



**TEAC Case Analysis
University of Southern Maine
Teacher Education Program
*Inquiry Brief***

Instructions: This Case Analysis is linked to relevant sections of the Audit Report and the Inquiry Brief Proposal. For this purpose all three documents—the Case Analysis, the Audit Report, and the Brief—must be saved into the same folder.

To follow the link, simply control/[left] click. To return to the main text of the Case Analysis, be sure your Web toolbar is visible, and click on the BACK (leftmost) arrow on the toolbar.

Audit Opinion

The *Brief* earned a clean audit opinion, and each component of the TEAC system received a clean opinion. The auditors also concluded that the evidence supports the view that the University of Southern Maine is committed to the teacher education program.

Summary of claims and evidence

The program holds itself to ten standards, eight of which are aligned to one of the ten Maine teacher standards and to the components of TEAC's *Quality Principle I*. Five of the standards emphasize what the prospective teacher must understand – viz., (1) human diversity, (2) the teaching subject, (3) appropriate uses of technology, (4) a variety of instructional strategies, and (5) how to assess student learning. In addition, five other standards emphasize the USM prospective teacher's performance. The USM teacher is expected (1) to be able articulate his/her beliefs about how to insure success for all students, (2) to demonstrate ethical and legal professional practices, (3) to create a democratic learning environment, (4) to plan effective lessons, and (5) to engage in career-long professional improvement.

The faculty make multiple assessments, most of a formative purpose during a year-long internship. The main lines of evidence the faculty relies on to convince itself that the candidates have met its ten standards are:

1. Grades (in method courses, content areas, and overall undergraduate GPA), which consistently yield means above 3.0
2. Standardized test scores: Praxis I and II mean scores for the interns, which exceed the state standard and national averages.
3. Admission interview: ratings by two to three interviewers (faculty and mentors) of

the candidate's understanding of content, technology, and equity as exhibited in prompted essays, Q&A, philosophical statement, portfolios, etc., which met or exceeded the program faculty's expectations in these areas.

4. Intern Assessment System: ratings of instructional units on six standards by faculty supervisors & mentors, and ratings of the semester's aggregate evidence on the ten program standards at the mid-point and end of the program by faculty supervisors, mentors, and the intern, which usually met or exceeded the program faculty's expectations.
5. Entry and Exit Surveys: at the end of the program, the mean ratings from candidates on the importance of the program's values & practices are at the top of the scale, and ratings of the degree of candidate preparedness met or exceeded the program faculty's expectations.
6. Partner School Principal Survey: mean ratings by employers regarding program completers' preparation in the areas of the ten standards were in the *adequately to well-prepared* scale range.
7. Employment information: upon completion of the program, 76% of the candidates, on average, are employed as teachers and another 14% assume other positions in a school.
8. Program impact: assessment scores made at the program endpoint are invariably higher than those at the midpoint of the program and significantly higher in the areas of program emphasis.

The auditors were able to verify and corroborate the evidence cited above for the magnitude of the scores above. They also found lawful and consistent relationships within and between selected program assessments which support the view that the program is able to make valid interpretations of its assessments.

Evidence in support of the claims:

Quality Principle I: Evidence of student learning

Component 1.1: Subject matter knowledge

Evidence available to the panel that is consistent with subject matter knowledge

- [Table 3.2](#), [Table 4.1](#) and [Table 4.2](#) in the *Inquiry Brief* provide the program's subject matter evidence.
- [Audit Task A1](#), [Audit Task A11](#) and [Audit Task A12](#) either corroborate or directly verify the program's assessments of subject matter knowledge.

Evidence available to the panel that is inconsistent with subject matter knowledge

None

Rival explanations for the claim that the evidence is consistent with subject matter knowledge

No rival explanations.

Component 1.2: Pedagogical knowledge

Evidence available to the panel that supports pedagogical knowledge

- [Table 4.3](#), [Table 4.4](#), [Table 4.5](#), and [Table 4.6](#) in the *Inquiry Brief* present the program's evidence of pedagogical knowledge.
- [Audit Task A2](#), [Audit Task A11](#), [Audit Task A12](#), [Audit Task A22](#) and [Audit Task A23](#) provide evidence that the program students understand the pedagogical literature.

Evidence available to the panel that is not consistent with pedagogical knowledge

- [Audit Task A22](#) and [Audit Task A23](#) revealed that the students' knowledge was not always informed by the literature.

Rival explanations for the claim that the evidence supports pedagogical knowledge

No rival explanations.

Component 1.3: Caring teaching skills

Evidence available to the panel that is consistent with caring teaching skills

- [Table 4.7](#), [Table 4.8](#), [Table 4.9](#), [Table 4.10](#), [Table 4.15](#), and [Table 4.16](#) in the *Inquiry Brief* give evidence consistent with caring and effective teaching skill.
- [Audit Task A3](#), [Audit Task A11](#), and [Audit Task A12](#) provide evidence of the candidates' teaching skill.

Evidence available to the panel that is inconsistent with caring teaching skills

None

Rival explanations for the claim that the evidence supports caring teaching skills

No rival explanations.

1.4 Crosscutting themes for Quality Principle I

Evidence available to the panel for the crosscutting themes

- [Table 4.11](#), [Table 4.12](#), [Table 4.13](#), and [Table 4.14](#) in the *Inquiry Brief* provide evidence consistent with the cross-cutting theme requirements.
- [Audit Task A4](#), [Audit Task A8](#), and [Audit Task A21](#) provide evidence about the program students' understanding of the cross-cutting themes.

Evidence available to the panel that is inconsistent with the acquisition of the cross-cutting themes

None

Rival explanations for the claim that the evidence supports the cross-cutting themes

No rival explanations.

Component 2.2: Evidence of valid assessment

Evidence available to the panel that is consistent with reliable and valid assessment of student learning

- [Table 3.6](#) and [Table 3.7](#) in the *Inquiry Brief* and [Audit Task A14](#), [Audit Task A15](#), [Audit Task A16](#), [Audit Task A17](#), [Audit Task A18](#), [Audit Task A19](#), and [Audit Task A20](#) provide evidence that is consistent with the view that the program's assessments are acceptably reliable and valid.

Evidence available to the panel that is inconsistent with the reliable and valid assessment of student learning

- [Audit Task A18](#) and [Audit Task A19](#) also revealed that some expected correlations that would otherwise indicate validity were low.
- Clarification task [C16](#) indicates that ceiling effects are prevalent in some of the assessments.

Rival explanations for the claim that the evidence supports reliable and valid assessment of student learning

No rival explanations.

Quality Principle III: Institutional learning

Component 2.1: A rationale for the link the assessments.

Evidence available to the panel that supports the rationale for the program's assessments

- [Table 3.1](#), [Table 3.3](#) and [Table 3.4](#) in the *Inquiry Brief* set out the program's assessments for QPI and the cross-cutting themes.
- [Audit Task B1](#), [Audit Task B2](#), [Audit Task B3](#), [Audit Task B4](#), and [Audit Task B5](#) and [clarification tasks C1](#), [C2](#), [C5](#), [C6](#), [C7](#), [C8](#), [C9](#), [C10](#), [C11](#), [C12](#), and [C13](#) show that the faculty has a rationale for its assessment practices.

Evidence available to the panel that is inconsistent with a rationale for the program's assessments

None

Component 3.1: Program decisions based on evidence

Evidence available to the panel that supports the program's decisions based on evidence

- The faculty undertook a study of the impact of the program and the results are reported in [Table 4.17](#) of the *Inquiry Brief*. In addition the *Brief* outlines a series of accomplished and planned investigations on pages [48-50](#).

Evidence available to the panel that is inconsistent with the program's decisions based on evidence

None

Rival explanations for the evidence about the program's decisions based on evidence

No rival explanations.

Component 3.2: An influential quality control system

Evidence available to the panel that is consistent with an influential quality control system

- [Audit Task B7](#), [Audit Task B8](#), [Audit Task B9](#), and [Audit Task B10](#) and [clarification tasks C3, C4, C15, C16, and C19](#) have findings that are consistent with a functioning quality control system.
- In addition the findings displayed in [Table III.2a](#) in the audit report are similarly consistent.

Evidence available to the panel that is inconsistent with an influential quality control system

None

Rival explanations for the evidence about an influential quality control system

No rival explanations.

Element 4.0: Capacity for Program Quality

Evidence available to the panel that is consistent with the capacity for program quality

See [Appendix B](#) of the *Inquiry Brief* and Audit Report [Table III.1](#) and [Table III.2b](#).

Evidence available to the panel that is inconsistent with capacity for program quality

None

Suggested Weaknesses and Stipulations

None

Suggested Accreditation Recommendation (shaded)

1.0 (new and old) Candidate Learning	2.0 (new)/3.0 (old) Faculty Learning	3.0 (new)/4.0 (old) Capacity & Commitment	Accreditation status designations
Above standard	Above standard	Above standard	Accreditation (5 years) <i>for an initial Inquiry Brief</i>
Above standard	Above standard	Above standard	Accreditation (10 years) <i>for a successive Inquiry Brief</i>
Above standard	Below standard	Above standard	Accreditation (2 years)
Below standard	Above standard	Above standard	Accreditation (2 years)
Above standard	Above standard	Below standard	Accreditation (2 years)
Below standard	Below standard	Above standard	Deny
Below standard	Above standard	Below standard	Deny