

**Grow Your Own Beginning Teachers
First Year Results**

Prepared for Grow Your Own Illinois
and
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APPENDIX

Grow Your Own Beginning Teachers: First Year Results Executive Summary

The goals of the Grow Your Own Teachers Initiative (GYO) are: 1) Create a pipeline of highly qualified teachers of color; 2) Improve teacher retention in low-income schools; and 3) Prepare culturally competent, community-connected teachers for hard-to-staff schools and hard-to-fill positions.

OER Associates LLC (OER), an external evaluator, was contracted by GYO to provide data collection pilot services for the purpose of describing the status of a sample of GYO beginning teachers currently working in classrooms. Four GYO partnerships throughout the state agreed to participate in the initial pilot. The evaluators conducted site visits to four school districts. Site visits included classroom observations, teacher interviews, and principal interviews; in selected sites, mentors and superintendents were also interviewed. A total of 2 superintendents, 5 principals, 6 teachers, and 3 mentors participated in the pilot. Key findings are presented below.

Preparation of GYO Teachers

- All GYO beginning teachers describe valuable aspects of their preparation program and GYO involvement that prepared them to teach. Most valuable was the student teaching experience, and having a helpful mentor or GYO Coordinator. However, they wanted more preparation in classroom management.
- Principals and mentors believe the GYO beginning teachers were well-prepared to teach in their districts. Many attribute the GYO beginning teachers' prior experiences in the school/district as being an important factor.
- Superintendents and principals agree that their GYO beginning teachers meet their hiring expectations that include strong teaching skills, intelligence, expertise in engaging children in learning, enjoyment regarding working with children, knowledge of curriculum and classroom management, understanding of community and family, and love of teaching. They seek teachers who have a desire and willingness to learn, and have high expectations for all students--including at risk students.
- Many of the principals knew the GYO beginning teacher before she was hired, and agree that prior knowledge of the teacher positively affected the decision to hire her.
- Principals and mentors agree that the GYO beginning teachers are performing as well as--and in some cases better than--other beginning teachers.

GYO Teachers: Content Knowledge and Effective Teaching

- GYO beginning teachers far exceeded expectations on Curriculum and Instruction, and on Assessment. GYO beginning teachers are particularly strong in knowledge of content area, and lessons having a discernable purpose. Mentors confirm that GYO beginning

teachers engage in effective lesson planning.

- While still positive, GYO beginning teachers' skills could be strengthened in the areas of: variety of instructional purposes used, stimulating students' creativity, and differential pacing of lessons.
- GYO beginning teachers far exceeded expectations related to knowledge of content. During classroom observations, all GYO beginning teachers received the highest possible ratings on demonstrating strong command of content. In addition, graduates received high ratings regarding the broad scope of content taught, and its applicability beyond the specific facts or skills presented. All mentors agree that the GYO beginning teachers have a strong grasp of content.
- GYO beginning teachers far exceeded expectations on Classroom Management. GYO beginning teachers are particularly strong in the following areas: acting confidently and competently with students, stating consequences for undesirable behavior without critical tone, refraining from negative verbalizations, materials organized and prepared ahead of time, maintaining standards of professional conduct, and dressing appropriately.
- While still positive, GYO beginning teachers' skills could be strengthened in promoting purposeful student-student interaction for learning purposes.
- Many GYO beginning teachers believe they are particularly strong in classroom management, and others believe they are organized, prepared, and successfully plan ahead. These opinions were validated during the external evaluator classroom observations.
- A few teachers report that paperwork and organization continues to be a challenge.

GYO Teachers and Community Leadership

- Superintendents and principals agree that high quality teachers are interested in their community. All GYO beginning teachers are involved in their community to some extent, including tutoring at the school, doing outreach, coaching a sports team, volunteering, serving on education-related committees or boards, volunteering at church or community functions, using the local library, and volunteering at a church fine arts camp. Two GYO beginning teachers are not teaching in their community, but they are learning more about their school community so they can be more effective teachers. GYO beginning teachers continue to be connected to their GYO network. Many GYO Coordinators and mentors continue to provide support, even after graduation from the program.

Relationships with Other Teachers

- Mentors and GYO beginning teachers agree that GYO beginning teachers are successfully collaborating with other teachers in the school. GYO beginning teachers perceive their

general learning community environment as being very positive and collaborative. Principals believe that it takes most beginning teachers time to become true collaborative partners. However, based on the data gathered, it appears that GYO beginning teachers develop relationships and engage in productive collaboration quicker than most beginning teachers.

Relationships with Parents

- GYO beginning teachers successfully communicate and interact with parents. They are comfortable communicating "in person", as well as via e-mails and newsletters.

Teaching Impact of GYO Strengths

- GYO beginning teachers agree that having a shared race/ethnicity/culture with students facilitates their understanding of, respect for, and empathy with students and parents. GYO beginning teachers appear to have a deep understanding of diverse backgrounds.
- GYO beginning teachers' prior work and life experiences give them a level of maturity that helps them be more effective teachers. Principals, mentors, and GYO beginning teachers agree that entering the teaching profession as a second career or several years after high school positively impacts teaching effectiveness.
- GYO beginning teachers' experiences as parents tend to make them more empathetic and understanding of student and family needs. They also see the value of involving parents in their children's education.

GYO Teachers, Student Results

- GYO beginning teachers far exceeded expectations on Teacher/Student Interaction. GYO beginning teachers are particularly strong in: directions are given in clear, understandable terms; exhibits appropriate and enthusiastic teaching disposition; students are treated with respect; communicates positively with students; students are allowed to speak to the teacher without interruption; and teacher effectively responds to student feedback.
- Principals and mentors agree that the GYO beginning teachers relate well to their students. All six GYO beginning teachers believe they have good relationships with their students. Many agree that either through GYO, or because they have lived in the community for a long time, they knew many of the students and have established good rapport.

Support for Grow Your Own

- Superintendents praise GYO for putting the time and energy into preparing new teachers.
- Principals express support for the GYO program and hope it will continue to find funding.

Many principals are pleased with their GYO beginning teachers' expertise and are glad their school/district was involved with GYO.

Additional Findings

- All six GYO beginning teachers included in the study are currently working as classroom teachers. Due to financial constraints in the school districts and state, it is uncertain how many will be retained next year. Because the GYO beginning teachers are first or second year teachers, they have low priority when cutbacks are made. The current funding status of education in Illinois has resulted in several GYO beginning teachers being RIF'ed, or in having to accept positions outside of their immediate community. The lack of job security is a disappointment. All intend to continue working in the profession.
- All GYO beginning teachers have inspiring stories of the positive effects GYO has had on themselves, their children, their families, or others.

Conclusions

The pilot study successfully gathered a range of data from various sources and stakeholders in order to describe the status of a sample of GYO beginning teachers currently working in classrooms. Results must be viewed with caution due to the small sample size; however, trends do emerge from this limited set of data. The external evaluator concludes the following:

- Grow Your Own Illinois (GYO) has successfully created a pipeline of highly qualified teachers of color. GYO beginning teachers enter their classrooms "ready to teach", and exhibit positive and effective behaviors that are likely to result in increased student achievement.
- GYO provides the supports teacher candidates need to successfully obtain employment in their communities, or similar communities. However, financial constraints in school districts and the state could affect retention rates. Several highly rated GYO beginning teachers have been RIF'ed for the coming year. The external evaluator wonders whether, given the considerable state and personal resources devoted to preparing GYO teachers--and the high quality of their teaching performance--they somehow can be given higher priority in their districts so they are not the first ones released.
- Many factors positively affect GYO beginning teachers' success as beginning teachers, including shared race/ethnicity/culture, entering the teaching profession as a second career or several years after graduating from high school, being a parent themselves, and being involved in the community.
- GYO beginning teachers communicate and interact successfully with their students' parents, and collaborate well with other teachers in the school. The external evaluator projects that the GYO beginning teachers will become leaders in their school more quickly than other beginning teachers.

- GYO beginning teachers far exceeded expectations on curriculum and instruction, knowledge of content area, assessment, classroom management, and teacher/student interaction. The external evaluator concludes that the combination of high quality education at the university/college level and the dedicated support of GYO Coordinators successfully prepare highly competent teachers.
- GYO beginning teachers continue to be connected to the GYO network, showing an ongoing commitment to continuous improvement and striving for excellence.

A GYO beginning teacher dramatically describes what the experience has meant to her: "My GYO Coordinator was wonderful. I faced challenges at the university, and family illnesses. The steady, strong support of GYO staff encouraged me, told me I could make it. Anytime I needed anything, they would help. I would encourage anyone with a problem or need to email my GYO Coordinator. It took me many years from when I first enrolled in a community college to become a certified teacher. Without GYO, my family, friends, and the school staff, I don't know how I would have done it. I'm glad that I had the opportunity to teach at this school. That's what GYO is about; to become a teacher at your school. The principal encouraged me to become certified. It was good advice."

Grow Your Own Beginning Teachers: First Year Results

Introduction

The Grow Your Own Teachers initiative is an innovative partnership of community organizations, higher education institutions, and school districts that supports parents, community members, and paraprofessionals in low-income communities to become highly qualified teachers. The goals of GYO are: 1) Create a pipeline of highly qualified teachers of color; 2) Improve teacher retention in low-income schools; and 3) Prepare culturally competent, community-connected teachers for hard-to-staff schools and hard-to-fill positions. Grow Your Own Teachers represents a community-based solution to national problems: high teacher turnover in low-income schools; too few teachers of color; and too few teachers who know the language and culture of the students and their families.

There are 16 GYO consortia partnerships in Illinois, 8 in Chicago and one each in Alton, East St. Louis, Peoria, Quad Cities, Rockford, South Suburbs, Southernmost Illinois, and Springfield. Partnerships include 16 community organizations, 12 public and private colleges and universities, 12 community colleges, 23 school districts, and 2 unions. The 16 consortia have recruited almost 500 GYO teacher candidates who have entered college to become teachers. Candidates are 85% people of color (57% African American; 28% Hispanic); 72% between the ages of 30-50; 81% women; 74% are working full time in addition to college, many as school paraprofessionals. To date, there are 23 GYO graduates and another 100+ are in Colleges of Education in their final phase of teacher preparation.

Description of Study and Methods

OER Associates LLC (OER), an external evaluator, was contracted by GYO to provide data collection pilot services for the purpose of describing the status of a sample of GYO beginning teachers currently working in classrooms. Anne Hallett, Director of GYO Illinois, met with OER to plan the pilot and design meetings to solicit stakeholder input and feedback. On April 12, 2010, GYO Coordinators, the GYO Director, and OER staff met (participants met “in person” or via phone) to discuss the pilot design. Participants agreed that two major areas should be explored:

- Strengths and challenges of GYO beginning teachers
- Current level of GYO beginning teachers’ teaching effectiveness and how GYO has contributed to this level of teaching effectiveness.

Meeting participants then offered various ideas for key questions to be explored. OER developed a list of potential areas of inquiry (see Appendix). This list was sent to all meeting participants and additional GYO Coordinators. They were asked to review each question, and rate it as: essential, would be nice to know, and low priority. Anne Hallett and Sue Rasher reviewed all responses (see Appendix) and created a final set of 21 areas of inquiry, based on the priorities set during the rating exercise (see Table 1).

To help add context to this report, OER and Anne Hallett looked at what the research of the Consortium on Chicago School Research has shown to be the Five Essential Supports necessary for school improvement: (1) Leaders, (2) Parent-community ties, (3) Professional capacity of faculty and staff, (4) Student-centered learning climate, and (5) Ambitious instruction. The early data on GYO beginning teachers show they are strong in these characteristics. For example, GYO beginning teachers show exceptional strength in knowledge of content, classroom management, community involvement, and strong relationships with parents.

In several cases, superintendents and principals were asked to describe "successful beginning teachers". To preserve confidentiality and to respect human subjects requirements, principals and superintendents were **not** directly asked about the skills of the specific GYO beginning teachers included in this study. Rather, the general descriptions of successful beginning teachers were used to help evaluators assess the degree to which GYO beginning teachers met the standards of successful beginning teachers. In this report, all general responses that describe successful beginning teachers appear in italics, and should not be construed to describe the GYO beginning teachers included in this study.

OER developed a draft set of interview protocols and an observation instrument that addressed the key potential areas of interest. This was reviewed and revised based on input from Anne Hallett. OER contacted all sites with graduates and asked them to participate in the pilot.

Throughout the report, OER has included quotes in boxes from GYO beginning teachers that capture their lively personal assessments and reflections.

Four GYO partnerships throughout the state agreed to participate in the initial pilot. The evaluators conducted site visits to four school districts. Site visits included classroom observations, teacher interviews, and principal interviews; in selected sites, mentors and superintendents were also interviewed. A total of 2 superintendents, 5 principals, 6 teachers, and 3 mentors participated in the pilot. The evaluators also observed all 6 teachers in their classrooms. During their interviews, all six GYO beginning teachers were willing to share personal stories of the effects of GYO on themselves, their children, their families, or others. Some of these stories are included in the body of the report to illustrate GYO's effects on the beginning teachers. Every attempt is made by the evaluators to maintain anonymity in the stories reported; therefore, some identifying details have been changed or eliminated.

Table 1. GYO Teachers: Key Areas of Interest

#	Area of Interest	Source			
		Teacher Observ.	Interview		
			Teacher	Admin.	Mentor
1	Relationships with parents: How have you connected with parents so they can understand the learning environment?		X	X	X
2	Relationships/collaboration/camaraderie with other teachers; status as member of a learning community		X	X	X
3	What was valuable in my preparation that prepared me to teach (i.e., exit interview-type question)?		X		
4	How could I have been better prepared to teach?		X	X	X
5	Principal: How do GYO graduates compare to your other beginning teachers?			X	X
6	How do you incorporate your understanding of the surrounding community into your teaching practice?		X	X	X
7	Leadership at school level regarding work with parents (e.g., committees, connecting parents to citizenship workshops, parenting workshops/courses, GED workshops).		X	X	
8	Knowledge and use of effective teaching strategies	X			X
9	Classroom management	X			
10	How does shared race/ethnicity/culture with students impact teaching effectiveness?		X		
11	How does age (i.e., age 30-50) or being a parent impact teaching effectiveness. How does the wisdom gained via age or parental status transfer to effectiveness in the classroom?		X	X	X
12	Were GYO graduates able to find employment in their community or a similar neighborhood? If yes, what kinds of jobs (e.g. teaching, administrative, full-time, substitute teaching) and where.		X		
13	Classroom observations of GYO teachers/non-GYO teachers.	X			
14	Personal stories of GYO graduates: effects on self, children, family, other		X		
15	How is the community work I did as a GYO participant useful in my current work?		X		
16	Teacher/student interaction	X	X	X	X
17	Are you able to continue to learn about the surrounding community now that you are teaching, and to sustain relationships outside of the classroom (Probe: Use of community resources)?		X		
18	Knowledge of content	X	X		X
19	Leadership at community level (e.g., advocacy work)		X	X	X
20	Have you stayed connected with the GYO network? Have you continued a relationship with members of your GYO cohort? Do they provide you with support or assistance, now that you have graduated?		X		
21	Consortium on Chicago School Research (1) Leaders, (2) Parent-community ties, (3) professional capacity of faculty & staff, (4) student-center learning climate, (5) ambitious instruction	X	X	X	X

A. Development of Instruments

OER developed a draft set of interview protocols and an observation instrument that address the key potential areas of interest. The following instruments were developed:

- GYO Graduate Teacher Interview (15 items)
- GYO Superintendent Interview (13 items)
- GYO Principal Interview (15 items)
- GYO Mentor Interview (12 items)
- GYO Classroom Observation Instrument (57 ratings; 2 open-ended items).

All were reviewed and revised based on input from Anne Hallett. All interview protocol items are open-ended. The observation instrument includes 57 items rated from “1” (none) to “5” (abundant) and 2 open-ended items. Classroom observers were instructed to consider a “3” as a satisfactory rating, one that is likely to be given to a beginning teacher. Ratings of “4” or “5” are in the more exemplary range and are likely to be given to experienced and excellent teachers. Table 1 shows which key areas of interest are addressed by which instruments.

B. Analysis of Data

OER conducted a content analysis of all qualitative data, searching for trends among individual respondent groups (GYO beginning teacher, superintendent, principal, and mentor). Descriptive statistics were calculated from the observation instrument. The observation instrument items address four major dimensions: Curriculum and Instruction (21 items), Interaction (18 items), Classroom Management (16 items), and Assessment (2 items). Dimension scores are calculated by averaging the ratings composing each dimension. This makes it possible to compare responses by dimension. Descriptive statistics are discussed for both dimensions and individual items.

This report summarizes findings by the key areas of interest, followed by a summary and general conclusions. In some cases, key areas of interest topics are merged. In a few cases, new areas of interest were added.

1. Preparation of GYO Teachers

A. Valuable Aspects of GYO Teachers' Preparation

All GYO beginning teachers described at least two valuable aspects of their teacher preparation program and GYO support that prepared them to teach. Three graduates mentioned their student teaching experience as being most valuable. One notes that she did her student teaching in the classroom in which she is now teaching; this was valuable because she knew the students, their needs, and the families when she began teaching. Three describe having a very helpful mentor or GYO Coordinator who effectively prepared them for teaching: “(Mentor) modeled, I watched, then she released the class to me. She is still available to me. She let me try so many things.” “My GYO Coordinator has been very supportive and always answered my questions and helped me problem solve. (Name of coordinator) mentored me both regarding teaching and in my contacts with the university to be certain I could work and still be enrolled in the classes I needed.” A fourth graduate described having a fellow cohort member who offered a good deal of support. Three graduates describe specific things they learned in their courses that were helpful. For example, when school started, one graduate was given a book on how to prepare and set up her classroom management. She was well prepared to do this because she had read the book in one of her courses and had discussed it with her professors.

During my student teaching, my family had a financial setback and I was worried about child care and student teaching. I expressed this concern to my GYO Coordinator. Next thing I knew, GYO gave me a stipend, child care and mileage

It's all in the support I've received. For the most part, it was financial. Plus, I took out loans and used part of my savings. I'm just very thankful. I grew up with GYO for the years in which I was a participant. I knew I wouldn't go anywhere without GYO. I've had so much support from my family, teachers, and my mentor. I wouldn't have continued without the support from one of my professors. The teachers and principal have supported me

My GYO Coordinator was wonderful. I faced challenges at the university, and family illnesses. The steady, strong support of GYO staff encouraged me, told me I could make it. Anytime I needed anything, they would help. I would encourage anyone with a problem or need to email my GYO Coordinator. It took me many years from when I first enrolled in a community college to become a certified teacher. Without GYO, my family, friends, and the school staff, I don't know how I would have done it. I'm glad that I had the opportunity to teach at this school. That's what GYO is about; to become a teacher at your school. The principal encouraged me to become certified. It was good advice.

Conclusion: All GYO beginning teachers describe valuable aspects of their teacher preparation program and GYO involvement that prepared them to teach. Most valuable was the student teaching experience, or having a helpful mentor or GYO Coordinator.

B. How GYO Beginning Teacher Could Have Been Better Prepared to Teach

Superintendent Perceptions

Superintendents were asked, in general, how teacher preparation colleges/universities can better prepare teachers to teach in their district. Responses are summarized below:

- *This is a practical piece, based on the reality of where we are in public education. Young (college-age) people have challenges. These compete with preparedness.*
- *Use research-based materials for their own students—model good teaching in your professional school. We know children learn this way, so you must model effective instructional strategies. Be cognizant of research, practice with them, model for them. Have the teachers practice so they have more confidence using research-based strategies. Teach applicable strategies, not just theory.*

Principal Perceptions

Four of the five principals believe their GYO beginning teachers were well-prepared to teach in their district. The fifth reported that the GYO beginning teacher could have been better prepared, but is doing a good job. “She just needed time to improve her instruction and will do so over time.” The remaining principals praised the abilities of their GYO beginning teachers: “She came very prepared, partly due to working with her mentor teacher with whom she student taught. She is committed to this program at our school, and is willing to teach another grade level if it means staying on because of cuts.” “She was very prepared to teach in the district. She jumped in with different things and our clientele.” Several principals mentioned the importance of beginning teachers having strong mentors.

In general, principals believe there are ways that teacher preparation colleges/universities can better prepare teachers to teach in their school/district. Two principals mention the need for more attention to classroom management. Other suggestions include the following topics: familiarizing candidates with large districts, such as the Chicago Public School system; understanding students who live in difficult environments, especially communities with large crime and violence problems; realizing that every learner is at a different level; understanding school law and what teachers are/are not permitted to do; special education regulations; writing IEPs; and running IEP meetings with parents.

Mentor Perceptions

All three mentors believe that the GYO beginning teachers were well-prepared to teach in their district. One notes: “She was well prepared, partly because she was so involved in our district. She is familiar with the policies and curriculum at the school, because she’s a parent of students at the school.” Another adds: “I wholeheartedly do not feel she could have been better prepared, due to the background knowledge she had when she entered the district as a teacher.”

GYO Beginning Teacher Perceptions

Three GYO beginning teachers would have liked to be better prepared in terms of classroom management. Two believe they would have benefited from learning more classroom management strategies: “From my university classes, I would have liked more suggestions regarding student behavior problems. I learned theory from my classes, but I would have benefited from learning more strategies. It would have been helpful to observe more classes

within the context of these classes and then discuss ways to handle situations that arose. Specifically, it would be helpful to learn what triggers certain student responses.” One graduate noted that she would have liked to know ahead of time that she was expected to buy supplies with her own money and to completely set up her own classroom; another needed more support in writing lesson plans ahead of time.

Conclusion: Principals and mentors believe the GYO beginning teachers were well-prepared to teach in their districts. Many attributed the GYO beginning teachers’ prior experiences in the school/district as being an important factor. GYO beginning teachers were much more critical of their preparation level, with many expressing a need for more preparation in classroom management. *In general, superintendents believe it is important to include ample opportunities for practice; and for college/university professors to model effective teaching practices using of research-based materials and strategies.* Several principals agree with GYO beginning teachers that more preparation regarding classroom management would be helpful.

2. GYO Teachers: Content Knowledge and Effective Teaching

A. Knowledge and Use of Effective Teaching Strategies

Mentor Perceptions

All mentors report that the GYO beginning teachers were knowledgeable regarding lesson planning. Two mentors did help their mentees improve their lesson plans, become familiar with the teaching material, and improve the pacing of lessons.

Classroom Observation Perceptions

GYO beginning teachers’ knowledge and use of effective teaching strategies is evaluated via the *GYO Classroom Observation Instrument (C.O.I.)*. The observation instrument includes 57 items rated from “1” (none) to “5” (abundant) and 2 open-ended items. Classroom observers were instructed to consider a “3” as a satisfactory rating, one that is likely to be given to a beginning teacher. Ratings of “4” or “5” are in the more exemplary range and are likely to be given to experienced and excellent teachers. The observation instrument items address four major dimensions: Curriculum and Instruction (21 items), Interaction (18 items), Classroom Management (16 items), and Assessment (2 items). In this section, we discuss results for Curriculum and Instruction, and Assessment items. Classroom Management and Interaction are discussed in Sections 11 and 12, respectively.

Table 2 summarizes the descriptive statistics for the Curriculum & Instruction and Assessment dimensions and items. Table 3 (see Appendix) summarizes the frequency distributions for the Classroom Curriculum & Instruction dimension, and Table 4 (see Appendix) summarizes the frequency distributions for the Assessment dimension.

GYO beginning teachers far exceeded expectations on Curriculum & Instruction and Assessment as measured by the C.O.I. The average (mean) rating is 4.4 on Curriculum & Instruction, and 4.7 on Assessment. All GYO beginning teachers received average ratings of 4

or higher on Assessment. 5 of 6 GYO beginning teachers received average ratings of 4 or higher on Curriculum & Instruction.

All graduates received the highest possible ratings on the Curriculum & Instruction item: Demonstrates strong command of content area. 5 of 6 graduates received the highest possible ratings on the item: Lesson has discernable purpose.

Lower average ratings were received for the following Curriculum & Instruction items. Note, however, that this is well above the 3.0 satisfactory benchmark.

- Variety of instructional strategies used (mean=3.83)
- Content stimulates students' creativity (mean=3.83)
- Students are allowed to work at their own pace so that those who work quickly are allowed to proceed within the activity or to new activities and those who work slowly are allowed ample time to complete the activity (mean=3.83).

GYO beginning teachers were rated highly positively on both assessment items, especially: Class assignments extend or check for learning (mean=4.83). During Teacher Interviews, all GYO beginning teachers described using both formal and informal assessments to evaluate student learning. Interestingly, many take anecdotal notes or maintain individual student portfolios to supplement the information obtained from more formal assessments.

Conclusion: GYO beginning teachers far exceeded expectations on Curriculum and Instruction, and on Assessment. GYO beginning teachers are particularly strong in the following areas: knowledge of content area, and lessons have a discernable purpose. While still positive, GYO beginning teachers' skills could be strengthened in the areas of: variety of instructional purposes used, stimulating students' creativity, and differential pacing of lessons. Mentors confirm that GYO beginning teachers engage in effective lesson planning.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of GYO Classroom Observations (N=6)

		Mean	Std. Dev.
A	CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION	4.39	0.38
1	Lesson has discernable purpose	4.83	0.41
2	Learning objectives are clear and meaningful	4.50	0.55
3	Adapts instruction to students' interests, needs, prior knowledge	4.83	0.41
4	Presents ideas clearly and meaningfully to students	4.67	0.52
5	Delivers instructions clearly and meaningfully to students	4.67	0.52
6	Variety of instructional strategies used	3.83	0.41
7	Demonstrates strong command of content area	5.00	0.00
8	Content presented stimulates students' creativity	3.83	0.41
9	Content presented stimulates students' higher order thinking	4.00	0.63
10	Content is broad in scope and has applicability beyond the specific facts or skills presented	4.50	0.55
11	Content is connected to previous learning	4.67	0.52
12	Content is meaningful, complex, and rich	4.17	0.75
13	General content is integrated with professional & pedagogical knowledge to create meaningful learning experience	4.17	0.75
14	Students understand and learn content of lesson	4.67	0.52
15	Provides appropriate practice to enable students to obtain outcomes	4.33	0.82
16	Provides activities & materials appropriate for students with diverse needs	4.17	0.41
17	Provides activities & materials appropriate for students with diverse backgrounds	4.00	0.00
18	Paces lessons appropriately	4.33	0.82
19	Adjusts the tempo of lessons to ensure student understanding	4.50	0.84
20	Lesson is suitable for the developmental level of students	4.67	0.52
21	Students are allowed to work at their own pace so that those who work quickly are allowed to proceed within the activity or to new activities and those who work slowly are allowed ample time to complete the activity	3.83	0.75
B	INTERACTION	4.71	0.22
22	Motivates and sustains students' interest	4.50	0.55
23	Motivates and sustains students' involvement	4.50	0.55
24	Verbally communicates in a grammatically correct fashion	4.67	0.52
25	Written communication is grammatically correct	4.67	0.82
26	Nonverbal communication is appropriate and effective	4.50	0.55
27	Visual communication is appropriate and effective	4.50	0.55
28	Promotes ability of students to evaluate information, think analytically, & reach sound conclusions	4.50	0.55
29	Asks questions that are open-ended or problem-solving (why, how, what if questions)	4.17	0.75

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of GYO Classroom Observations (continued) (N=6)

		Mean	Std. Dev.
B	INTERACTION (continued)		
30	Directions are given in clear, understandable terms	5.00	0.00
31	Demonstrates ability to teach students with ethnic, cultural, and socio-economic differences	4.50	0.55
32	Demonstrates ability to teach students with linguistic differences	4.67	0.52
33	Maintains teacher/pupil rapport	4.83	0.41
34	Exhibits appropriate & enthusiastic teaching disposition	5.00	0.00
35	Students are treated with respect	5.00	0.00
36	Students are actively engaged in lesson	4.83	0.41
37	Communicates positively with students	5.00	0.00
38	Students are allowed to speak to the teacher without interruption	5.00	0.00
39	Teacher effectively responds to student feedback	5.00	0.00
C	CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT	4.72	0.19
40	Establishes and maintains necessary order	4.67	0.52
41	Acts confidently and competently with students	5.00	0.00
42	Teacher verbally intervenes to stop undesirable behavior—or undesirable behavior does not occur	4.67	0.52
43	Consequences for undesirable behavior are briefly stated without critical tone	5.00	0.00
44	Consequences are implemented with consistency	4.83	0.41
45	Teacher refrains from negative verbalizations (such as yelling, criticizing, scolding, threatening, sarcasm)	5.00	0.00
46	Purposeful student-student interaction adds to learning	3.67	0.52
47	Acts in a manner of increasing student self-esteem, regardless of student behavior	4.67	0.52
48	Materials are organized and prepared ahead of time	5.00	0.00
49	Uses time and materials efficiently	4.83	0.41
50	Classroom environment supports the intellectual development of students	4.50	0.55
51	Classroom environment supports the personal development of students	4.33	0.52
52	Overall classroom milieu is positive	4.50	0.55
53	Maintains standards of professional conduct	5.00	0.00
54	Dresses appropriately	5.00	0.00
55	Students and teacher collaborate; classroom exemplifies a community of learners with shared goals	4.83	0.41
C	ASSESSMENT	4.72	0.19
56	Class assignments extend or check for learning	4.83	0.41
57	Checks that students understand concepts before proceeding	4.50	0.55

B. Knowledge of Content

Mentor Perceptions

All three mentors believe their mentees have a good grasp of content. Additional comments include:

- We've discussed math, geometry, and three dimensional shapes, and how to teach them. She feels comfortable with the curriculum and content areas.
- Considering that it is her first year in that grade level, she knows it well.
- (GYO beginning teacher) and I met during the summer to better equip her for the upcoming year. As a result, she felt more immersed in our curriculum than she would have if such discussions had not ensued. (GYO beginning teacher) took the information discussed and applied the advice given from the first day of school. Questions arose, as she actually worked her way through the curriculum. (We) addressed these questions as they arose.

Classroom Observation Perceptions

The C.O.I. includes several items that related to teachers' knowledge of content. These items are part of the Curriculum & Instruction dimension (see Table 2). As discussed previously, all GYO beginning teachers received the highest possible ratings on the C.O.I Curriculum & Instruction item: Demonstrates strong command of content area. GYO beginning teachers were rated positively on two additional items related to knowledge of content:

- Content is broad in scope and has applicability beyond the specific facts or skills presented (mean=4.50)
- Content is meaningful, complex, and rich (mean=4.17).

The C.O.I. gathers open-ended data on the lessons observed. These can be used to evaluate the teacher's knowledge of content during the lesson. In all cases, GYO beginning teachers demonstrated a strong command of the content being presented. Examples are presented below:

- During calendar work, the teacher monitored and inserted math components into the recitation of the days and months. She asked math questions, e.g. how many days of the week, how many months in the year? In addition, she asked questions about activities and professions, also using charts. The teacher took word cards from the wall and reciting the words, with students repeating after her. The teacher corrected their pronunciation, using phonological awareness breakdowns of words. Students assisted the teacher, handling the cards. All followed and repeated her breakdown of pronunciation.
- The teacher worked with small groups on reading. Students were divided into four levels of reading and writing. One teacher worked with the lowest group on phonological awareness, using word cards, identifying words and letters. Another adult worked with a group of three students. Each read aloud pages from the same book. The teacher asked students questions about what they were reading, and also had students identify geometric shapes in the book. The other groups worked on writing words, using word cards at their tables.
- The teacher began with a vocabulary/spelling activity. She asked questions and

individual students responded with answers and spelling of certain words, e.g. window, ocean. The teacher and students reviewed a spelling packet with homework for the next day. They reviewed a page of words each had to learn. They discussed the words and their meanings, e.g. combination, action, vision.

- The teacher led games of Hangman, all defining words, in preparation for a reading lesson about volcanoes. They read silently along with a student who was reading out loud. Following the reading, the teacher asked questions which related to the passage and their previous knowledge from classroom studies on the subject or related subjects.
- When Centers began, the teacher sat down at a table with a reading group. All had read the same book, The Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad Treasure Hunt. The teacher led a discussion with questions related to the class's previous comments. She made sure to ask each student for comments. Throughout the discussion, students gave reviews. The teacher inserted new vocabulary words, throughout the discussion. All discussed favorite parts of different sections. The teacher released her group and asked another group to come to the table, where they read The Preposterous Hippopotamus. The teacher led a discussion which included much laughter. Then, she and students gave examples in life similar to those in the book, which made them laugh more.
- The teacher worked with a group of 5 students who have been struggling with "base" words, while the rest of the class worked on a "word" assignment at their desks. Students felt free to share learning activities with each other and ask each other questions. The group working with the teacher worked on white boards. Teacher instructed them to write "base" words. She led a discussion about double consonants and adding endings. The teacher and students returned to the whole group, and all reviewed the worksheets. The teacher led a discussion on narrative stories. She gave an example of one student's narrative and its consistency until it "fell off the track" with another tale. There was discussion between teacher and students and student to student. The teacher gave an assignment to write a narrative about their experience in their current grade. There was discussion on examples of stories read. Next, they discussed "time order" words.
- The teacher began the social studies lesson by having students recall information learned yesterday. The class reviewed the definitions of lake, lowlands, peninsula, and island. The teacher drew illustrations on the board to reinforce learning. The teacher also showed a map of Florida to reinforce definitions. Next, the teacher directed her students to take out their textbooks, and introduced the concept of forecast. She asked students questions about forecasts, adjusting the questioning to determine each student's prior understanding of the concept. Students were encouraged to tell the teacher something they already knew about climates. The lesson concluded with students working on a weather forecast worksheet. Students were instructed to read the forecast on the worksheet and answer questions about the forecast. Before the students began working on their own, the whole class read the forecast charts together. The teacher provided individual help as needed.

Conclusion: GYO beginning teachers far exceeded expectations related to knowledge of content. During classroom observations, all graduates received the highest possible ratings on demonstrating strong command of content. In addition, GYO beginning teachers received high ratings regarding the broad scope of content taught, and its applicability beyond the specific facts or skills presented. All mentors agree that the GYO beginning teachers have a strong grasp of

content.

C. Classroom Management: Classroom Observation Perceptions

GYO beginning teachers' classroom management is evaluated via the *GYO Classroom Observation Instrument* (C.O.I.). The observation instrument includes 57 items rated from "1" (none) to "5" (abundant) and 2 open-ended items. Classroom observers were instructed to consider a "3" as a satisfactory rating, one that is likely to be given to a beginning teacher. Ratings of "4" or "5" are in the more exemplary range and are likely to be given to experienced and excellent teachers. The observation instrument items address 16 items related to Classroom Management.

Table 2 summarizes the descriptive statistics for the Classroom Management dimension and items. Table 5 (see Appendix) summarizes the frequency distributions for the Classroom Management dimension.

GYO beginning teachers far exceeded expectations on the Classroom Management dimension as measured by the C.O.I. The average (mean) rating is 4.7. All GYO beginning teachers received average ratings of 4.4 or higher on Classroom Management.

All GYO beginning teachers received the highest possible ratings on the following Classroom Management Items:

- Acts confidently and competently with students
- Consequences for undesirable behavior are briefly stated without critical tone
- Teacher refrains from negative verbalizations (such as yelling, criticizing, scolding, threatening, sarcasm)
- Materials are organized and prepared ahead of time
- Maintains standards of professional conduct
- Dresses appropriately.

Only one item received an average rating below 4.0: Purposeful student-student interaction adds to learning (mean=3.67). Note, however, that this is well above the 3.0 satisfactory benchmark.

Conclusion: GYO beginning teachers far exceeded expectations on Classroom Management. GYO beginning teachers are particularly strong in the following areas: acting confidently and competently with students, stating consequences for undesirable behavior without critical tone, refraining from negative verbalizations, materials organized and prepared ahead of time, maintaining standards of professional conduct, and dressing appropriately. While still positive, GYO beginning teachers' skills could be strengthened in promoting purposeful student-student interaction for learning purposes.

3. GYO Teachers and Community Leadership

A. Community Leadership

Superintendent Perceptions

Both superintendents agree that high quality teachers are interested in their community. Those who live in the community and work there are more likely to invest their time and resources than those who do not live in a community. However, one superintendent cautions that beginning teachers should not just assume that since they live in the community, they will be hired. They must have the qualities and expertise the school needs.

Principal Perceptions

All principals describe ways in which high quality teachers become involved in their communities. Some limit their participation to school events, but most participate or volunteer in other community events, including sports and fairs. “Being involved in the community is important for everyone and benefits everyone.”

Three principals agree that new teachers are frequently very enthusiastic, and get involved in coaching and other opportunities. Two principals note that it takes some time for beginning teachers to get involved in the community.

Mentor Perceptions

All mentors report that their GYO beginning teachers are involved in the community to some extent. One provides tutoring at the school, does outreach, and coaches a sports team. Another volunteers in many different arenas throughout the community. The GYO beginning teacher “...is also very resourceful in tapping into the community for classroom support. She has received many donations for the classroom by doing so.”

GYO Beginning Teacher Perceptions

Four GYO beginning teachers report that they either grew up in the surrounding community, or have lived in it for some time. This makes it much easier for them to understand students’ or teachers’ needs. The remaining two GYO beginning teachers are not from the community, and they are learning more about the community so they can be more effective. Several GYO beginning teachers volunteer in the community, including serving on education-related committees or boards, volunteering at church or community functions, using the local library, and volunteering as a reading tutor or at a church fine arts camp. One adds that she takes her class on field trips within the community: “I know the community, so it is easy for me to access community resources.”

Due to the limited amount of time available during teacher interviews, the evaluators were unable to discuss specific instances of how the community work GYO beginning teachers did as GYO participants has been useful in their current work. Similarly, the evaluators were unable to discuss ways in which GYO beginning teachers are able to continue to learn about the surrounding community now that they are teaching, and to sustain relationships outside of the classroom (e.g., use of community resources).

Conclusion: *Superintendents and principals agree that high quality teachers are interested in*

their community. All GYO beginning teachers are involved in their community to some extent. Involvement ranges from tutoring at the school, doing outreach, coaching a sports team, volunteering, serving on education-related committees or boards, volunteering at church or community functions, using the local library, and volunteering at a church fine arts camp. Two GYO beginning teachers are not teaching in their community, but they are learning more about their school community so they can be more effective teachers.

B. Continuing Connection with the GYO Network

All GYO beginning teachers have stayed connected in some way to the GYO Network. Some maintain contact with their cohort members, others attend GYO meetings, and some maintain close contact with their GYO Coordinator: “I frequently correspond with my GYO Coordinator via email. I enjoy going to GYO meetings, when possible. When I learned that GYO funding was being cut, I went with other GYO participants to Springfield. I emailed my senator and representative. This is a valuable program that provides many supports to future teachers. It is not just about the stipends.”

I was at the end of my college career when GYO came into my life. I already had my life set. I see that it (GYO) has a huge effect on other GYO candidates, and I see how GYO helps them. I am very close with another GYO beginning teacher. She and I have formed our own support group.

Conclusion: GYO beginning teachers continue to be connected to the GYO network.

4. Relationships with Other Teachers

Superintendent Perceptions

Both superintendents agree that high quality teachers have higher order thinking discussions about teaching, including such topics as Best Practices, research, differentiated instruction, institutional leadership, academics, needs of specific students, and motivating students. One adds that high quality teachers understand the value of collegiality without competition

Both superintendents agree that some beginning teachers meet this expectation, and some do not. Much of this is dependent on the college they attended. One notes that if there is a teaching lab on campus, they can work with theory and practice. Challenges occur when they have worked with theory alone.

Principal Perceptions

All principals emphasize the importance of all teachers in the school interacting, sharing ideas, and sharing strategies. One adds: “The whole school does better if they discuss ideas and strategies, and create an atmosphere of teachers communicating for the benefit of the students. This must be part of the culture of the school.” Three principals mention the importance of collaboration with grade level teams, as well as other colleagues. One principal adds: “All make time to help others.”

Three principals agree that it takes most beginning teachers time to become true collaborative partners. "They can feel insecure about their own skills." Others note that the amount of collaboration depends on the support of colleagues and team members in the building. One adds that beginning teachers want to collaborate, but they need help with this.

Mentor Perceptions

All mentors believe their GYO beginning teachers are successfully collaborating with the other teachers in the school. One adds: "She's willing to share her strategies with other teachers. She helps her team in their grade level meetings." Another notes: "I have seen (GYO beginning teacher) interact with others and have enjoyed watching others respond to her warmth and good nature. She is self-assured and poised, both with her friends and among strangers. People respond to her warm and friendly manner and truly enjoy her presence."

GYO Beginning Teacher Perceptions

All GYO beginning teachers report having good relationships with at least some of the other teachers at their school. Four collaborate with other teachers at grade level meetings. Four describe the general learning community environment as very positive and collaborative; "I can go to any teacher in the building and ask for an idea and they will provide me with one. We are a close knit group." Two mention having lunch regularly with other teachers, and sharing ideas informally. Two are frustrated that their teacher mentors are not familiar with their content area, and are not of much help; these graduates rely on other teachers for help. Conversely, one describes a strong mentor/mentee relationship: "My mentor and I meet once a week."

Conclusion: *Superintendents and principals agree that high quality teachers interact with others, sharing ideas and research-based strategies. Principals, mentors, and GYO beginning teachers emphasize the importance of collaboration with grade level teams. Mentors and GYO beginning teachers agree that GYO beginning teachers are successfully collaborating with other teachers in the school. GYO beginning teachers perceive their general learning community environment as being very positive and collaborative. Principals believe that it takes most beginning teachers time to become true collaborative partners. However, based on the data gathered, it appears that GYO beginning teachers develop relationships and engage in productive collaboration quicker than most beginning teachers.*

5. Relationships with Parents

A. How High Quality Teachers Interact or Communicate with their Students' Parents

Superintendent Perceptions

Both superintendents agree that high quality teachers interact or communicate with their students' parents with positive messages as well as negative. One superintendent adds that communication should be transparent, and open relationships should be built between teachers and parents. The second superintendent emphasizes the importance of content-specific with specific suggestions for how parents can support students' learning. It is important for teachers to show that they do care about the student, and want him/her to do well.

Principal Perceptions

All principals believe it is important for teachers engage in frequent communication with parents, using multiple modes (phone, newsletters, notes, e-mail, etc.). Two add that prompt and regular communication is important. Three describe the importance of having an open door policy.

Conclusion: *Superintendents believe it takes beginning teachers some time to be successful in interacting and communicating with their students' parents. Some principals describe positive examples of beginning teachers being eager and successful regarding parent interactions. Several principals describe instances when beginning teachers come to them for advice. The mentors and GYO beginning teachers believe the GYO beginning teachers have been very successful with parent communications and interactions. Most GYO beginning teachers communicate with parents "in person", and many send e-mails and newsletters to maintain contact. It appears that GYO beginning teachers are much more likely to be successful in interacting and communicating with their students' parents than non-GYO beginning teachers.*

B. How Successfully Beginning Teachers Communicate with Parents

Superintendent Perceptions

Both superintendents agree that beginning teachers generally need some time to be successful in interacting and communicating with their students' parents. One adds that approximately 25% communicate well at the beginning; others need to work on integrating all they have learned in college and make this part of their teaching repertoire.

Principal Perceptions

Principals offered varying perspectives of how successfully beginning teachers interact and communicate with parents. Three describe positive examples of beginning teachers being eager and successful regarding parent interactions. Two believe that it takes some time for beginning teachers to engage in successful interactions with parents. Three principals describe instances when beginning teachers came to them for advice: "Sometimes, they're overwhelmed. At that point, I remind them of what is important. They soon understand that they can do a better job by communicating with parents." One principal singled out the successes of the GYO beginning teacher: "My GYO teacher has parents in her room daily. If something happens, she

contacts the parent immediately. One parent is less responsive, so the teacher sends home a weekly note to maintain contact.”

Mentor Perceptions

Two mentors believe the GYO beginning teacher successfully interacts and communicates with her students’ parents. One explains: “(GYO beginning teacher) did have a few parents that afforded her the opportunity to deal with challenging situations. These parents have had a tentative history in previous years with other teachers, and (GYO beginning teacher) was not intimidated by the scenarios that arose. She remained composed and professional, and discussed with me (and our principal) the choices she had made and how she could improve on similar situations in the future.” The third mentor has not discussed parent interaction/communication with the GYO beginning teacher, but assumes that it is going okay because no questions have come up.

GYO Beginning Teacher Perceptions

All GYO beginning teachers describe ways in which they successfully connect with parents. Five communicate with parents “in person”; most encourage parents to visit their classrooms. “I always tell parents that my door is open for them to observe. I invite them to speak with me.” Four communicate regularly via newsletters or letters, three communicate via email, and two communicate via phone calls. One GYO beginning teacher describes her contact with parents as follows (note this is paraphrased from the interview): “I am in frequent contact with parents. They are comfortable visiting the school and contacting me to see how their children are doing. At GYO cohort meetings, we learned how to approach parents. For example, if the parent gets upset, then we need to let them talk and get out their frustrations. In my college coursework, I learned that parents know their children best, so we need to give them time to talk and express their opinions.”

Three GYO beginning teachers report having successful and meaningful connections with parents due to their previous positions as either classroom aides in the school or in other community roles. One GYO beginning teacher reports that one of her greatest strengths in her current position is: “...great communication with parents.” One notes that one of her greatest challenges is getting parents to use different strategies when helping their children learn.

No specific examples of leadership at the school level regarding working with parents were mentioned.

Parents and students got together and made me a book of pictures and letters from students. They titled it “The Best Teacher Ever.”

Conclusion: *Superintendents agree that high quality teachers interact and communicate with students’ parents with positive messages as well as negative. Principals agree that it is important for teachers to engage in frequent communication with parents, using multiple modes.* Most GYO beginning teachers report having successful and meaningful connections with parents.

6. Teaching Impact of GYO Strengths

A. Race/Ethnicity/Culture

Five of the six GYO beginning teachers describe how shared race/ethnicity/culture positively impacts their teaching effectiveness. Most of these describe how their shared backgrounds facilitate their understanding of, respect for, and empathy with students and parents. However, some caution that there are differences within shared races/ethnicities/cultures, and there is still a learning process required to understand the specific needs of their student population. The sixth GYO beginning teacher notes that her class includes a large range of ethnicities, so there is not really a shared background other than an understanding of diverse backgrounds.

My son was not such a good student. Then, I started my education, and we studied together. He helped me with my homework. And, he became a better student, along the way. Now, he's a student at an admission-competitive magnet school.

Conclusion: GYO beginning teachers agree that having a shared race/ethnicity/culture with students facilitates their understanding of, respect for, and empathy with students and parents. However, there are differences within shared races/ethnicities/cultures. More important is that GYO beginning teachers appear to have a deep understanding of diverse backgrounds.

B. Maturity

Principal Perceptions

All principals agree that because the GYO beginning teachers entered the teaching profession as a second career or a number of years after high school, they are more effective teachers. Several principals emphasized the advantage of knowing—and having previous experience with—the school district. Many note that the GYO beginning teachers enter the profession because they love it; they are more focused than many candidates who enroll straight out of high school. “Second career teachers are always great teachers. They are called here for different reasons. Usually, they go above and beyond what is required and asked of them.”

Mentor Perceptions

Two mentors believe that the effect of GYO beginning teachers entering the profession several years after high school is a positive. They went to college when they were ready to learn. One continues: “Her work opportunities prior to graduation from the university gave her work experience and maturity. With this world experience prior to college, (GYO beginning teacher) was able to draw upon real life situations when preparing to become a teacher. She used these experiences to her advantage.” The third mentor does not believe it makes any difference when a teacher enters the profession.

GYO Beginning Teacher Perceptions

All six GYO beginning teachers believe that their age and life experiences have positively affected their teaching effectiveness. Two describe how their previous careers were unfulfilling, and how much more enthusiastic they are in their new profession as teachers. One adds: “It is a challenge to enter the profession several years after high school; there are various

family needs to balance. But, I had the support of the staff here, the superintendent, and the principal. The GYO Coordinator was my rock.”

C. Experience with Children

Five of the six GYO beginning teachers have children, and the sixth is from a large family. All agree that this helps them be more understanding of their students’ and families’ needs. One describes how her experiences as a parent of a child with special needs helped her understand the academic challenges of children, but also the importance of parent input. One sums the impact: “I was a parent, helping my children in school, before I was a teacher helping my students. They’ve seen the struggles I’ve gone through and they’ve worked hard in school along with me. I advise parents about reading, and tell them to take their children to the library. This is based on my experience as a parent.”

Conclusion: Principals, Mentors, and GYO beginning teachers agree that entering the teaching profession as a second career or a number of years after high school positively impacts teaching effectiveness. GYO beginning teachers' prior work and life experiences give them a level of maturity that helps them be more effective teachers. Also, GYO beginning teachers' experiences with children and as parents interacting with schools regarding their children tend to make them more empathetic and understanding of student and family needs. They also see the value of involving parents in their children's education.

7. GYO Teachers, Other Beginning Teachers

A. Qualities Administrators Look for in Hiring a Teacher

Superintendent Perceptions

Superintendents look for a range of qualities when hiring a teacher. The following qualities were mentioned:

- *Competent instructional acumen to connect and engage students in the educational process.*
- *Intelligence, basic knowledge of curriculum and classroom management, understanding of community and family.*
- *See the education of children as their life’s work.*
- *Desire to learn, know when to ask for help, not cocky.*
- *Knowledge of proper English.*

Principal Perceptions

Four principals look for individuals who enjoy working with children, care about children, and love to teach. Three principals look for individuals who are likely to work collaboratively with other staff members. Two principals look for individuals who understand the school’s expectations and milieu, and who have strong teaching skills. Two look for lifelong learners who are open to learning and professional development. Two look for individuals who will be a good fit for the school. Two look for well qualified, highly knowledgeable individuals.

B. Challenge to Hire Teachers from Diverse Backgrounds; Teacher Turnover

One superintendent agrees that it is a challenge to hire teachers from diverse backgrounds, and that teacher turnover has been a challenge; another superintendent reports that neither is a challenge. The superintendent whose district has these challenges adds: “I am consistent with research, and find no correlation between ethnicity and effectiveness. However, I do know we live in a society in which certain adults are role models. It’s a challenge to find teachers from diverse backgrounds.”

C. Superintendent Perceptions: Successful Strategies High Quality Teachers Use to Help At Risk Children Succeed

Superintendents agree that teachers must have high expectations of at risk students. “They need to get children to believe in themselves. The teacher should be the facilitator for this.” Both agreed that beginning teachers can be successful if they do not make excuses for their students and therefore enable them. Teachers must recognize that only a quality education will help at risk children to succeed.

D. How GYO Beginning Teachers Compare to Other Beginning Teachers

Superintendent Perceptions

Both superintendents knew their respective GYO beginning teacher, and both had positive things to say about them. Both also praised GYO for putting the time and energy into preparing new teachers. One superintendent comments: “She is centered and instructional and cares about her students.” Another notes that, since the GYO beginning teacher is from the community, she is unlikely to leave, and it is worthwhile to devote professional development resources to building skills that need improvement. One adds: “She is committed to her work, and is willing to work beyond the school day. She wishes to give back to the community because of all that the community has given her.”

Principal Perceptions

All principals agree that their GYO beginning teachers are performing as well as—and in some cases better than—other beginning teachers. One principal continues: “Her prior experience works to her advantage. Other first year teachers are not doing as well. She is, without a doubt, more successful.” Another explains: “She rates as high as my best teachers. We hire from another scholarship program, also. She rates highly with other non-GYO beginning teachers who have had other additional support. If someone has backing and support, they will rise to the top.” One principal notes that the GYO beginning teacher takes on more community and family involvement than the average beginning teacher.

Mentor Perceptions

One mentor has mentored other teachers before, and notes that the GYO beginning teacher “...has been one of the more cooperative, receptive, and dedicated individuals with which I have worked.” Key strengths include confidence in her teaching abilities, being open to suggestions, taking direction well, and following through with effective application. One mentor has not previously mentored teachers, but is currently mentoring both GYO and non-GYO beginning teachers. She believes the GYO and non-GYO teachers are equally competent. The third mentor has not previously mentored other teachers.

E. Knew Teacher Before S/he Started Teaching; Effect on Decision to Hire

Four of the five principals knew the GYO beginning teacher before she was hired. Three of the four agreed that prior knowledge of the teacher positively affected the decision to hire her. “She started the before/after program at our school.” “She has a strong work ethic.” “We knew what we were getting with her.” “She takes on more community involvement and family involvement than the average beginning teacher.” One principal notes that she hired the individual because of her teaching qualities, not because she was from the community.

Conclusion: *When hiring teachers, superintendents and principals look for a range of skills including strong teaching skills, intelligence, expertise in engaging children in learning, enjoyment regarding working with children, knowledge of curriculum and classroom management, understanding of community and family, and love of teaching. They seek teachers who have a desire and willingness to learn, and have high expectations for all students--including at risk students.* Superintendents and principals agree that their GYO beginning teachers meet these expectations. Superintendents praise GYO for putting the time and energy into preparing new teachers. Many of the principals knew the GYO beginning teacher before she was hired, and agree that prior knowledge of the teacher positively affected the decision to hire her. Principals and mentors agree that the GYO beginning teachers are performing as well as--and in some cases better than--other beginning teachers

8. GYO Teachers, Student Results

A. Teacher/Student Interaction

Principal Perceptions

All principals agree that their GYO beginning teachers relate well to their students. Strengths of at least one GYO beginning teacher include: maintaining good classroom environments, communicating with parents and students, organizing small groups, engaging students in meaningful learning, relating to students with special needs, being patient, being well prepared, and writing lesson plans.

Mentor Perceptions

Two mentors believe their mentees relate very well to their students, and one believes the mentee is “...a little under-proficient, but she will grow.” Additional comments include:

- She’s good at reaching the students who are outgoing and those who are shy. As a first year teacher, she is doing well, for instance, she knows which students to call on for answers.
- She’s worked with our RTI (Response to Intervention) specialist, and is able to relate and adapt her curriculum and teaching styles to students.
- Basic. She’s a little under proficient, but she will grow. She has taken the Fred Jones Tools for Teaching course. We didn’t do much mentoring work in that area. We had discussions regarding challenging students.
- She does have several challenging students, and with these students I have offered mentoring guidance on how to deal with specific scenarios. These children were individuals that I had instructed in kindergarten, so I had background knowledge into their unique situations. We problem solved each situation and would revamp our ideas as

needed.

GYO Beginning Teacher Perceptions

All six GYO beginning teachers believe they have good relationships with their students. GYO beginning teachers are mixed regarding whether GYO affected their relationships with their students. One explains that, since she became a GYO participant relatively late in her studies, she already had established her teaching style. Others describe that—because they had worked in the district for years or because they have lived in the community for a long time—they knew many of the students and this helps them establish good rapport.

Classroom Observation Perceptions

GYO beginning teachers' interaction with students is evaluated via the *GYO Classroom Observation Instrument* (C.O.I.). The observation instrument includes 57 items rated from “1” (none) to “5” (abundant) and 2 open-ended items. Classroom observers were instructed to consider a “3” as a satisfactory rating, one that is likely to be given to a beginning teacher. Ratings of “4” or “5” are in the more exemplary range and are likely to be given to experienced and excellent teachers. The observation instrument items address 18 items related to Interaction.

Table 2 (see page 9) summarizes the descriptive statistics for the Interaction dimension and items. Table 6 (see Appendix) summarizes the frequency distributions for the Interaction dimension.

GYO beginning teachers far exceeded expectations on the Interaction dimension as measured by the C.O.I. The average (mean) rating is 4.7. All GYO beginning teachers received average ratings of 4.4 or higher on Interaction. No individual items were rated below an average of 4.0.

All GYO beginning teachers received the highest possible ratings on the following Teacher/Student Interaction Items:

- Directions are given in clear, understandable terms
- Exhibits appropriate and enthusiastic teaching disposition
- Students are treated with respect
- Communicates positively with students
- Students are allowed to speak to the teacher without interruption
- Teacher effectively responds to student feedback.

The C.O.I. gathers open-ended data on the lessons observed. These can be used to evaluate the teacher's interactions with students during the lesson. In all cases, GYO beginning teachers demonstrated effective interactions with students. Examples are presented below:

- The teacher is very confident and leads a quick paced lesson, not allowing the students time to shift attention or lose focus. The students are on task, keeping up with the demands of the teacher. The teacher is proficient at working with a large group and keeping them focused.
- The teacher was very individual-oriented, as shown when students asked her questions. She would go over to the student and make sure that s/he understood her response. When

she gave the lessons for the whole group, it was more automatic. The teacher was warm and friendly, and focused on learning. She worked best with small groups and individuals.

- The teacher spoke clearly, with a warm and smiling relationship with students, infusing instruction with classroom management throughout the lesson. The teacher skillfully led activities, games and reading, keeping everyone's attention.
- This teacher never made a negative comment. She was always smiling, and managed to observe many individual students at the same time. Though she worked with one group during Centers, she was able to maintain order and focus with others working in other centers. The teachers used student comments as springboards for group discussion. It appeared that the teacher's efficiency and directness steered students to be the same.
- The teacher had a mild demeanor, which seemed to comfort the students. All seemed curious and volunteered information. The teacher was soft-spoken, and she and students appeared to respect each other. The classroom is decorated with word walls and student work. Messages and examples of learning cover every part of the wall. Supplies are neatly organized. Everyone was involved in learning.
- The teacher adapts instruction to help students successfully answer her questions. This is a special education classroom, and the teacher patiently gives students hints. The teacher is warm, patient, friendly, supportive, and encouraging. She gives both verbal awards and tickets for future awards. Students are permitted to talk about content of interest to them; they can either verbally answer questions or write the answers on the board. There is a wide range of child abilities in the classroom, yet each child is learning. This teacher has mastered differentiated instruction. She makes serious attempts to build students' vocabulary and oral language. At times, lower functioning students are partnered with higher functioning students. The evaluator notes, however, that some of the students may have benefited from more wait time from the teacher. After the lesson, the teacher noted to the evaluator that one of the lower functioning students could have completed the worksheet on his/her own, but enjoyed the attention of the other student.

Conclusion: Principals and mentors agree that the GYO beginning teachers relate well to their students. All six GYO beginning teachers believe they have good relationships with their students. Many agree that either through GYO, or because they have lived in the community for a long time, they knew many of the students and have established good rapport. GYO beginning teachers far exceeded expectations on Teacher/Student Interaction. GYO beginning teachers are particularly strong in the following areas: directions are given in clear, understandable terms; exhibits appropriate and enthusiastic teaching disposition; students are treated with respect; communicates positively with students; students are allowed to speak to the teacher without interruption; and teacher effectively responds to student feedback.

B. Academic Achievement of Students

Mentor Perceptions

Two mentors do not have information on the academic achievement of GYO beginning teachers' students. One notes that when she observes the GYO beginning teacher's classroom, her class and students look very much like the others at that grade level. The third mentor reports that the GYO beginning teacher's teaching methods were very effective: "Her students

scored the highest of the three second grade classes on their Math Basic Facts Assessment. In addition, her students were equal in their reading skills with one second grade class and higher than the other second grade class. It was a productive year.”

GYO Beginning Teacher Perceptions

GYO beginning teachers were asked how their students were doing academically this year. All six report that their students are doing very well. Examples of responses are reported below:

- This is my best year. I’m proud of myself because I’ve pushed students who came in low. I’m tutoring them.
- I have two out of 23 who struggle, but they are making gains also.
- They’ve improved a lot. But, it’s a constant challenge.
- I’m curious to see their ISATs. I’ve seen improvements in many students. One student came out of the Special Ed program and has come a long way, requiring much less attention and re-direction.

Conclusion: No student data were reviewed for this report. However, anecdotally, mentors and GYO beginning teachers report that GYO beginning teachers' students are doing as well or better than their counterparts in other grade level classrooms.

9. GYO Beginning Teachers: Jobs in Their Communities

Only GYO beginning teachers who were currently working as classroom teachers in a school district were included in this study. All six are currently either working in their community or a similar neighborhood. One worked in a nearby community last year, but this year is working in her community. For all graduates, working in their own community was their first choice. Two expressed frustration that while they were working in their community this year, they have been RIF’ed for next year.

Conclusion: All six GYO beginning teachers included in the study are currently working as classroom teachers. Due to financial constraints in the school districts and state, layoffs are a grave concern. Because the GYO beginning teachers are first or second year teachers, they have low priority when cutbacks are made.

10. Additional Comments

Principals

All principals offered additional comments during their interviews. These are summarized below.

- It is important that you (State GYO and OER) are showing support for these teachers by following up, to find out what is working and what needs adjusting in their education.
- I hope the GYO program continues. It gives people a chance to stay in the community and give what they have to offer in what they want to do. It is more meaningful and committed when you are involved in your own community.
- I am just concerned about funding. It is hard to expand a program if it is not going to be a priority for the state. We do not have fewer students; we are just cutting people, thinking we can get by with less. I am concerned about the diversity piece. We need new energy and a new variety of teachers. Someone like our GYO beginning teacher brings a different, needed background.
- She's done a fine job. She's a good teacher. There are bigger and better things ahead for her.
- We are very pleased with how our GYO beginning teacher worked out. She is still growing.

Mentors

Three mentors providing support to GYO beginning teachers were interviewed. Mentoring services varied by district. Mentor #1 meets with mentees once a week for 45 minutes and discusses issues, problems, and concerns. They keep a mentoring notebook with calendar insertions (e.g. November-talked about parent/teacher conferences). The mentor conducts two observations per year for 45-60 minutes, accompanied by pre-observation and post-observation conferences. Mentor #2 mentored the GYO beginning teacher on the Danielson Framework for Teaching, and had informal meetings based on her needs. Mentor #3 met with the GYO beginning teacher two times a month (with other new teachers) the first two quarters of the school year and thereafter, one group meeting a month. During the group meetings they address items which the principal feels are of greatest importance for their teaching success. The mentor also provides new information from the district and gives them reminders of upcoming assignments. The mentor provides direction regarding parent/teacher conferences and building walk-throughs. The mentor reviewed beginning teachers' understanding of the school's new priority standards. Individual communications were done on an "as needed" basis, but they were approximately a couple times a week. The GYO beginning teacher and mentor continually touched base on classroom management and how things were going. Specific questions regarding parent/teacher relationships were addressed through anecdotal records and observational checklists. Questions were answered and concerns were addressed as they came up.

GYO Beginning Teachers

Teachers were asked about their greatest strengths and their greatest challenges in their current position. Interestingly, two GYO beginning teachers believe they are particularly strong in classroom management, and two GYO beginning teachers believe they are organized, prepared, and successfully plan ahead. They described other strengths that included:

- Because I'm a mother, I can relate to children and talk to them on their level.
- I'm a team player.
- I have great communication with parents.
- My group is doing wonderfully. They did well on their tests.
- Patience. My group is difficult. They are behind. But, I have patience with them. My students' parents are not doing homework with them.
- I include a lot of hands-on activities. For example, students were having difficulty remembering spelling words from day to day. I brought out letters and had the students practice by spelling them out on a pocket chart. We also go outside and write spelling words using sidewalk chalk. It is important to be creative when you see students struggle.
- When we can, we take field trips into the community so that students really learn about the community. For example, we visit the Fire Department station and meet the firefighters. This impresses the students more than just reading about community helpers.

No clear-cut patterns regarding challenges are noted. Two teachers are frustrated by the amount of paperwork they are required by the district to complete. One teacher who described classroom management as a strength also described it as an ongoing challenge. Additional challenges include:

- To not internalize a student's issues. I take responsibility, but I know it is their issue.
- Organization.
- I've lost some creativity this year, because I was overwhelmed by the building curriculum this year. They say it gets easier.
- Getting parents to use different strategies when helping their children learn.
- In special education, all of the students are at different levels, so it can be a challenge to effectively implement differentiated instruction. While the teacher preparation courses talk about modification and differentiation, this is much more difficult to do in practice.

Conclusion: Principals express support for the GYO program and hope it will continue to find funding. Many principals are pleased with their GYO beginning teachers' expertise and are glad their school/district was involved with GYO. Many GYO beginning teachers believe they are particularly strong in classroom management, and others believe they are organized, prepared, and successfully plan ahead. These opinions were validated during the external evaluator classroom observations. A few teachers report that paperwork and organization continues to be a challenge.

11. Conclusion

In conclusion, Grow Your Own Illinois (GYO) has successfully created a pipeline of highly qualified teachers of color. GYO beginning teachers enter their classrooms "ready to teach", and exhibit positive and effective behaviors that are likely to result in increased student achievement. GYO provides the supports teacher candidates need to successfully obtain employment in their communities, or similar communities. However, financial constraints in school districts and the state could affect retention rates. Several highly rated GYO beginning teachers have been RIF'ed for the coming year. The external evaluator wonders whether, given the considerable state and personal resources devoted to preparing GYO teachers--and the high quality of their teaching performance--they somehow can be given higher priority in their districts so they are not the first ones released.

Many factors positively affect GYO beginning teachers' success as beginning teachers, including shared race/ethnicity/culture, entering the teaching profession as a second career or a number of years after graduating from high school, being a parent themselves, and being involved in the community. GYO beginning teachers communicate and interact successfully with their students' parents, and collaborate well with other teachers in the school. The external evaluator projects that the GYO beginning teachers will become leaders in their school more quickly than other beginning teachers. The external evaluator concludes that the combination of high quality education at the university/college level and the dedicated support of GYO Coordinators successfully prepare highly competent teachers.

The above conclusions are based on the first year results. The external evaluator recommends that this baseline data be regularly tracked to examine the ongoing success of Grow Your Own teachers.

APPENDIX

**Table 3. Curriculum and Instruction:
Frequency Distributions of GYO Classroom Observations (N=6)**

A. CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION

Count	Cum Count	Pct	Cum Pct	CI
1.	1.	16.7	16.7	3.952
1.	2.	16.7	33.3	4
1.	3.	16.7	50.0	4.238
1.	4.	16.7	66.7	4.571
1.	5.	16.7	83.3	4.714
1.	6.	16.7	100.0	4.857

1. Lesson has discernable purpose

Count	Cum Count	Pct	Cum Pct	Q01
1.	1.	16.7	16.7	4
5.	6.	83.3	100.0	5

2. Learning objectives are clear and meaningful

Count	Cum Count	Pct	Cum Pct	Q02
3.	3.	50.0	50.0	4
3.	6.	50.0	100.0	5

3. Adapts instruction to students' interests, needs, prior knowledge

Count	Cum Count	Pct	Cum Pct	Q03
1.	1.	16.7	16.7	4
5.	6.	83.3	100.0	5

4. Presents ideas clearly and meaningfully to students

Count	Cum Count	Pct	Cum Pct	Q04
2.	2.	33.3	33.3	4
4.	6.	66.7	100.0	5

5. Delivers instructions clearly and meaningfully to students

Count	Cum Count	Pct	Cum Pct	Q05
2.	2.	33.3	33.3	4
4.	6.	66.7	100.0	5

**Table 3. Curriculum and Instruction:
Frequency Distributions of GYO Classroom Observations (continued) (N=6)**

6. Variety of instructional strategies used

Count	Cum Count	Pct	Cum Pct	Q06
1.	1.	16.7	16.7	3
5.	6.	83.3	100.0	4

7. Demonstrates strong command of content area

Count	Cum Count	Pct	Cum Pct	Q07
6.	6.	100.0	100.0	5

8. Content presented stimulates students' creativity

Count	Cum Count	Pct	Cum Pct	Q08
1.	1.	16.7	16.7	3
5.	6.	83.3	100.0	4

9. Content presented stimulates students' higher order thinking

Count	Cum Count	Pct	Cum Pct	Q09
1.	1.	16.7	16.7	3
4.	5.	66.7	83.3	4
1.	6.	100.0	100.0	5

10. Content is broad in scope and has applicability beyond the specific facts or skills presented

Count	Cum Count	Pct	Cum Pct	Q10
3.	3.	50.0	50.0	4
3.	6.	100.0	100.0	5

11. Content is connected to previous learning

Count	Cum Count	Pct	Cum Pct	Q11
2.	2.	33.3	33.3	4
4.	6.	100.0	100.0	5

12. Content is meaningful, complex, and rich

Count	Cum Count	Pct	Cum Pct	Q12
1.	1.	16.7	16.7	3
3.	4.	66.7	66.7	4
2.	6.	100.0	100.0	5

**Table 3. Curriculum and Instruction:
Frequency Distributions of GYO Classroom Observations (continued) (N=6)**

13. General content is integrated with professional & pedagogical knowledge to create meaningful learning experience

Count	Cum Count	Pct	Cum Pct	Q13
1.	1.	16.7	16.7	3
3.	4.	50.0	66.7	4
2.	6.	33.3	100.0	5

14. Students understand and learn content of lesson

Count	Cum Count	Pct	Cum Pct	Q14
2.	2.	33.3	33.3	4
4.	6.	66.7	100.0	5

15. Provides appropriate practice to enable students to obtain outcomes

Count	Cum Count	Pct	Cum Pct	Q15
1.	1.	16.7	16.7	3
2.	3.	33.3	50.0	4
3.	6.	50.0	100.0	5

16. Provides activities & materials appropriate for students with diverse **needs**

Count	Cum Count	Pct	Cum Pct	Q16
5.	5.	83.3	83.3	4
1.	6.	16.7	100.0	5

17. Provides activities & materials appropriate for students with diverse **backgrounds**

Count	Cum Count	Pct	Cum Pct	Q17
6.	6.	100.0	100.0	4

18. Paces lessons appropriately

Count	Cum Count	Pct	Cum Pct	Q18
1.	1.	16.7	16.7	3
2.	3.	33.3	50.0	4
3.	6.	50.0	100.0	5

**Table 3. Curriculum and Instruction:
Frequency Distributions of GYO Classroom Observations (continued) (N=6)**

19. Adjusts the tempo of lessons to ensure student understanding

Count	Cum Count	Pct	Cum Pct	Q19
1.	1.	16.7	16.7	3
1.	2.	16.7	33.3	4
4.	6.	66.7	100.0	5

20. Lesson is suitable for the developmental level of students

Count	Cum Count	Pct	Cum Pct	Q20
2.	2.	33.3	33.3	4
4.	6.	66.7	100.0	5

21. Students are allowed to work at their own pace so that those who work quickly are allowed to proceed within the activity or to new activities and those who work slowly are allowed ample time to complete the activity

Count	Cum Count	Pct	Cum Pct	Q21
2.	2.	33.3	33.3	3
3.	5.	50.0	83.3	4
1.	6.	16.7	100.0	5

**Table 4. Assessment:
Frequency Distributions of GYO Classroom Observations (N=6)**

D. ASSESSMENT

Count	Cum Count	Pct	Cum Pct	ASSESS
1.	1.	16.7	16.7	4
2.	3.	33.3	50.0	4.5
3.	6.	50.0	100.0	5

56. Class assignments extend or check for learning

Count	Cum Count	Pct	Cum Pct	Q56
1.	1.	16.7	16.7	4
5.	6.	83.3	100.0	5

57. Checks that students understand concepts before proceeding

Count	Cum Count	Pct	Cum Pct	Q57
3.	3.	50.0	50.0	4
3.	6.	50.0	100.0	5

**Table 5. Classroom Management:
Frequency Distributions of GYO Classroom Observations (N=6)**

C. CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Count	Cum Count	Pct	Cum Pct	CLASSM
1.	1.	16.7	16.7	4.437
1.	2.	16.7	33.3	4.562
1.	3.	16.7	50.0	4.687
1.	4.	16.7	66.7	4.812
1.	5.	16.7	83.3	4.875
1.	6.	16.7	100.0	4.937

40. Establishes and maintains necessary order

Count	Cum Count	Pct	Cum Pct	Q40
2.	2.	33.3	33.3	4
4.	6.	66.7	100.0	5

41. Acts confidently and competently with students

Count	Cum Count	Pct	Cum Pct	Q41
6.	6.	100.0	100.0	5

42. Teacher verbally intervenes to stop undesirable behavior—or undesirable behavior does not occur

Count	Cum Count	Pct	Cum Pct	Q42
2.	2.	33.3	33.3	4
4.	6.	66.7	100.0	5

43. Consequences for undesirable behavior are briefly stated without critical tone

Count	Cum Count	Pct	Cum Pct	Q43
6.	6.	100.0	100.0	5

44. Consequences are implemented with consistency

Count	Cum Count	Pct	Cum Pct	Q44
1.	1.	16.7	16.7	4
5.	6.	83.3	100.0	5

45. Teacher refrains from negative verbalizations (such as yelling, criticizing, scolding, threatening, sarcasm)

Count	Cum Count	Pct	Cum Pct	Q45
6.	6.	100.0	100.0	5

**Table 5. Classroom Management:
Frequency Distributions of GYO Classroom Observations (continued) (N=6)**

46. Purposeful student-student interaction adds to learning

Count	Cum Count	Pct	Cum Pct	Q46
2.	2.	33.3	33.3	3
4.	6.	66.7	100.0	4

47. Acts in a manner of increasing student self-esteem, regardless of student behavior

Count	Cum Count	Pct	Cum Pct	Q47
2.	2.	33.3	33.3	4
4.	6.	66.7	100.0	5

48. Materials are organized and prepared ahead of time

Count	Cum Count	Pct	Cum Pct	Q48
6.	6.	100.0	100.0	5

49. Uses time and materials efficiently

Count	Cum Count	Pct	Cum Pct	Q49
1.	1.	16.7	16.7	4
5.	6.	83.3	100.0	5

50. Classroom environment supports the intellectual development of students

Count	Cum Count	Pct	Cum Pct	Q50
3.	3.	50.0	50.0	4
3.	6.	50.0	100.0	5

51. Classroom environment supports the personal development of students

Count	Cum Count	Pct	Cum Pct	Q51
4.	4.	66.7	66.7	4
2.	6.	33.3	100.0	5

52. Overall classroom milieu is positive

Count	Cum Count	Pct	Cum Pct	Q52
3.	3.	50.0	50.0	4
3.	6.	50.0	100.0	5

53. Maintains standards of professional conduct

Count	Cum Count	Pct	Cum Pct	Q53
6.	6.	100.0	100.0	5

**Table 5. Classroom Management:
Frequency Distributions of GYO Classroom Observations (continued) (N=6)**

54. Dresses appropriately

Count	Cum Count	Pct	Cum Pct	Q54
6.	6.	100.0	100.0	5

55. Students and teacher collaborate; classroom exemplifies a community of learners with shared goals

Count	Cum Count	Pct	Cum Pct	Q55
1.	1.	16.7	16.7	4
5.	6.	83.3	100.0	5

**Table 6. Teacher/Student Interaction:
Frequency Distributions of GYO Classroom Observations (N=6)**

B. INTERACTION

Count	Cum Count	Pct	Cum Pct	INTERACT
1.	1.	16.7	16.7	4.444
2.	3.	33.3	50.0	4.556
1.	4.	16.7	66.7	4.833
2.	6.	33.3	100.0	4.944

22. Motivates and sustains students' interest

Count	Cum Count	Pct	Cum Pct	Q22
3.	3.	50.0	50.0	4
3.	6.	50.0	100.0	5

23. Motivates and sustains students' involvement

Count	Cum Count	Pct	Cum Pct	Q23
3.	3.	50.0	50.0	4
3.	6.	50.0	100.0	5

24. Verbally communicates in a grammatically correct fashion

Count	Cum Count	Pct	Cum Pct	Q24
2.	2.	33.3	33.3	4
4.	6.	66.7	100.0	5

25. Written communication is grammatically correct

Count	Cum Count	Pct	Cum Pct	Q25
1.	1.	16.7	16.7	3
5.	6.	83.3	100.0	5

26. Nonverbal communication is appropriate and effective

Count	Cum Count	Pct	Cum Pct	Q26
3.	3.	50.0	50.0	4
3.	6.	50.0	100.0	5

**Table 6. Teacher/Student Interaction:
Frequency Distributions of GYO Classroom Observations (continued) (N=6)**

27. Visual communication is appropriate and effective

Count	Cum Count	Pct	Cum Pct	Q27
3.	3.	50.0	50.0	4
3.	6.	50.0	100.0	5

28. Promotes ability of students to evaluate information, think analytically, & reach sound conclusions

Count	Cum Count	Pct	Cum Pct	Q28
3.	3.	50.0	50.0	4
3.	6.	50.0	100.0	5

29. Asks questions that are open-ended or problem-solving (why, how, what if questions)

Count	Cum Count	Pct	Cum Pct	Q29
1.	1.	16.7	16.7	3
3.	4.	50.0	66.7	4
2.	6.	33.3	100.0	5

30. Directions are given in clear, understandable terms

Count	Cum Count	Pct	Cum Pct	Q30
6.	6.	100.0	100.0	5

31. Demonstrates ability to teach students with ethnic, cultural, and socio-economic differences

Count	Cum Count	Pct	Cum Pct	Q31
3.	3.	50.0	50.0	4
3.	6.	50.0	100.0	5

32. Demonstrates ability to teach students with linguistic differences

Count	Cum Count	Pct	Cum Pct	Q32
2.	2.	33.3	33.3	4
4.	6.	66.7	100.0	5

33. Maintains teacher/pupil rapport

Count	Cum Count	Pct	Cum Pct	Q33
1.	1.	16.7	16.7	4
5.	6.	83.3	100.0	5

**Table 6. Teacher/Student Interaction:
Frequency Distributions of GYO Classroom Observations (continued) (N=6)**

34. Exhibits appropriate & enthusiastic teaching disposition

Count	Cum Count	Pct	Cum Pct	Q34
6.	6.	100.0	100.0	5

35. Students are treated with respect

Count	Cum Count	Pct	Cum Pct	Q35
6.	6.	100.0	100.0	5

36. Students are actively engaged in lesson

Count	Cum Count	Pct	Cum Pct	Q36
1.	1.	16.7	16.7	4
5.	6.	83.3	100.0	5

37. Communicates positively with students

Count	Cum Count	Pct	Cum Pct	Q37
6.	6.	100.0	100.0	5

38. Students are allowed to speak to the teacher without interruption

Count	Cum Count	Pct	Cum Pct	Q38
6.	6.	100.0	100.0	5

39. Teacher effectively responds to student feedback

Count	Cum Count	Pct	Cum Pct	Q39
6.	6.	100.0	100.0	5

Grow Your Own Pilot Data Collection Project: Potential Areas of Inquiry
(4/12/10)

Thank you for participating in our 4/12/10, and for identifying potential areas of inquiry for our initial data collection project. We are exploring two major areas:

- Strengths and challenges of GYO graduates.
- Current level of GYO graduates' teaching effectiveness and how GYO has contributed to this level of teaching effectiveness.

As we discovered yesterday, there is considerable overlap in the questions we would ask/actions we would observe to explore these potential areas of inquiry. So that we do not get bogged down in which of the two major areas to explore, I have combined all questions into that attached worksheet. Please review each question on the worksheet, and rate it as: essential, would be nice to know, and low priority by placing an "X" in the appropriate box. (We understand that some of the questions overlap or seem repetitive; we will combine these for the final list. We are including all of the questions now to ensure that we address as many areas as possible that are important or of interest to you). We know that most of the areas of inquiry are important, but we will only be able to focus on 10-15 of them. So, please use all rating options and do not rate more than 20 as "essential".

Anne Hallett and Sue Rasher will review all responses and create a final set of areas of inquiry, based on the priorities you set. OER Associates will create the teacher, principal, superintendent, and other key stakeholder (possibly mentors?) interview instruments, and classroom observation instruments that address these areas of inquiry. Because of our need for quick turnaround to implement this project, **PLEASE RETURN YOUR WORKSHEET TO SUE RASHER BY**

6 PM APRIL 14, 2010. You may either e-mail your responses to: suerasher@oerassociates.com or fax them to: 847-251-8001. Thank you for helping us with this important project.

Question	Essential	Nice to Know	Low Priority
Relationships with parents: How have you connected with parents so they can understand the learning environment?			
How much does the principal/other key administrator support establishing and maintaining strong parent relationships?			
# of parents attending parent/teacher conferences, other school events			
Relationships with the community			
Leadership at community level (e.g., advocacy work)			
How is the community work I did as a GYO participant useful in my current work?			
How do you incorporate your understanding of the surrounding community into your teaching practice?			
Are you able to continue to learn about the surrounding community now that you are teaching, and to sustain relationships outside of the classroom (Probe: Use of community resources)?			
Leadership at school level regarding work with parents (e.g., committees, connecting parents to citizenship workshops, parenting workshops/courses, GED workshops).			
Are you able to continue to learn about the surrounding community now that you are teaching, and to sustain relationships outside of the classroom?			
Do you have children enrolled in the school district (for Chicago: in the neighborhood) in which you are now teaching?			
Relationships/collaboration/camaraderie with other teachers; status as member of a learning community			
General relationships within the school building.			
Among your teaching colleagues, how is your relationship with other teachers? Does the cohort experience translate into the school? Is there a cohort in the school?			
Leadership at school level (e.g., committees, tutoring students, after school programs). In what additional activities (outside of the classroom) related to student learning are you engaged?			
What kinds of support do GYO teachers get from their building, principal, district (e.g., mentor, professional development, institutionalized support, individualized support)? How does this differ from the support given to other teachers?			
Extent of mentor support; is GYO providing mentoring?			
Personal stories of GYO graduates: effects on self, children, family, other			
If you had not enrolled in GYO and how would your life be different than it is today?			
Are GYO teachers pursuing additional degrees, certification?			
How long (far into the future) do you see yourself continuing to work in the teaching profession?			
Knowledge of content			
Use of reflection			
Knowledge and use of effective teaching strategies			

Question	Essential	Nice to Know	Low Priority
Teacher/student interaction			
Classroom management			
Discipline referrals/suspensions: # of GYO graduates students' referred/suspended vs. other teachers at the same grade level			
Instructional practices			
Student achievement (ISAT, Access, student attendance)			
Satisfaction with being a teacher at present school; if not a GYO school, comparison of two experiences			
What is the alignment of teacher's beliefs and values with school mission?			
Has your sense of being a quality teacher changed, from preparation to now in the classroom?			
What was valuable in my preparation that prepared me to teach (i.e., exit interview-type question)?			
Most important help received from teacher preparation college/university (e.g., instructors, course content, other)			
Most important help received from GYO staff and system of support (e.g., financial, child care, location of classes, transportation, tutors, other)			
How could GYO have better prepared me to teach (i.e., exit interview-type question)?			
While you were a candidate, did GYO provide you with a system of support? What were most important/helpful?			
Additional supports needed from GYO at this time?			
Have you stayed connected with the GYO network? Have you continued a relationship with members of your GYO cohort? Do they provide you with support or assistance, now that you have graduated?			
How does shared race/ethnicity/culture with students impact teaching effectiveness?			
How does prior work as a teacher aide impact teaching effectiveness? What are the challenges of going from an assistant role in the classroom to a head teacher role?			
How does age (i.e., age 30-50) or being a parent impact teaching effectiveness. How does the wisdom gained via age or parental status transfer to effectiveness in the classroom?			
What was the GYO candidate's employment status—and job title—prior to enrolling in GYO?			
What was the GYO candidate's volunteer experience (e.g., parent mentor, literacy ambassador) prior to enrolling in GYO? during GYO? after graduation?			
What was the GYO candidate's school experience (e.g., local school council, tutor) prior to enrolling in GYO? during GYO? after graduation?			
What was GYO candidate's advocacy experience (e.g., Springfield, community events) prior to enrolling in GYO? during GYO? after graduation?			
GYO assistance in finding employment			
(For GYO graduates who found employment), how many were asked back the second year? next year? lost their jobs? were RIFed?			

Question	Essential	Nice to Know	Low Priority
Were GYO graduates able to find employment in their community or a similar neighborhood? If yes, what kinds of jobs (e.g. teaching, administrative, full-time, substitute teaching) and where.			
Suggestions for improving GYO			
Would recommend/not recommend GYO to others			
Analyze employment statistics, student achievement, and teacher effectiveness to answer the question: Did GYO do a good job of recruiting teachers?			
Course instructors/faculty: How did GYO candidates compare to your other students? Dispositions? Passing through gateways towards graduation/certification?			
Principal: How do GYO graduates compare to your other beginning teachers?			
Principal: Copy of GYO graduate's teacher evaluation form (need GYO graduate's consent)			
Principal: Teacher turnover of GYO graduates vs. others?			
Mentor: How do GYO graduates compare to the other teachers your have mentored? Strengths? Challenges? What types of support do you provide?			
Parent interviews regarding GYO teachers			
Student interviews regarding GYO teachers			
Classroom observations of GYO teachers/non-GYO teachers (?)			
Add other ideas here:			

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Grow Your Own Pilot Data Collection Project: Potential Areas of Inquiry (4/15/10)
(N=7 responses; some respondents did not rate all items)

Question	Essential	Nice to Know	Low Priority
Relationships with parents: How have you connected with parents so they can understand the learning environment?	6	1	0
Relationships/collaboration/camaraderie with other teachers; status as member of a learning community	6	1	0
What was valuable in my preparation that prepared me to teach (i.e., exit interview-type question)?	6	0	0
How could GYO have better prepared me to teach (i.e., exit interview-type question)? Not an eval of GYO. How could I be better prepared to teach?	6	1	0
Principal: How do GYO graduates compare to your other beginning teachers?	6	1	0
How do you incorporate your understanding of the surrounding community into your teaching practice?	5	2	0
Leadership at school level regarding work with parents (e.g., committees, connecting parents to citizenship workshops, parenting workshops/courses, GED workshops).	5	2	0
Knowledge and use of effective teaching strategies	5	1	0
Classroom management	5	1	0
How does shared race/ethnicity/culture with students impact teaching effectiveness?	5	1	1
How does age (i.e., age 30-50) or being a parent impact teaching effectiveness. How does the wisdom gained via age or parental status transfer to effectiveness in the classroom?	5	2	0
Were GYO graduates able to find employment in their community or a similar neighborhood? If yes, what kinds of jobs (e.g. teaching, administrative, full-time, substitute teaching) and where.	5	2	0
Principal: Teacher turnover of GYO graduates vs. others? But maybe too early. Too early	5	1	0
Student interviews regarding GYO teachers	5	1	1
Classroom observations of GYO teachers/non-GYO teachers (?) Based on what rubric? Will the teachers know what they are being judged on?	5	2	0
Most important help received from teacher preparation college/university (e.g., instructors, course content, other)	4	3	0
Most important help received from GYO staff and system of support (e.g., financial, child care, location of classes, transportation, tutors, other)	4	2	0
Personal stories of GYO graduates: effects on self, children, family, other	4	1	1
If you had not enrolled in GYO and how would your life be different than it is today?	4	2	0
Relationships with the community	4	2	0
How long (far into the future) do you see yourself continuing to work in the teaching profession?	4	1	1
How is the community work I did as a GYO participant useful in my current work?	4	3	0
Teacher/student interaction	4	2	0
Are you able to continue to learn about the surrounding community now that you are teaching, and to sustain relationships outside of the classroom (Probe: Use of community resources)?	4	1	1
How does prior work as a teacher aide impact teaching effectiveness? What are the challenges of going from an assistant role in the classroom to a head teacher role? If applicable	4	3	0
Suggestions for improving GYO PRA Q	4	3	0
Course instructors/faculty: How did GYO candidates compare to your other students? Dispositions? Passing through gateways towards graduation/ certification?	4	3	0
Mentor: How do GYO graduates compare to the other teachers your have mentored? Strengths? Challenges? What types of support do you provide?	4	3	0
Parent interviews regarding GYO teachers	4	3	0
Principal: Copy of GYO graduate's teacher evaluation form (need GYO graduate's consent)	3	4	0

Knowledge of content	3	3	0
Leadership at community level (e.g., advocacy work) I would broaden this question so people don't think it's "Springfield or nothing"	3	4	0
Leadership at school level (e.g., committees, tutoring students, after school programs). In what additional activities (outside of the classroom) related to student learning are you engaged?	3	4	0
What kinds of support do GYO teachers get from their building, principal, district (e.g., mentor, professional development, institutionalized support, individualized support)? How does this differ from the support given to other teachers?	3	4	0
Extent of mentor support; is GYO providing mentoring? Another initiative	3	3	0
Student achievement (ISAT, Access, student attendance) Gains only. Too soon to ask?	3	3	0
Has your sense of being a quality teacher changed, from preparation to now in the classroom?	3	3	0
Analyze employment statistics, student achievement, and teacher effective-ness to answer the question: Did GYO do a good job of recruiting teachers? What is teacher effectiveness? How is it normally measured? Only gains data.	3	2	0
(For GYO graduates who found employment), how many were asked back the second year? next year? lost their jobs? were RIFed? Not in this budget	3	3	0
Among your teaching colleagues, how is your relationship with other teachers? Does the cohort experience translate into the school? Is there a cohort in the school?	2	4	0
Are GYO teachers pursuing additional degrees, certification?	2	3	1
Instructional practices	2	4	0
While you were a candidate, did GYO provide you with a system of support? What were most important/helpful? PRA Q	2	5	0
Additional supports needed from GYO at this time?	2	4	0
Have you stayed connected with the GYO network? Have you continued a relationship with members of your GYO cohort? Do they provide you with support or assistance, now that you have graduated???????	2	5	0
What was the GYO candidate's employment status—and job title—prior to enrolling in GYO? and after GYO!	2	3	2
What was the GYO candidate's school experience (e.g., local school council, tutor) prior to enrolling in GYO? during GYO? after graduation?	2	4	0
What was GYO candidate's advocacy experience (e.g., Springfield, community events) prior to enrolling in GYO? during GYO? after graduation?	2	4	0
GYO assistance in finding employment	2	4	0
Would recommend/not recommend GYO to others	2	2	2
What was the GYO candidate's volunteer experience (e.g., parent mentor, literacy ambassador) prior to enrolling in GYO? during GYO? after graduation?	1	4	1
What is the alignment of teacher's beliefs and values with school mission?	1	5	1
Use of reflection	1	5	0
General relationships within the school building.	1	4	1
How much does the principal/other key administrator support establishing and maintaining strong parent relationships?	0	5	2
# of parents attending parent/teacher conferences, other school events	0	6	0
Do you have children enrolled in the school district (for Chicago: in the neighborhood) in which you are now teaching?	0	4	2
Discipline referrals/suspensions: # of GYO graduates students' referred/suspended vs. other teachers at the same grade level	0	5	0
Satisfaction with being a teacher at present school; if not a GYO school, comparison of two experiences	0	6	0
Did having a GYO Academic Advisor provide added benefit at the higher education level?		X	
Do you believe you received any additional or less consideration from the course instructor as a result of being a GYO teacher candidate?		X	
Wherever you look at something, you need to have baseline data to compare it with: use			

consortium surveys and measures to look at teacher turnover in low income African American schools, for instance, then compare GYO teacher turnover with that. Test scores are of no interest unless they are gains/value added for the teacher and her students who were there the whole year: what gains did her students make, what gains were made by other CPS teachers in low income African American schools, or Latino schools, with their students over the year.			
Academic press: the consortium for school research at U of C has done surveys that explore key issues, like relationships between parents and teachers, “academic press”, emotional supports. Use the key predictors that they have found for student achievement and do surveys asking the same questions, so you have something to compare them with. If you ask teachers if they feel they have good relationships with the parents, how do you know what is a high positive and what is a low negative, unless you can compare it with the results from a question that is regularly asked by the Consortium.			
Comment on the items beginning with “Knowledge of content”: I’m not sure how you are going to ask these, but one way would be to ask which areas they are working on to improve their own practice, and to probe for specifics on those areas.			
I like the general drift of some of the questions focusing on disconnect between GYO – engendered expectations and the way the school is actually run. We need to make sure that we don’t prepare people to function only in a utopia....			
Time it took candidate to complete program	X		
(to candidates) Are you willing to serve as a mentor for current GYO candidates		X	
I agree wholeheartedly that we should inquire about student achievement, but I do not think that the ISAT and PSAT scores will be of great value to us, at least at this point. Most of our graduates have been teaching one to three years, and what we need to measure is improvement in teaching skills and content knowledge. I think that data might be best reflected in interviews with principals and superintendents at this point. It takes time to become a master teacher.			