction			
8. Recognize the need to vary their instructional methods			
9. Plan instruction based upon knowledge of subject matter, students, the curriculum, and the community			
10. Create a structure for learning by selecting and/or creating significant learning tasks that make the subject matter meaningful to students			
11. Establish and maintain appropriate standards of behavior and create a positive learning environment that shows a deep commitment to students and their success			

Please turn over and continue on the back.

SCALE

- Met+ Professional educator has met and exceeded the standard
- Met Professional educator has met the standard
- Met- Professional educator has failed to meet the standard

Generally speaking, the educators prepared at Southern Connecticut State University:

	MET -	MET	MET +
12. Create instructional opportunities to support students' academic, social and personal development			
13. Use effective verbal, nonverbal and media communications techniques which fosters individual and collective inquiry			
14. Employ a variety of instructional strategies that enable students to think critically, solve problems and demonstrate skills			
15. Use various assessment techniques to evaluate student learning and modify instruction as appropriate			
16. Conduct themselves as professionals in accordance with the Code of Professional Responsibility for Teachers			
17. Share responsibility for student achievement and well-being			
18. Continually engage in self-evaluation of the effects of their choices and actions on students and the school community			
19. Seek out opportunities to grow professionally			
20. Serve as a leader in the school community			
21. Demonstrates a passion for improving their profession			

Please provide any additional comments:

Thank you very much!
CCSAR 2005-2006

January 2, 2006

Dear Principal:

I need your help! Teacher education is at a crossroads in our State and I need your feedback on this survey to demonstrate that our programs do, in fact, produce the kind of teachers you need to hire. The information that I am asking you to provide will help us improve the quality of the educational and field experiences that our students receive, and will help us to continue to meet the standards set by all of our accrediting bodies. Your input will also help us continue to meet the needs that your school has for highly qualified classroom teachers and other educational professionals.

I would greatly appreciate your help by completing and returning the enclosed survey **January 16, 2006**. For your convenience, a self-addressed stamped envelope has been enclosed. Additionally, we are providing you with the names of SCSU alumni who were working at your school during Spring 2005. The CSDE provided us with a list of SCSU graduates and the name of the school where each graduate was working when they submitted their BEST portfolio. This additional information should be helpful to you as you complete the survey. We will not include any individual names or identifying information regarding the school or the SCSU graduate in any subsequent reports we may generate.

SCSU Alumni: e.g. Joe Johnson

As an expression of my appreciation, I would be happy to send you a copy of the report when all the data have been analyzed. If you wish to receive a copy, please indicate this by completing and returning the attached sheet along with your completed questionnaire.

If you should have any questions, please contact Maureen Gilbride-Redman at **CCSAR-Center for Community and School Action Research** at 203/392-6439. The fax number at CCSAR is 203/392-5017.

As the Interim Dean in the School of Education, and as a colleague in the field of education, I trust you appreciate the need to quantify the results of our programs and to be accountable to others. Thanking you in advance for your help. I look forward to receiving your important feedback in the form of a completed questionnaire by **January 16, 2006**.

Sincerely,

James M. Granfield, Ph.D.
Interim Dean
School of Education

Please Complete and Return.
ALL INFORMATION ON THIS FORM WILL BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL

Name: _____
Title: _____
School Name: _____
School Address: _____
Phone/Fax and E-mail: _____
School Grade Level: _____
School Setting: _____

1. How many SCSU graduates work or have some type of affiliation to your school? _____ Approximate year of graduation from SCSU _____

2. Please check below their affiliation:

Teacher _____ (please write specific area they teach) _____

Interns _____ Substitute Teacher _____ School Counselor _____

School Psychologist _____ School Administrator _____

Other (please be specific) _____

3. Have you ever attended or taken any classes at SCSU?

Yes _____ No _____

Did you graduate from SCSU? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, which field of study did you graduate from? (please be specific) _____

If no but you have taken classes at SCSU, please write which ones (please be specific).

4. Would you be interested in participating in our bi-yearly focus groups?

Yes _____ No _____

CCSAR 2006

**Educator Preparation Report
Request Form
(Principal)**

I have enclosed the completed educator preparation questionnaire. Please send me a copy of the report on the evaluation of the educator preparation programs at Southern Connecticut State University.

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

E-mail Address (if applicable): _____

Telephone Numbers:

Work: _____

Home: _____

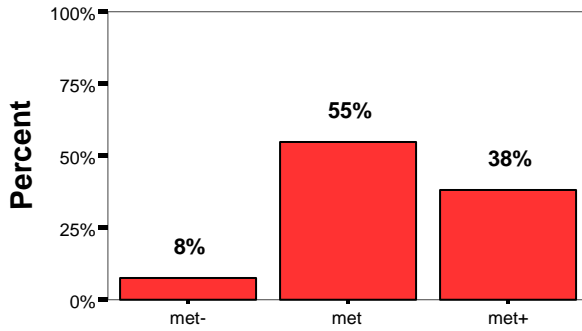
Fax: _____

CCSAR 2006

Bar Charts for Individual Survey Responses

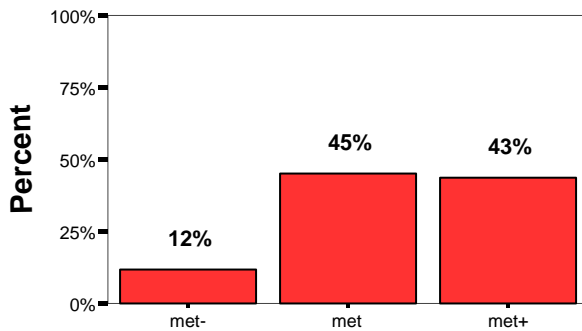
Generally speaking, the educators prepared at Southern Connecticut State University:

1. Understand how students learn and develop



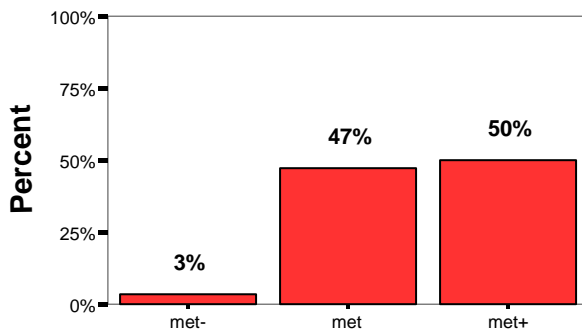
a1

2. Understand how students differ in their approaches to learning



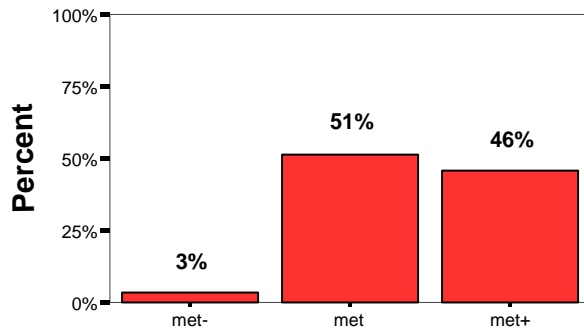
a2

3. Demonstrate proficiency in reading



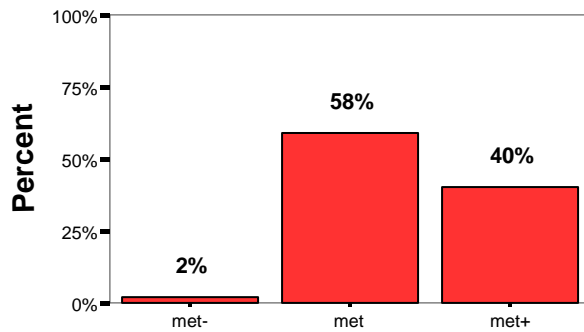
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4. Demonstrate proficiency in writing



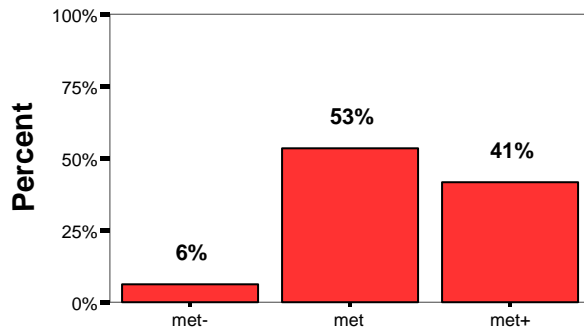
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5. Demonstrate proficiency in mathematics



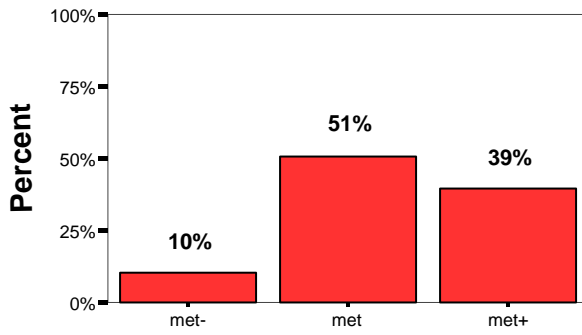
a5

6. Understand the central concepts and skills, tools of inquiry and structures of the disciplines they teach



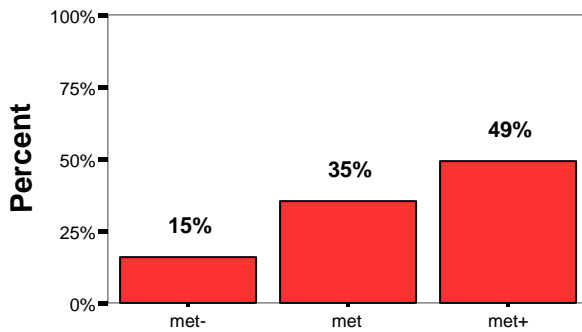
a6

7. Know how to design and deliver instruction



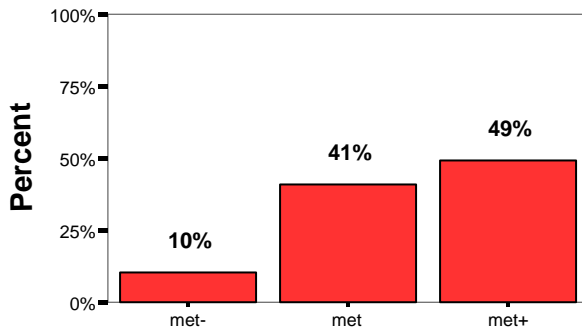
a7

8. Recognize the need to vary their instructional methods



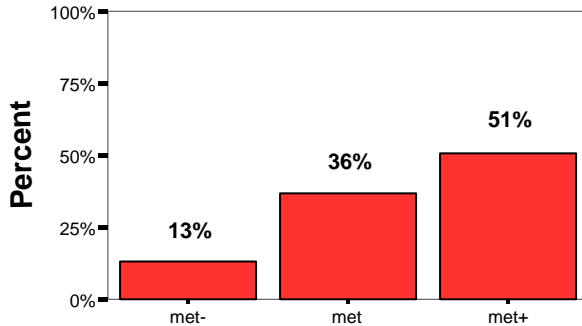
a8

9. Plan instruction based upon knowledge of subject matter, students, the curriculum, and the community



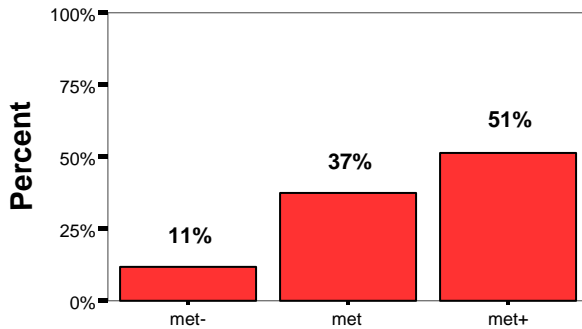
a9

10. Create a structure for learning by selecting and/or creating significant learning tasks that make the subject matter meaningful to students



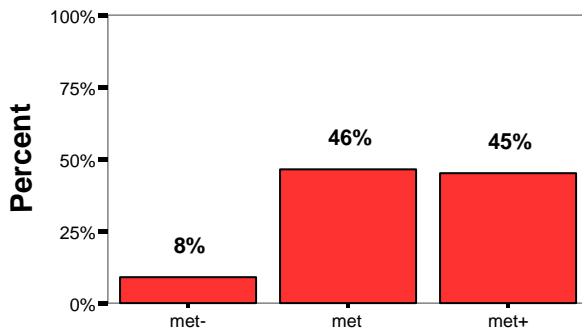
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11. Establish and maintain appropriate standards of behavior and create a positive learning environment that shows a deep commitment to students and their success



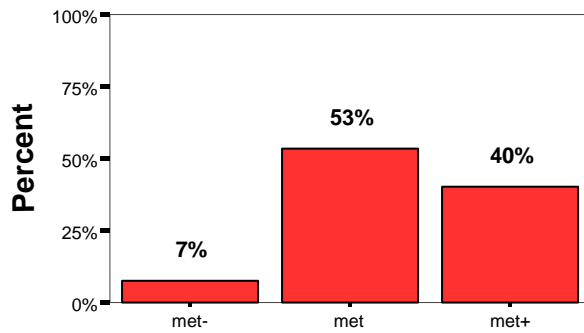
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12. Create instructional opportunities to support students' academic, social and personal development



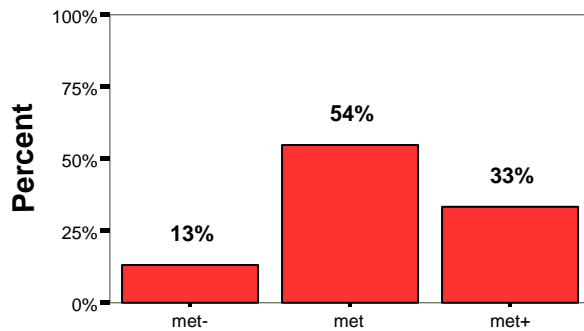
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13. Use effective verbal, nonverbal and media communications techniques which fosters individual and collective inquiry



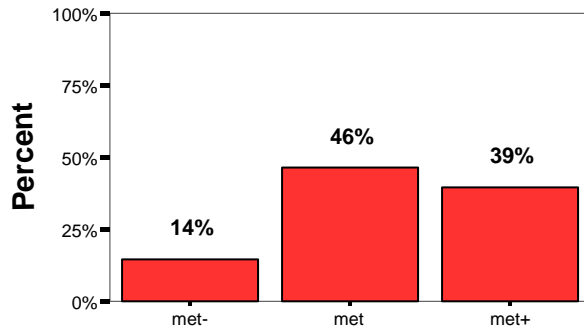
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14. Employ a variety of instructional strategies that enable students to think critically, solve problems and demonstrate skills



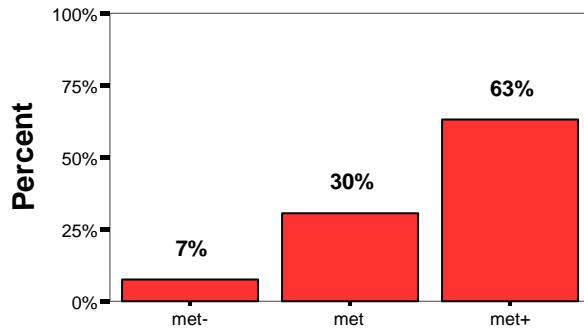
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15. Use various assessment techniques to evaluate student learning and modify instruction as appropriate



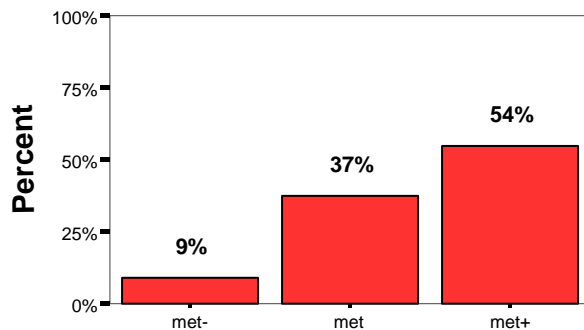
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16. Conduct themselves as professionals in accordance with the Code of Professional Responsibility for Teachers



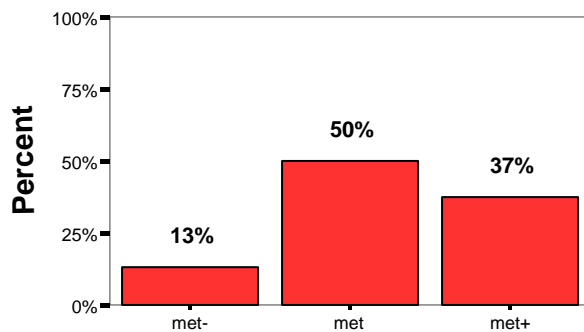
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17. Share responsibility for student achievement and well-being



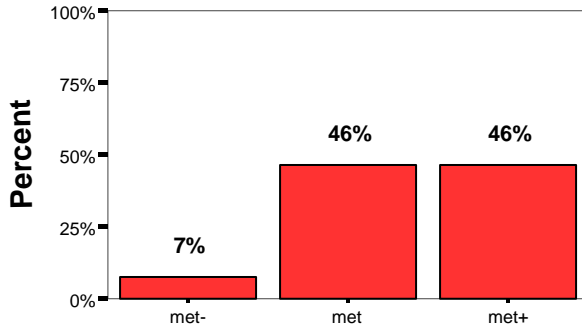
a17

18. Continually engage in self-evaluation of the effects of their choices and actions on students and the school community



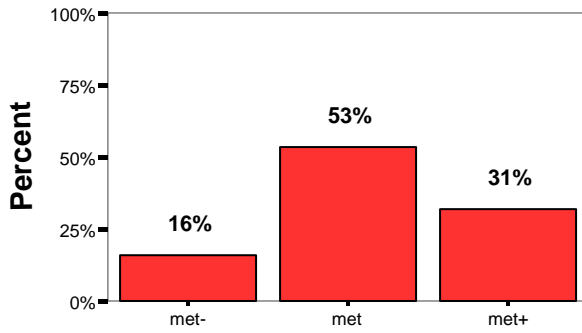
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19. Seek out opportunities to grow professionally



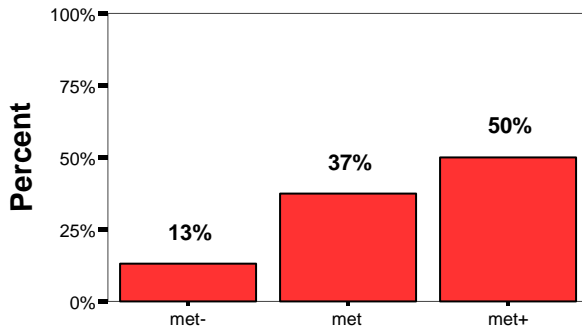
a19

20. Serve as a leader in the school community



a20

21. Demonstrates a passion for improving their profession



a21