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SAMPLE University  
Master of Arts in Education  
Teacher Leadership  
Program Evaluation

Conducted in Collaboration with and  
Presented by

Florida Atlantic University  
Office of Educational Leadership Learning

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## **1. Introduction**

The purpose of this evaluation report is to summarize the findings of a comprehensive and collaborative review of the effectiveness, quality, and impact of SAMPLE University's Master of Arts in Teacher Leadership Program. This report will provide an overview of the program status and recommendations for continuous improvement. The review was comprised of multiple stakeholders, including faculty, students, alumni, and administrators, ensuring that diverse perspectives were integrated into the evaluation process. This external program evaluation was facilitated by Florida Atlantic University's Office of Educational Leadership Learning (FAU-OELL).

## **2. Objectives**

The objectives of this program review include:

1. Assess Program Quality: Evaluate the alignment of program and course objectives.
2. Student Outcomes: Review student performance and learning outcomes
3. Stakeholder Satisfaction: Describe the satisfaction levels of students, alumni, faculty, and industry partners.
4. Continuous Improvement: Identify areas for improvement and develop actionable recommendations.

## **3. Collaborative Evaluation Framework**

This program evaluation was developed and implemented utilizing a collaborative approach (O'Sullivan, 2004; Rodríguez-Campos & Rincones-Gómez, 2012). Upon the initial invitation from Sample University (SU) to engage in the evaluation as an external evaluator, FAU-OELL team members then initiated conversations with SU to determine the purpose and scope of the review. An evaluation plan was designed to reach out to participants and engage stakeholders at each stage of the evaluation process. The team collaboratively established clear expectations to maintain clear communication. This occurred through transparent and adaptive interactions with all participating stakeholders. In this manner, the objectives were prioritized, and the purpose and scope of the review was maintained.

### **3.1. Formation of the Evaluation Team**

Members of the evaluation team included the external evaluation partners FAU-OELL, SU-MATL program faculty, student representatives, alumni, and university administrators. FAU-OELL elicited input from these stakeholders throughout the evaluation process as they collected feedback for continuous improvement.

Roles and Responsibilities of Evaluation Team Members:

- FAU OELL External Evaluators: Facilitated the evaluation plan and activities.
- SU MATL Faculty Members: Provided insights into curriculum effectiveness.
- Students: Offered perspectives on the student experience.
- Alumni: Provided feedback on the program's impact on their career development.
- Administrators: Ensured alignment with university policies and strategic goals.

### **3.2. Data Collection and Analysis**

To ensure multiple perspectives were included in this review, a variety of data collection tools were utilized with the intent to provide flexibility in participation.

### **Surveys, Questionnaires and Interviews:**

- Student interviews and extended response questionnaires were used to collect data on course content, teaching quality, resources, and overall satisfaction.
- Faculty interviews and extended response questionnaires allowed the evaluation team to gather feedback on the implementation of the program, course design, and continuous improvement.
- Alumni surveys gathered more quantitative feedback on the overall student experience and the relevance of the program to career and professional development.

### **Document Analysis:**

- In addition, a document analysis was conducted to determine evidence of program impact and relevance as well as alignment with teacher leader standards. Documents included course syllabi, stated learning outcomes, student work samples, rubrics, and assessment results.
- A comparison was also made with similar programs at peer institutions, including admission requirements, coursework, and intended program outcomes.

## **3.3. Stakeholder Involvement**

### **Regular Meetings:**

- The joint collaborative evaluation team held meetings throughout the duration of the evaluation to review progress, discuss findings, and develop recommendations.

### **Feedback Loop:**

- The SU/FAU-OELL team created tools to gather feedback for the current review, as well as establish mechanisms for future feedback from students, faculty, and alumni throughout the academic year.

## **3.4. Reporting and Dissemination**

A comprehensive final report summarizing findings and recommendations for improvement will be shared with the university community for the purposes of program sustainability and continuous progress.

## **4. Findings**

### **4.1 Objective 1: Assess Program Quality: Evaluate the alignment of program and course objectives.**

The evaluation team engaged in a document review that analyzed program components and intended outcomes with industry standards. In this case, an alignment analysis of the SU-MATL Program with the seven domains of the Teacher Leader Model Standards (2011).

Domain I: Fostering a Collaborative Culture to Support Educator Development and Student Learning - The teacher leader understands the principles of adult learning and knows how to develop a collaborative culture of collective responsibility in the school. The teacher leader uses this knowledge to promote an environment of collegiality, trust, and respect that focuses on continuous improvement in instruction and student learning.

SU Program Alignment:

- The program includes courses such as EDL 617: Mentoring, Coaching, and Collaboration and EDL 618: Organizational Engagement, which emphasize fostering

collaboration among educators. The focus on mentoring, coaching, and leading teams to use evidence-based practices aligns well with promoting a collaborative culture.

- Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) related to creating trusting and respectful collaborative groups, promoting high-quality collaborative relationships, and improving student success align closely with the functions of Domain I.

#### Domain II: Accessing and Using Research to Improve Practice and Student Learning

The teacher leader understands how research creates new knowledge, informs policies and practices and improves teaching and learning. The teacher leader models and facilitates the use of systematic inquiry as a critical component of teachers' ongoing learning and development.

##### Sample University Program Alignment:

- The program incorporates a strong emphasis on research through the Research Core (e.g., ED 690: Methods of Inquiry and ED 795A/B: Seminar), which prepares students to conduct action research in their schools.
- SLOs that involve using data to promote instruction, assess inequities, and lead school changes (e.g., SLOs 3, 4, 11, 12) show a strong alignment with Domain II, which focuses on accessing and using research for improving practice and student learning.

#### Domain III: Promoting Professional Learning for Continuous Improvement

The teacher leader understands the evolving nature of teaching and learning, established and emerging technologies, and the school community. The teacher leader uses this knowledge to promote, design, and facilitate job-embedded professional learning aligned with school improvement goals.

##### SU Program Alignment:

- The program's emphasis on leadership development through continuous professional learning is evident in courses like EDL 617 and EDL 618, where participants learn to mentor, coach, and lead professional learning communities (PLCs).
- The focus on promoting and sustaining organizational change and facilitating high-quality professional learning (e.g., SLOs 13, 14, 24) aligns with Domain III's focus on promoting professional learning for continuous improvement.

#### Domain IV: Facilitating Improvements in Instruction and Student Learning

The teacher leader demonstrates a deep understanding of the teaching and learning processes and uses this knowledge to advance the professional skills of colleagues by being a continuous learner and modeling reflective practice based on student results. The teacher leader works collaboratively with colleagues to ensure instructional practices are aligned to a shared vision, mission, and goals.

##### SU Program Alignment:

- Courses like EDL 616: Leading Teams to Use Evidence-based Practices and EDL 618: Organizational Engagement directly address the facilitation of improvements in instruction and student learning.

- SLOs that involve using data to improve instructional practices, creating equitable learning environments, and driving improvements in school culture (e.g., SLOs 5, 10, 16) demonstrate a strong alignment with Domain IV, which is focused on advancing professional skills and improving student outcomes.
- Students engage in reflection assignments throughout the program. Accompanying rubrics indicate that deep reflective practices must be demonstrated within the written responses, including “recognition that the frame of reference with which an event is viewed can change” and that an “internal dialogue” is demonstrated that indicates a “critical awareness of one’s own processes of mental functioning”.

**Domain V: Promoting the Use of Assessments and Data for School and District Improvement**  
The teacher leader is knowledgeable about current research on classroom- and school-based data and the design and selection of appropriate formative and summative assessment methods. The teacher leader shares this knowledge and collaborates with colleagues to use assessment and other data to make informed decisions that improve learning for all students and to inform school and district improvement strategies.

**SU Program Alignment:**

- The program's emphasis on data-driven decision-making is evident in multiple courses, particularly EDL 616 and EDL 617, where participants learn to use data for improving instructional practices and leading school improvement initiatives.
- SLOs that focus on systematically examining data, leading PLCs, and using assessments to inform school-wide decisions (e.g., SLOs 11, 12, 15) align well with Domain V, which emphasizes the use of assessments and data for school and district improvement.

**Domain VI: Improving Outreach and Collaboration with Families and Community**  
The teacher leader understands that families, cultures, and communities have a significant impact on educational processes and student learning. The teacher leader works with colleagues to promote ongoing systematic collaboration with families, community members, business and community leaders, and other stakeholders to improve the educational system and expand opportunities for student learning.

**SU Program Alignment:**

- The program emphasizes collaboration within the school community. Explicit references to outreach and collaboration with families and the broader community are less prominent in the provided program description. However, interviews with faculty, alumni and students indicate that the EDL 618 Capstone Project requires engaging a variety of stakeholders from the broader school community.
- SLOs such as bringing student and parent voices into decision-making processes (e.g., SLO 15) do touch on aspects of Domain VI.

**Domain VII: Advocating for Student Learning and the Profession**  
The teacher leader understands how educational policy is made at the local, state, and national level as well as the roles of school leaders, boards of education, legislators, and other

stakeholders in formulating those policies. The teacher leader uses this knowledge to advocate for student needs and for practices that support effective teaching and increase student learning and serves as an individual of influence and respect within the school, community, and profession.

#### SU Program Alignment:

- The program's emphasis on equity and leadership for school change, as seen in EDL 615: Leading Equity in Schools and EDL 618: Organizational Engagement, aligns with advocating for student learning and the profession.
- SLOs related to examining school policies for equity, promoting fair and ethical practices, and leading school-wide changes (e.g., SLOs 1, 9, 23) align well with Domain VII, which focuses on advocating for student learning and the profession.

#### Summary of Alignment

Overall, the SU Teacher Leadership program aligns strongly with the Teacher Leadership Model Standards, particularly in fostering collaboration (Domain I), accessing and using research (Domain II), promoting professional learning (Domain III), facilitating instructional improvements (Domain IV), and promoting the use of data (Domain V). Alignment with Domain VI (Improving Outreach and Collaboration with Families and Community) could be enhanced with more explicit focus on community and family engagement. The program's emphasis on equity and ethical leadership also aligns well with Domain VII (Advocating for Student Learning and the Profession).

#### Comparison of Programs Based on Publicly Available Program Descriptors

A comparison analysis was conducted of the publicly available program descriptors of sample Teacher Leadership programs across the country (Table 1). While all the TL programs were asynchronous online, two are housed in a traditional brick-and-mortar public university while a third (ACE) is completely virtual. Two of the programs compared below are full master's programs while two are graduate certificate programs. The required number of core courses are similar, with comparable admissions expectations. Based on the comparison chart below, the SU-MATL has comprehensive student outcomes that align with teacher leader standards and identify specific dispositions and skills that will prepare graduates for a broad range of roles and increased responsibilities within the educational setting. Three, including SU-MATL, require access to an educational setting. Based on additional information collected in this evaluation, SU-MATL includes capstone projects throughout the program that require action research and the application of student learning in real-time educational contexts.

*Table 1 Comparison of Teacher Leadership Programs*

Institution	Comparison University #1	Comparison University #2	Comparison University #3	Sample University (SU)
Type of Degree	Teacher Leadership Graduate Certificate	M.Ed. in Teacher Leadership	Teacher Leadership Graduate Certificate	Master of Arts in Education: Teacher Leadership (M.A.)

Format	Asynchronous Online	Asynchronous Online	Asynchronous Online	Asynchronous Online
# TL Courses	4	5	5	4
Summary of Student Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop knowledge and skills to learn from their own teaching.</li> <li>• Facilitate professional learning in schools.</li> <li>• Designed to meet the Teacher Leader Model Standards and National Staff Development Council's standards for professional learning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply leadership models and frameworks for shared governance and collaboration.</li> <li>• Develop professional learning opportunities.</li> <li>• Promote instructional best practices and continuous improvement.</li> <li>• Advocate for differentiated professional learning for teachers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activate for teachers as leaders for student learning and the profession.</li> <li>• Build networks of teachers with leadership skills in instructional, policy, and association leadership.</li> <li>• Encourage teacher-driven action research to improve student achievement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare teachers for new leadership roles such as master teacher, curriculum leader, assessment leader, mentor, and instructional coach.</li> <li>• Lead school improvement through evidence-based instructional practices and professional learning communities.</li> <li>• Understand and apply leadership principles for fostering equitable and effective educational environments.</li> <li>• Designed to meet the Teacher Leader Model Standards.</li> </ul>
Admission Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet general graduate certificate admissions requirements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet general graduate admissions requirements.</li> <li>• Access to the educational settings for completion of course assignments throughout the program.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet general graduate admissions requirements.</li> <li>• Teaching certificate required with one year of teaching experience</li> <li>• Access to a K-12 classroom.</li> <li>• Submission of a goal statement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet general graduate admissions requirements</li> <li>• Current credentialed teachers within an education setting.</li> <li>• Three years of teaching experience</li> </ul>

#### **4.2 Objective 2: Student Outcomes: Review student performance and learning outcomes.**

Student enrollment has steadily increased throughout the past four years the program has been admitting students, from 12 in Cohort 1 to 32 in the current cohort (Table 2). In the one year that statistics were available, the 2022-23 cohort saw a graduation rate of 71%. In addition, a review of the latest EDL 618 capstone project scores indicates 94% receiving full points for this culminating assignment that incorporates components from multiple competencies. A review of sample student reflection assignments provided to the evaluation

team as well as the accompanying rubric indicate a high level of alignment between student submissions and program expectations.

*Table 2 Summary of Student Enrollment and Graduation*

School Year	Student Enrollment	Degrees Conferred
2020-2021	12	(not available)
2021-2022	13	(not available)
2022-2023	14	10
2023-2024	32	In Progress
2024-2025	TBD	N/A

#### **4.3 Objective 3: Stakeholder Satisfaction: Describe the satisfaction levels of students, alumni, faculty, and industry partners.**

##### **Exit Survey**

An exit survey was distributed to alumni of the program (See Appendix A). While the survey only elicited a 20% response rate, it can be viewed as the beginning of a plan for continuous improvement for the program with the opportunity for comparison data from year to year. Highlights of the responses are indicated below (see Table 3). All responses are included in the appendices (See Appendix B).

*Table 3 Summary of Alumni Exit Survey*

Item	Cumulative Responses
How would you rate your overall satisfaction with your experience in the MATL program?	4 Stars out of 5
How would you rate the value of the education you received within the MATL?	3.6 Stars out of 5
How strongly do you agree or disagree with each of the following?	
The MATL professors are available to support students.	80% Agree or Strongly Agree
The MATL coursework is academically rigorous.	60% Agree
The MATL program is committed to helping each student succeed.	100% Agree or Strongly Agree
The MATL program has provided me with access to support and resources that helped me grow as a leader.	60% Agree or Strong Agree
My learning experiences in the MATL prepared me to expand my leadership roles and/or responsibilities.	80% Agree
As a result of the MATL, I feel more confident in my leadership abilities.	60% Agree or Strongly Agree
As a result of completing the MATL, I have increased skills relevant to my career goals.	40% Strongly Agree
The MATL program themes of Equity, Evidence-based Instruction, Mentoring, Coaching and Collaboration, and Organizational Engagement.	100% Agree or Strongly Agree
My experiences in the SU MATL resulted in my growth in leadership for systems thinking, data and design, culture and climate, learnership and operational thinking.	60% Agree or Strongly Agree



What do you consider the best thing about your experience in the MATL concentration?	<i>"The 690-692 course work in program evaluation was challenging and rewarding." "Being able to apply what we were learning and the projects we were completing to our real-life classrooms was really cool. It felt like we were gaining applicable skills."</i>
What is one thing about your experience in the MATL that you would change if you could?	<i>"Completing my cumulative project during the summer made it difficult to collect data." "More live engagements with teachers."</i>
How likely are you to recommend the MATL concentration to a prospective student?	80% are Likely Recommend

### Interviews/Questionnaires

The evaluation team engaged multiple stakeholders in interviews (see Appendix C) to determine perceptions of their experiences within the MATL program. These stakeholders included students, alumni, faculty, and administrators. A synthesis of their experiences as categorized into the following themes give insight into the program relevancy and satisfaction of stakeholders.

#### Leadership Development

All participants emphasized the program's focus on leadership development. This included preparing students for diverse leadership roles within educational settings, such as mentoring, coaching, and fostering teacher leadership. The program encouraged a broad view of leadership, going beyond traditional administrative roles to empower teachers to be leaders within their classrooms and schools, even those who may still be early in their careers. *"It's kind of intimidating to take on a leadership role because you feel like you'll let the seasoned teachers do that but through the program I was given very tangible resources of how you can be a leader, and how you can advocate for students, and it just felt much more accessible as a new teacher to be able to do that."* – MATL Recent Graduate

#### Equity and Inclusive Practices

The theme of equity is consistently highlighted across all participant responses. The program aims to promote equity-driven leadership by teaching strategies that foster inclusive learning environments. A faculty member identified the ability to look at data through an equity lens and then take action in response to real-world issues as *"a common theme within all our deliverables"* and one that *"that connects directly to the career experiences of our candidates"*. One student appreciated developing an equity focus in the very first class, *"Which I think is really cool to be the 1st class, because then every other class that you're taking, you're kind of seeing through that lens"*. However, there is also a recognition of the need for more practical guidance on how to implement these equity principles effectively or, as another student

reflected, *“how to get to that [equity]... That is one of the things where I wish there was a little bit more that I could take from this course”*.

#### Curriculum Integration and Practical Application

The program’s curriculum is designed to integrate core themes such as equity, mentoring, coaching, and evidence-based instruction. It emphasizes the practical application of theoretical knowledge, ensuring that students can connect their learning to real-world educational contexts. This alignment between theory and practice is seen as a strength, preparing students for practical leadership roles. One recent graduate remarked that having the choice and flexibility to adapt projects to unique contexts and interests was *“really refreshing... I loved being able to tap into the other leadership [opportunities] I’m involved in”*.

#### Program Format and Online Learning Environment

The online, asynchronous format of the MATL program is generally praised. As one faculty member described, *“It provides a robust and user-friendly interface for managing course materials, facilitating discussions, submitting assignments, and providing feedback.”* It provides flexibility and accessibility, especially for working professionals and international students, and utilizes tools like Canvas to support learning. Utilizing Canvas as a platform has its advantages, as it is common to surrounding school districts and students are familiar with it. In addition, the use of Canvas is standardized from course to course, allowing for consistency and predictability in the format. The university has an in-house IT department that can provide technical support. In addition, Canvas has 24/7 support which is particularly helpful to MATL’s students who may be in varied time zones. Although convenient and often the very reason students chose the SU MATL in the first place, the asynchronous format does sometimes lack the connectivity that in-person or face-to-face classes foster. Students appreciated current practices to increase connectivity, such as video recordings of professors explaining critical content and real-time class meetings and suggested these practices could be enhanced to develop a greater sense of community building and student engagement. For example, more frequent virtual synchronous class meetings that are then recorded for those who cannot attend. A student reflected, *“I loved that [class meeting] because it did give that face-to-face interaction.”* Students also reported that their professors were generally available via email or messaging.

#### Support and Mentorship

Mentorship and support are critical components of the program. There is an emphasis on the importance of a supportive learning environment, including virtual meetings, technical support, and fostering a sense of community among students. Some suggested the need for more structured opportunities for mentorship and practical leadership development, especially for those without access to a school-based professional learning community (PLC). *“I felt confident that anytime I needed to reach out to anybody that I would be listened to and responded to back immediately.” – MATL Student*

## 5. Recommendations

### **5.1 Objective 4 - Continuous Improvement: Identify areas for improvement and develop actionable recommendations.**

While the above themes reflected strengths and relevancy of the program, there were some areas identified for growth. This was an intentional aspect of the evaluation plan. The ability to identify areas for growth indicates the SU MATL program team's commitment to continuous improvement. This feedback was a result of the direct question: Are there areas for growth within the program? Several areas for improvement were identified. These include:

- Ensure that classes which require data collection are scheduled during the school year when there is increased access to K-12 students and data.
- Make sure that required textbooks are fully utilized throughout the course.
- Stronger connections with school districts to provide diverse field experiences.  
*“Expanding partnerships and connections with more school districts could enhance the program’s relevance and impact.”*
- Increase ways to market and attract students to grow the program.

Additional overall recommendations are a synthesis of the evaluation:

The program is extensively aligned with the Teacher Leader Model Standards. However, additional explicit focus on community and family collaboration would strengthen alignment with Teacher Leader Model Standard *Domain VI: Improving Outreach and Collaboration with Families and Community*. Extending partnerships with districts as mentioned above would ensure greater opportunities within a variety of contexts for community and family collaboration. In addition, MATL students could engage in more diverse field experiences, internship opportunities, and be exposed to different district policies and practices across those communities.

As indicated by an upward trend in enrollment, the MATL is growing. One student enrolled because their sibling had a positive experience in the program. Developing a system of reflection and continuous improvement that includes specific tools like exit surveys for recent graduates could track program goals and refine program outcomes.

## 6. Conclusion

This evaluation, rooted in the collaborative framework, was designed to ensure that Sample University's Master of Arts in Teacher Leadership remains relevant, effective, and of the highest quality. By involving a diverse group of stakeholders in the review process, the MATL program fostered culture of continuous improvement and academic excellence. This is an extension of the tenets of the MATL program, which commits to empowering teachers with leadership dispositions and tools to engage in action research to advocate for their students and in turn elevate both teacher and student voice.

This evaluation demonstrates, as evidenced by student artifacts and participants own lived experiences, that students, faculty, and program documents are aligned in support of the program goals of creating a learning environment where teachers can growth in their understanding and application of the four themes of (1) equity, (2) evidence-based instruction, (3) mentoring, coaching and collaboration, and (4) organizational engagement. In addition, students are provided opportunities to develop and display the skills and dispositions that are embedded in the five types of “leaderly thinking” of the SU MATL (systems; data and design; culture and climate; learnership; operational). The program has been meeting the needs of participants to grow as teacher leaders and have a positive impact on their students and

school communities. There are exciting prospects ahead for this program as it grows in enrollment and continues to align its practices with targeted student outcomes through reflection and continuous improvement.

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