

# **CSU Evaluation of Teacher Preparation Including Teacher Assessment of Preparation Value**

**CSU Center for Teacher Quality  
February 2004**

## **Summary**

The outcomes of teacher preparation programs on 22 CSU campuses were examined in a fourth annual evaluation, and are summarized in this report. CSU programs were effective when the evaluations began in 2001, and are improving in effectiveness each year. CSU effectiveness includes the subject-matter preparation of K-12 teachers in colleges of arts and sciences, and their pedagogical preparation in colleges of education. Individual campuses use the evaluation results as constructive feedback in order to make substantive improvements in programs.

## **Sources of Evaluation Information**

Four annual cohorts of CSU teaching graduates participated in the evaluation. The Chancellor's staff surveyed K-12 classroom teachers who had completed their credential preparation at CSU campuses during the 1999-00, 2000-01, 2001-02 and 2002-03 academic years. CSU also surveyed the school supervisors of the first-year teachers. Both groups provided valuable information to the CSU.

Teachers who participated in the CSU evaluation had several important qualifications. All had been admitted into CSU programs of professional teacher preparation. All participants had satisfactorily completed the coursework and fieldwork components of those programs. CSU campuses recommended them for California teaching credentials. All served as certificated teachers in K-12 schools for at least one year after completing CSU preparation. The participating teachers answered CSU's questions at the end of their first year of certificated teaching. Their answers have validity because the teachers completed all phases of CSU preparation and then used their newly-acquired skills while teaching in K-12 schools. The CO received responses from 50 percent or more of the randomly-selected teachers each year. The samples were large and the response rates were high so the evaluation findings reliably describe the preparation of four annual cohorts of CSU teachers.

School supervisors who participated in the evaluation also had important qualifications. From the beginning to the end of a school year, each administrator was officially responsible for the supervision and evaluation of one or more CSU teaching graduates. The administrators had previously supervised other first-year teachers in K-12 public schools. All knew the *Content Standards for California Public Schools* and were able to assess CSU teachers in relation to the standards. Each administrator received the name of the CSU graduate whose preparation was to be assessed. (None of them assessed CSU preparation "in general.") Before answering CSU questions, each supervisor had visited the CSU teacher's classroom for extended observations of teaching OR had discussed teaching issues with the CSU graduate in extended professional conferences at the school. Participating supervisors were well-suited to answer CSU's questions about how well each teacher was prepared for the many responsibilities of K-12 classroom teachers.

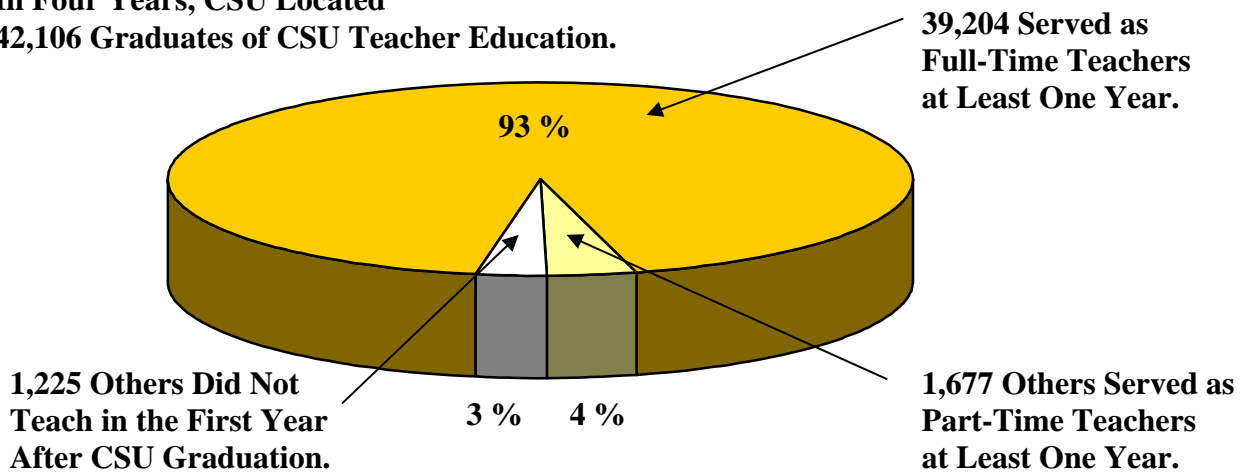
**First Evaluation Finding: Many CSU Students Become Teachers**

In the field of teacher preparation, news reports and policy discussions frequently indicate that "fifty percent of newly-prepared teachers do not become teachers at all." CSU's primary mission is to prepare skilled teachers for California's public schools. Accordingly, it is critically important for CSU graduates to enter the teaching profession and serve with distinction for many years. Until CSU initiated annual evaluations, however, reliable statistics about this critical issue were not available.

In the four cohorts whose preparation was evaluated, a total of 45,680 CSU students completed preparation for California teaching credentials. One year after they completed CSU programs, the CO staff located 42,106 or 92 percent of these CSU graduates. As Figure One shows, a total of 39,204 or 93 percent of the located graduates taught in K-12 schools throughout the first year following their CSU graduation. In the available literature, no other college or university has reported a teaching participation rate higher than 67 percent in a single year.

**Figure One:  
Ninety-Seven Percent of CSU Credential Graduates Become Teachers**

**In Four Years, CSU Located  
42,106 Graduates of CSU Teacher Education.**



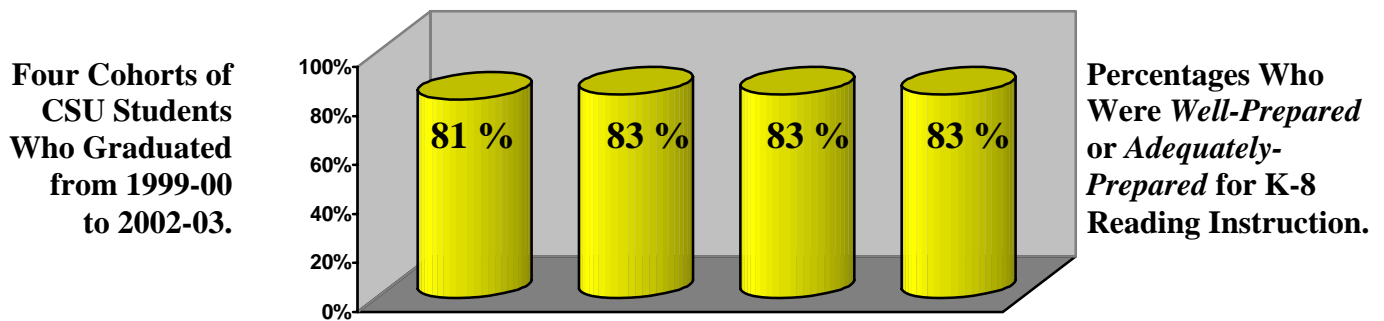
Four percent of the 42,106 CSU graduates served as teachers during part of their first year. Many of these individuals served as substitute teachers while applying for full-time teaching positions. When the four cohorts are combined with each other, only three percent of the graduates did not teach at all during their first year following CSU completion. Approximately 85 percent of these graduates planned to teach sometime after their first year, however. The long-term retention of CSU's graduating teachers is the subject of a follow-up study that is currently underway. *Based on evidence compiled in the four annual evaluations, the CSU is extremely productive and efficient in preparing very large numbers of classroom teachers who serve in California public schools.*

## Second Evaluation Finding: CSU Professional Teacher Preparation is Effective in Grades K-8

*Reading-Language Arts Standards for California Public Schools* are among the most important factors in the evaluation of CSU teacher preparation. Adopted by the California Board of Education in 1997, these standards set forth the literacy curriculum that CSU graduates must be prepared to teach in each grade level. CSU faculties have worked hard to integrate these standards into the preparation of every new teacher in recent years. The four-year evaluation provides the most reliable available evidence of CSU's effectiveness in preparing teachers to achieve *California's Reading-Language Arts Standards*.

During the four-year evaluation, CSU received feedback from 4,869 elementary school principals who were randomly selected to participate in the evaluation. These experienced K-8 administrators understood the *Reading-Language Arts Standards* and were responsible for implementing the standards in their schools. The supervisors also observed the CSU teaching graduates frequently during reading instruction. They assessed the preparation of 4,869 first-year K-8 teachers in relation to the following question: "How well was (Teacher's Name) prepared to teach reading-language arts according to the *California Reading-Language Arts Standards* for her/his grade level(s)?" Principals could answer this question by reporting that the first-year CSU graduate was *well prepared* or *adequately prepared* or *somewhat prepared* or *not-at-all prepared* for this critical responsibility. Figure Two shows the percentages of CSU first-year teachers who were *well prepared* or *adequately prepared* according to their supervisors who were experienced instructional leaders in their schools.

**Figure Two:  
In Elementary Schools, CSU Graduates are  
Prepared for Reading Instruction**



### Evaluations of Teacher Preparation by 4,869 School Principals (K-8)

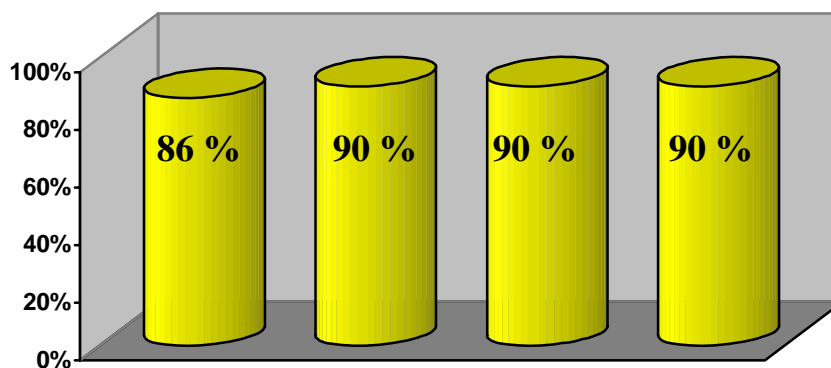
In these findings, "adequately prepared" describes a new teacher who has *sufficient preparation to function effectively* with the *support and assistance* that schools are expected to provide in the state's Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) Program. *The evaluation findings indicate strongly that CSU was effective in preparing teachers at the outset of the four-year evaluation period. CSU became more effective soon after the period started. Then CSU maintained its high level of effectiveness for the period's duration.* There have been no other valid, reliable evaluations of the California State University's effectiveness in teacher preparation.

## Third Evaluation Finding: CSU Professional Teacher Preparation is Effective in Grades 7-12

In grades 7-12, most CSU graduates teach one or two subjects of the curriculum. Most of these teachers completed CSU majors or minors in the subjects they teach. During their CSU studies, these prospective teachers also complete coursework and fieldwork in effective methods of subject-specific instruction. So, for example, prospective teachers of English, mathematics and science complete required coursework and fieldwork in effective *methods for teaching* English, mathematics and science, respectively. Although their programs of professional preparation are fully accredited, the *effectiveness* of their preparation has not been evaluated previously.

In grades 7-12, CSU evaluation questions are usually answered by the chairs of academic departments. These academic administrators are responsible for the active supervision and annual evaluation of CSU graduates who are first-year teachers in their departments. They are also experienced teachers who know California's *Content Standards* in their subjects. During the four-year evaluation, CSU received teacher-specific reports from 2,445 of these academic administrators, who responded to the following evaluation question: "How well did the CSU prepared (Teacher's Name) to teach her/his major subject(s) according to California's *Content Standards* in the same subject(s)?" If the CSU graduate was prepared to teach history or life science, then the academic department chair answered the question in relation to the *History Content Standards* or the *Life Science Content Standards*. Again, supervisors answered the question by reporting that CSU graduates were *well prepared* or *adequately prepared* or *somewhat prepared* or *not-at-all prepared* for this critical responsibility. Figure Three shows the percentages of CSU teachers who were *well prepared* or *adequately prepared* according to their supervisors. *During four recent years, experienced supervisors of academic departments in grades 7-12 have consistently affirmed CSU's effectiveness in preparing teachers to use contemporary instructional methods for grades 7-12 in their major subjects.*

**Figure Three:  
In Secondary Schools, CSU Graduates are  
Prepared to Teach Their Major Subjects**



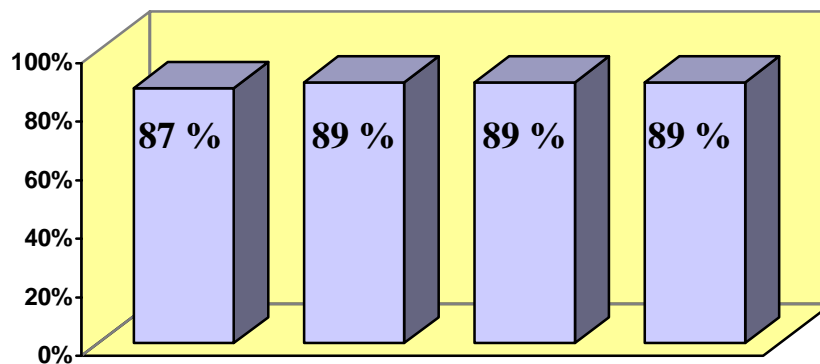
**Percentages of First-Year CSU Teachers Who Were  
*Well-Prepared* or *Adequately-Prepared* to  
Teach Their Major Subjects in Grades 7-12  
According to 2,445 Academic Department Chairs**

#### **Fourth Evaluation Finding: CSU Subject-Matter Preparation is Effective in Grades K-12**

Learning to use effective methods of instruction is not, by itself, sufficient teacher preparation. In addition to learning pedagogical ideas and practices, CSU students who intend to teach must know and understand the subjects to be taught. Every CSU campus offers undergraduate majors and minors in which prospective teachers acquire essential preparation in subject-matter. Operating outside of schools and colleges of education, this critical aspect of teacher preparation is equally essential for prospective elementary teachers and prospective secondary teachers. Accordingly, the four-year evaluation compiled evidence about the effectiveness of CSU subject matter preparation among first-year teachers in grades K-8 and in grades 7-12.

During the four-year evaluation cycle, a total of 7,334 elementary school principals and secondary school department chairs provided information about CSU subject matter preparation. These veteran educators were the supervisors of 7,334 first-year teachers from the CSU. They answered the following question: "How effective was CSU in preparing (Teacher's Name) to know and understand the subjects of the curriculum according to the *California Content Standards* for those subjects?" In answering this question, supervisors had the same *response options* as before. Figure Four shows the percentages of teachers in each annual cohort who were *well prepared* or *adequately prepared* to know and understand the subjects they were teaching.

**Figure Four:  
In All School Levels, CSU Graduates Are  
Prepared to Know and Understand Subject Matter**



**Percentages of First-Year CSU Teachers Who Were  
*Well-Prepared* or *Adequately-Prepared* to Know and  
Understand Subject Matter in Grades K-12  
According to 7,334 Experienced School Supervisors**

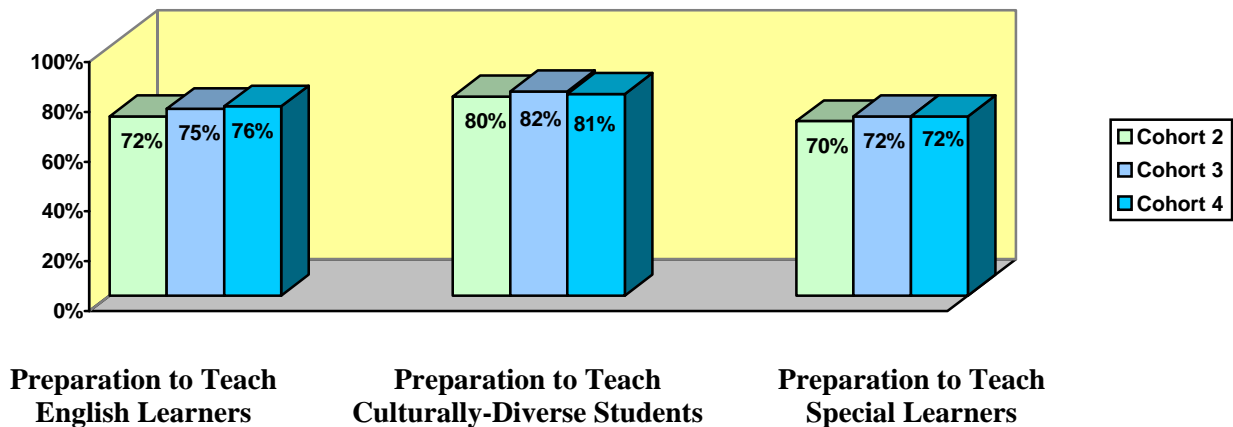
Evaluation data provide convincing evidence that *CSU graduates have strong knowledge and understanding of the subjects they are assigned to teach in their first-year assignments. Compared with other findings of the four-year evaluation, the subject matter preparation of K-12 teachers is unusually effective in the California State University.*

### Fifth Evaluation Finding: CSU Preparation for Student Diversity

California public schools serve many students who are English learners because their familial languages are other than English. Many English-speaking students have diverse cultural and social backgrounds. Still others have learning strategies that require instructional accommodations. It is critically important for increasing numbers of these students to become eligible for CSU admission and prepared for CSU academic success. Probably the most effective way for CSU to contribute to this goal is to prepare teachers to effectively teach diverse students who attend California public schools in grades K-12.

Throughout the CSU, Colleges of Education have pursued this goal for many years. Their efforts, too numerous to count, include the adoption of CLAD-BCLAD Program Standards, incorporation of urban teacher preparation curricula, offering of "mainstreaming" coursework and fieldwork, and many other initiatives that help to prepare teachers for student diversity. A common thread throughout these efforts is a focus on preparing teachers who view diversity as an educational strength and asset, not an educational weakness or liability. The annual evaluations provide a chance to ascertain how effective CSU is in this preparation, and whether the system's effectiveness is changing over time.

**Figure Five:  
CSU Preparation for Student Diversity**



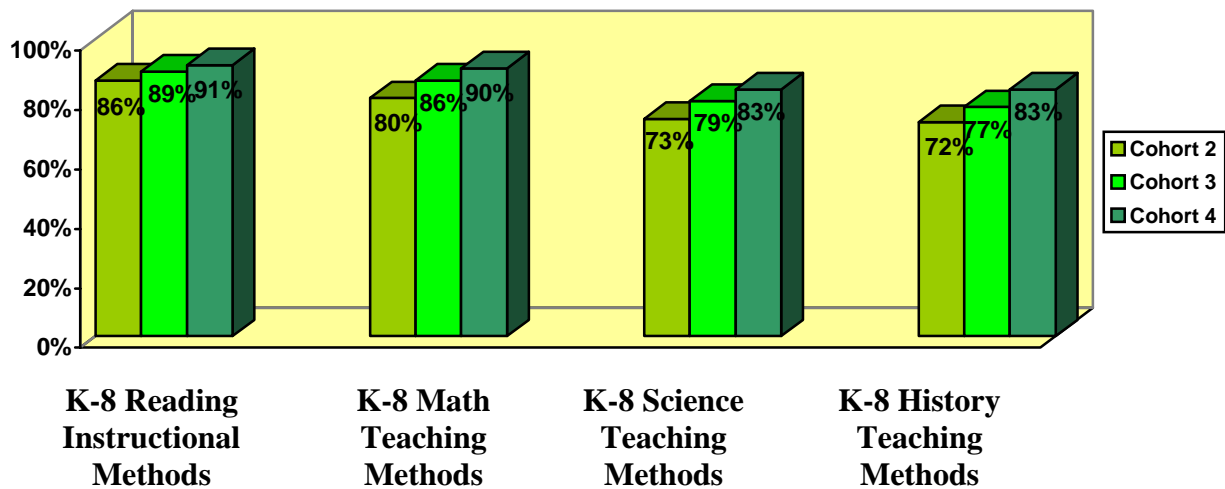
Beginning in the second year of the four-year evaluation, CSU asked elementary school principals and high school department chairs to answer three distinct questions about preparation of CSU teachers for student diversity. A combined total of 5,912 school supervisors answered the following questions: "How effective was the CSU in preparing (Teacher's Name) to meet the instructional needs of students who are (1) English learners, (2) culturally diverse, and (3) special learners?" Figure Five shows the percentages of first-year teachers in each of three annual cohorts who were *well prepared* or *adequately prepared* to meet the instructional needs of each important group of students. Compared with percentages in the prior graphs, the results in Figure Five suggest that CSU continues to make slow progress in achieving its goals, but students in K-12 schools need the CSU to accelerate the progress it is making in this critical area. For the CSU to do so could contribute substantially to the goal of providing many California students with opportunities for collegiate education in the CSU.

### Sixth Evaluation Finding: CSU Preparation is Increasingly Useful for First-Year Teachers

When prospective teachers earn their credentials and secure teaching jobs, they face the challenges of teaching in their own K-12 classrooms. When they begin to plan instruction and teach students each day, they want to be able to rely on the ideas and practices they learned at the university. To the extent that first-year teachers can *use* their prior preparation in their day-to-day work, they and their students experience greater success than would otherwise occur. For a university that prepares teachers, it is important that first-year graduates regard their prior preparation as *useful* and *valuable* in their teaching. CSU can be credited with the success and effectiveness of first-year teachers (and their students) to the extent that CSU preparation aids the teachers in fulfilling their professional duties.

During the last three years of the four-year evaluation, CSU asked its first-year teaching graduates in grades K-8 about the *usefulness* of their prior preparation. The actual teaching experiences of the CSU graduates provided a valid context and legitimate basis for them to judge the usefulness of CSU preparation. CSU's *usefulness questions* focused on specific classes and other elements of preparation each element of preparation was *very useful* or *somewhat useful* or *a little useful* or *not at all useful*.

**Figure Six:**  
**How Useful is CSU Preparation for First-Year Teachers?**



For each of three cohorts of CSU elementary teaching graduates, Figure Six shows the percentages who found four important elements of preparation to be *very useful* or *somewhat useful*. The four elements were preparation in the methods of reading instruction (left side of Figure Six), preparation in the methods of K-8 mathematics instruction, preparation in the methods of K-8 science teaching, and preparation in the methods of K-8 history-social science teaching (right side of Figure Six). For each of these important elements of elementary teacher preparation, the results in Figure Six show that *CSU has substantially increased the usefulness of preparation during the last three years*. The data also suggest that *CSU is more successful in providing useful preparation in reading and mathematics than in science or history-social science, but the latter subjects are improving in usefulness most rapidly*

*from one year to the next.* Prospective teachers who enroll in CSU credential programs have an assurance that the programs offer preparation they will regard as *useful* when they begin their work as classroom teachers.

### **Conclusion: How CSU Uses the Systemwide Evaluation Findings**

This report summarizes the most important findings of the CSU Systemwide Evaluation of Teacher Preparation from 2001 through 2004. On each CSU campus, academic leaders and faculties are using the evaluation findings to make needed improvements in teacher education. Systematic uses of the data are becoming commonplace in the CSU System, and campuses will soon be able to use the forthcoming results of the evaluation to indicate whether recent changes are increasing CSU outcomes. Evaluation is an integral element of the teacher education enterprise at an institution like the CSU where preparing teachers is a significant function.