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A Call to Action: What Student Teachers Can Teach Us

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Abstract

This qualitative study uses six years of survey data, collected from student teachers in a graduate level university initial teacher licensure program, to illuminate student teachers' experiences with their cooperating teachers during their student teaching internship. The data, comments made by student teachers about their experiences with their cooperating teachers, were used to answer this research question: What are student teachers telling us about their experiences with their cooperating teachers? Using the constant comparative method of qualitative analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) the survey data consisting of answers to the open form question "My cooperating teacher could have been more helpful to me by . . ." was analyzed and coded revealing six themes. Examples of student teacher comments are included. The paper concludes with recommendations for using the comments and resulting themes for a cooperating teacher education and development program.

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Introduction

The cooperating teacher is an integral part of the pre-service teacher preparation process. However, cooperating teachers often have not received formal preparation or education for serving in their multiple roles as mentors, coaches, and evaluators, beyond their own experience of being a student teacher or having hosted a student teacher previously. In this paper I will focus on the primary question: What are student teachers telling us about their experiences with their cooperating teachers? Through a review of the data routinely collected by our teacher education program, I will report what student teachers are saying about their experiences with their cooperating teachers to further our goal of better preparing cooperating teachers for their role, and to facilitate the development of the cooperating teacher-student teacher relationship.

Justification for the Study

Mentoring continues to be a part of early career induction for PK-12 educators. Much of the literature on mentoring in the PK-12 setting focuses on support and retention of early career educators (Darling-Hammond, 2001, 2003, 2005; Feiman-Nemser, 2003; Huling & Resta, 2001; Huling-Austin, 1990; Little, 1990; Moir, 2009; Moir & Gless, 2001; Odell & Ferraro, 1992, Odell & Huling, 2000; Strong, 2005). Wang, Odell, and Schwille (2008) reviewed the literature since 1997 on teacher induction effects and called for further study “to conceptualize the dispositions and skills that mentors need to influence beginning teachers’ learning and teaching” (p. 146). Heeding this call, I focused my investigation on the role of the cooperating teacher who works with a pre-service (student) teacher in an initial licensure program.

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Contextualizing the Study

To contextualize the study, I will provide the following operational definitions and explanations of our university's teacher preparation program: A cooperating teacher is an inservice teacher who has completed at least two years of successful inservice teaching and is selected to work with a pre-service (student) teacher in a university based initial licensure preparation program. A student teacher is a teacher candidate for initial state teaching licensure who is in our university's 15 month Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) degree and Licensure Program.

Our university academic year is divided into four 12 week segments: fall, winter, spring and summer. Each candidate begins the early childhood and elementary MAT program taking introductory courses in teaching methods and strategies (pedagogy), human development, educational history and research during the first summer term. In fall and winter terms the candidate then takes additional methods courses in teaching specific curriculum areas such as mathematics, science, language arts and reading, and also completes two part-time student teaching internships in two different schools at two different grade levels. The spring term consists of one course focused on preparation of the teacher work sample, plus full-time student teaching in which the candidate returns to the classroom (same school and grade level) from fall term. In spring term, candidates work alongside their cooperating teachers the same hours and schedule, moving gradually to assuming the full responsibilities for the class for three full weeks during the term. The final summer term concludes with the completion of the candidate's Master's thesis and oral examination. The candidate then graduates from the program with a Master of Arts in Teaching degree and initial state teaching licensure in both early childhood and elementary education.

Review of the Literature

Killian & Wilkins (2009) describe three factors of highly effective cooperating teachers as “(a) being in the midrange in number of teaching years, (b) having supervised more than five earlier field experience students, and (c) having closely collaborated with the university supervisor” (p. 67). Glenn (2006) posited five actions that effective cooperating teachers model in a study of two pairs of cooperating teachers and their student teachers made from her vantage point as their university-based student teacher supervisor: collaborating rather than directing; relinquishing an appropriate level of control; allowing for personal relationships; sharing constructive feedback; and accepting differences (pp. 89-93).

Kitchel and Torres (2007) explored the many factors in matching student teachers with cooperating teachers - especially how the relationship between the student teacher and cooperating teacher was perceived to affect the student teaching experience. Their study of student teachers in an agricultural education program used data from the Mentoring Relationship Questionnaire and the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (p. 15).

Rajuan, Beijaard and Verloop (2007) examined cooperating teacher expectations of student teachers in the early part of the development of their relationship. This study used five “categories of orientations” to discover cooperating teachers’ underlying values and beliefs about teaching and teacher education. These five orientation categories used by Rajuan et al. (citing the work of Calderhead and Shorrock, 1997) were academic, practical, technical, personal, and critical (p. 225). Rajuan et al. reported that understanding the differences and similarities of both the orientations of cooperating teachers and their student teachers and how these differences and similarities can affect how the relationship develops can provide insights into how cooperating teachers mentor (p. 227). The close examination

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of both similarities and differences also provided insights into both satisfactory and unsatisfactory self-reported experiences by cooperating teachers and student teachers. The study concluded that particular orientations, when aligned between cooperating teacher and student teacher, contribute to “satisfaction with the mentoring relationship” (Rajuan, et al., p. 238).

With these studies as a backdrop, I began to further consider the data we collect in our program from student teachers and cooperating teachers and how that data could inform our practice as teacher educators. Although I believe these studies each provide a manner in which to better understand the perspectives and orientations of the cooperating teacher, the study by Rajuan et al. (2007) pointed out to me that the student teacher’s voice is often not heard or is minimized. From the routine data collected after each student teaching experience is completed, I set out to examine what student teachers in our teacher preparation program were saying about their experiences with their cooperating teachers. This data will be reported following an introduction to the theoretical underpinnings for the study.

Theoretical Underpinnings

In a review of six years of evaluative survey data collected about student teachers’ experiences with their cooperating teachers in my university’s teacher education program, I noted that student teachers provided frank and concise summative comments about their experiences with their cooperating teachers. I saw these comments as a way to give voice to the student teachers’ experiences with their cooperating teachers. Researchers Wang, Odell and Schulle (2008) completed a literature review from 1997 focusing on induction practices of beginning teachers and called for additional teacher induction research related to

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mentoring relationships (p. 148). Wang et al. citing Rolheiser and Hundey (1995) also noted connections between pre-service teacher experiences and beginning teacher induction stating, “the collaborative norms and dispositions that beginning teachers develop in their preservice teacher programs contribute to their learning to teach in the induction period” (p. 147). Wang et al. called for additional case studies “to further conceptualize the dispositions and skills that mentors need to influence beginning teachers’ learning and teaching” (p. 146). The work of Rajuan et al. (2007) used focus groups to illicit data on the role of the cooperating teacher. Examining the methodology of Rajuan et al. and heeding the call of Wang et al. for additional case studies, I began to closely review the survey data our student teachers had provided about their cooperating teachers to more fully understand the student teachers’ perspectives as to the dispositions and skills that their cooperating (mentor) teachers exhibited, or failed to exhibit, during the student teaching experience.

Methodology

Data Collection Schedule and Sample Instrument

Surveys completed by six cohorts of student teachers at the end of winter and spring terms, in academic years 2006-2007 through 2011-2012, were used as data for this paper. This survey was developed by the university’s College of Education for use in licensure programs. It must be noted that the form’s rating changed once during this six year period. Copies of the programmatic survey form used by student teachers to evaluate their cooperating teachers are included in Appendices A and B. Individual student teacher survey responses are not made available to cooperating teachers, and the student teachers are made aware of this when they complete the survey.

Data Presentation

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Although a comparison across the two forms of the survey is not possible due to the change in rating scales, it is important to note that there is no statistically significant information that the closed form data provided. In addition, because this data reflects the overall scores for cooperating teacher evaluations from only six cohorts of student teachers, there is not a large enough sample to perform a more in-depth statistical analysis.

As discussed in the earlier literature review (see Kitchel & Torres, 2007; Rajuan et al., 2007), when student teachers are satisfied with their relationships and experiences with their cooperating teachers, these student teachers tend to rate the student teaching experience, and their cooperating teachers, positively. In the case of our programmatic data, student teachers who were satisfied with their relationships and experiences with their cooperating teachers tended to rate the cooperating teacher with all the same high numerical rating scale level. For example, in Cohorts 1-3, which used a rating scale of 0-5, with five being the highest rating, most student teachers who were satisfied with their student teaching experience and their relationship with their cooperating teacher rated their cooperating teachers almost exclusively with either 4s or 5s. The same was true for Cohorts 4 - 6, except that the rating scale for Cohorts 4 -6 was based on a 0-3 rating, with 3 being the highest score.

The same was true for open form question number one: *My Cooperating Teacher was most helpful to me by . . .* as every student could find at least one positive thing to say about their cooperating teacher even in situations where a difficult relationship existed between the student teacher and the cooperating teacher. However, there was often a discrepancy between student teachers' responses to the closed form questions and open form question number two.

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Now I will focus my analysis of the data on student teachers' responses to the second open form question: *My Cooperating Teacher could have been more helpful to me by*

To code the data from open form question two, I first typed in all the responses from the student teachers, keeping the responses recorded from members of each cohort in separate groupings. I recorded exactly what was written, not editing for conventions such as word choice, grammar, spelling or punctuation. (Only in the final presentation table of the data did I correct spelling.) I then reviewed these transcripts and began coding (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) using a hand-scored color coding system based on the use of words and phrases in each individual comment. I worked with one cohort's data at a time, then I combined these six coded sets of data into one set of data with emerging themes being listed.

To provide for inter-rater reliability, I gave the original transcripts of each of the six cohorts' comments and the one set of data listing emerging themes I had compiled to two colleagues who voluntarily reviewed the data separately. One volunteer inter-rater is a colleague who is currently teaching, and is a veteran teacher of 11 years who has served as a cooperating teacher for another institution. She currently serves as an "adjunct" teacher education methods instructor at my university. The other volunteer inter-rater is a colleague who recently graduated from a teacher preparation program (not my university's program) and has been a student teacher and substitute teacher and was formerly an attorney: for him, words matter. Both volunteer inter-raters have advanced degrees and are familiar with Glaser and Strauss' (1967) constant comparative method. Where any differences in our coding of the words or phrases existed these were noted in the final data record. There were only two student teacher comments that were coded differently by one of the additional colleagues who assisted in the coding. The student teacher comments listed in Appendix C are examples of the coded student teacher comments. Where comments were very similar

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only one example was listed in Appendix C. Of the potential 223 comments, 143 were made, for a response rate of 64.1 per cent on open form question two.

Analysis of the Data

The comments in answer to survey question two, *My Cooperating Teacher could have been more helpful to me by . . .*, were coded, revealing six themes: (a) communication styles and skills, (b) cooperating teacher expectations, (c) being part of the school community, (d) curriculum, (e) time to meet together, and (f) teaching time. Four comments were listed that were not coded into any of these identified six themes. Examples of the student teacher comments about their cooperating teacher can be found in Appendix C.

A Deeper Look at the Six Themes

In this section, I will give examples of the comments written by student teachers about their experiences with their cooperating teachers and provide context for the student teachers' comments.

Communication styles and skills.

The theme that was addressed by the greatest variety of comments was communication styles and skills. I believe communication styles and skills may be the entry point into discussing and planning for inservice education about all the themes revealed in the student teachers' data, especially when you factor in the multiple roles that cooperating teachers must navigate. Many of the comments focused on student teachers wanting more critical feedback on their work. Some examples of this theme are:

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“My Cooperating Teacher (CT) could have been more helpful to me by giving me more criticism of where I need to improve.”

“Sometimes I felt that I was doing well but was unsure what was good about my work and what needed attention.”

“My CT could have been more helpful to me by being more communicative about areas which are my weaknesses or potential problem areas.”

Student teacher comments also indicated that student teachers felt that their cooperating teachers were unsure of how to give critical feedback or did not feel comfortable in giving negative feedback. Here are examples of student teacher comments:

“My CT could have been more helpful to me by being more communicative about areas which are my weaknesses or potential problem areas.”

“I personally would like to have had more criticism. I do well when my errors have been pointed out clearly.”

“She is a kind person that I think occasionally hesitated to suggest improvements.”

The delicate balance of how to, how much and when to give critical feedback to a novice without causing them to feel defeated or give up was noted in the comments that student teachers made, highlighting how some cooperating teachers were not able to balance critical and positive feedback:

“There were possibly a few times she could have let me struggle a little more.”

“My CT could have been more helpful to me by providing informal feedback on my teaching earlier in the term to help guide me toward improvement.”

“There was a significant lack of encouragement and support throughout the term. She made me feel uncomfortable and nervous on a daily basis. Her mood was unpredictable but mostly negative.”

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Cooperating teacher expectations.

The theme of cooperating teacher expectations seems to be a straightforward request by student teachers for more clearly articulated expectations by their cooperating teachers. I was intrigued to find so many problems in this area were related to how the first meeting between cooperating teacher and student went. For example, what could seem like a small issue, using text messaging to leave a message for a cooperating teacher by a student teacher, became a problem that marred multiple student teacher-cooperating teacher relationships from the first days. Cooperating teachers told me that they did not carry a cell phone at school or look at it throughout the school day as most student teachers stated they did. Also some cooperating teachers did not have a cell phone with a texting option. After experiencing several of these problematic cooperating teacher-student teacher relationships, it became apparent that modes of communication would need to be a topic that student teachers must discuss with their cooperating teachers from the first day. Some examples of student teacher comments were:

“I could have used more guidance from the beginning.”

“My CT could have been more helpful to me by being more consistent with expectations for her classroom.”

“She had high expectations without providing a lot of guidance or directions.”

“At first, we had some issues regarding timeliness of email and telephone communication, but this is much improved now.”

Also, personal values around what “on time” meant became an expectations problem. One student teacher was told that for her cooperating teacher “being on time” meant arriving one hour before school began so that the cooperating teacher could prepare

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for the day and still have time to talk with the student teacher before the students arrived or morning faculty meetings were held. Another student teacher was told by the school office manager to come one half hour before the students arrived and was then met by an angry cooperating teacher who said she had no time to talk with her that day. Problems around understanding basic work expectations of the cooperating teacher were easily solved by giving a list of topics for both student teacher and cooperating teacher to discuss at their first meeting. This theme of cooperating teacher expectations is also related to themes of time to meet together, being part of a community and communication styles and skills.

Being part of the school community.

Being part of the school community may seem to be an obviously vital part of the process of a cooperating teacher inviting a student teacher to work in one's classroom and school. However, as discussed by Clarke and Jarvis-Selinger (2005), cooperating teachers may not perceive the tenuousness in how student teachers approach joining a new school (p.67). The student teacher joins a school not only as a new member but as a student member – not yet one of the fully participating members. Some student teachers have doubts about their abilities, and without day-to-day knowledge of the workings of the school, have to learn much in an on-the-job manner. The cooperating teacher, however, typically is already fully a part of the community. Depending on the personal relational styles of both the cooperating teacher and the student teacher there can easily be misunderstandings of expectations in how to be a part of the classroom and school community. It seems that many missteps could be avoided by bringing this topic to the forefront in early conversations during cooperating teacher inservice and education and through structured discussions between cooperating teachers and student teachers. It also

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seems that this theme could be addressed through an exploration of communication styles and skills. Some student teacher comments related to this theme were:

“My CT could have been more helpful to me by helping me feel more a part of the team. I still feel like an outsider and that I was on my own to work my way in.”

“My CT could have been more helpful to me by helping me feel more comfortable at this school.”

“My CT could have been more helpful to me by including/informing me of the PLC, staff and other important meetings that could create learning opportunities.”

“Sharing a few more policies of the school and some class responsibilities.”

Student teachers commented that it was the little things, like offering a place to put one’s coat and bag or showing the student teacher where the restroom and staff room were located on the first day, which made the student teacher feel welcome as a “real” teacher, not a visitor. Again, it would be simple to put together a list of community building action items for student teachers to talk with their cooperating teacher about with the intention of building a strong mentoring relationship between the cooperating teacher and student teacher from their first meetings together.

Curriculum and teaching time.

Curriculum and teaching time were themes that seemed inter-related. Often if the student teacher was unsure of how to use a curriculum material or felt that the subject content was new or difficult for them (for example, some student teachers have told me that they did not feel they were “good” at math as a student themselves, so they were afraid that they would not be able to teach math) they would not initiate taking on teaching the subject

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unless told to do so by their cooperating teacher. Some examples of student teacher comments were:

“My CT could have been more helpful to me by giving me more guidance in the material and strategies to present the curriculum.”

“My CT could have been more helpful to me by connecting the learning activities to district curriculum more specifically.”

There were also comments related to specific areas related to curriculum such as how to meet the needs of diverse learners. Some student teacher comments were:

“My CT could have been more helpful to me by discussing the specific needs of the diverse learners in the class.”

“Verbalizing more about how she makes and implements accommodations and extensions in the classroom.”

It was also noted that some cooperating teachers feared releasing their early childhood or elementary aged students to lessons taught by a student teacher. For example, one cooperating teacher told me she felt pressure for her early childhood and elementary aged students to perform well on an upcoming state standardized test and was fearful that the student teacher’s pacing with the lessons would fall short and the needed curriculum would not be completely covered before the upcoming test. Given such concerns, scheduling a student teacher in a classroom slated for high-stakes state standardized testing might not be the best approach. This area could be a point of discussion with the school district leaders who select grade levels for student teacher participation. Some examples of student teacher comments related to the theme teaching time were:

“Allowing me a bit more time to teach. After my work sample concluded, I had to continually ask for opportunities to teach.”

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“My CT could have been more helpful to me by allowing me to assume responsibility of the class more often – to act as a teacher.”

Time to meet together.

The theme of time to meet together was often mentioned but is an area where little can be done based on the time available in a school day to meet and confer between cooperating teachers and student teachers. I believe it is important to consider the issue of time and it may be best addressed as it relates to the theme of communication styles and skills. Some student teacher comments were:

“Setting time aside to discuss lessons. She is so busy, and has so many duties. I felt a little bit like I was part of her multi-tasking instead of getting one-on-one quality time.”

“My CT could have been more helpful to me by providing more debriefing time that was routine/uninterrupted.”

Implications

I believe the six themes that surfaced in this study, based on student teachers' comments, could provide the goals for design of an education program for future cooperating teachers. These themes are particularly important when addressing how to assist cooperating teachers' growth in not only expertise but in balancing their multiple roles as mentors, coaches, and evaluators of pre-service student teachers. Our work as teacher educators needs to be informed by data from both the cooperating teachers and student teachers. We need to closely examine the data we collect and look to future data that may be needed.

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Future Research

Continued research into the role of the cooperating teacher is needed on many fronts, such as: communication styles and skills, perspectives on teaching and learning, relationship formation, expectations of student teachers and cooperating teachers, and balancing multiple and often conflicting roles as coach, mentor and evaluator. For my part, this research is a call to action for change in my university's teacher preparation program:

- Analyze the data that is collected already and thoughtfully consider what else needs to be collected
- Redesign of the program forms to capture the data that is needed
- Assure that data that is requested is complete and accurate
- Use a data collection approach to discover more about who the cooperating teachers are beyond demographic data (possibly through the use of interviews, focus groups, more detailed surveys, a variety of instruments such as the Mentoring Relationship Questionnaire, Teaching Perspectives Inventory, or other instruments)
- Review, discuss and analyze the collected survey data with the cooperating teachers and student teachers through preparation of discussion topics materials
- Develop a model for discourse that brings cooperating teachers, student teachers and university teacher educators together as collaborators to learn what student teachers and cooperating teachers are saying about the student teaching internship experience
- A widened dissemination of the survey data to include cooperating teachers, student teachers and teacher education faculty and an invitation to school district leaders to be a part of a collaborative dialog about current teacher education literature and what the survey data reveals about cooperating teacher selection, preparation and education

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- A celebration of what is working and creation of a plan for change as needed for improvement

The possibility of changes to selection, preparation and education processes of cooperating teachers could provide additional opportunities for collaboration between school districts and university teacher education programs. Based on the themes that surfaced from an analysis and discussion of the data from this study of one university's teacher preparation program, and a review of current cooperating teacher literature, an approach in the development which focuses on development programs for cooperating teachers may be a starting point. Research based on data we routinely collect can be thoughtfully analyzed and could contribute to the success of cooperating teachers, student teachers, future teachers, the school districts they serve, and teacher educators as they lead teacher preparation programs.

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Appendix A

College of Education Evaluation of the Cooperating Teacher Form

<i>Example Rating Scale used for Cohorts 1, 2 and 3</i>	
DIRECTIONS: <i>Please rate your Cooperating Teacher on the scale of 5-1 or NA by circling the appropriate number or letters NA.</i>	
5	= Always (or whenever appropriate)
4	= Usually
3	= Sometimes
2	= Seldom
1	= Never
NA	= Not Applicable

My Cooperating Teacher:

- | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|----|---|
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | NA | 1. Discussed purposes and objectives of lessons. |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | NA | 2. Required and discussed written lesson plans. |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | NA | 3. Provided time for cooperative planning. |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | NA | 4. Observed my teaching and provided helpful feedback on my lesson in a timely manner. |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | NA | 5. Provided time for follow-up conferences. |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | NA | 6. Helped identify problems and plan several possible alternative solutions. |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | NA | 7. Helped me plan a variety of teaching techniques. |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | NA | 8. Allowed me to make independent decisions in my teaching. |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | NA | 9. Kept me informed of my strengths and weaknesses throughout the term. |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | NA | 10. Encouraged openness so that I could question procedures, which I did not understand. |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | NA | 11. Made me feel comfortable in discussing any problems in connection with my internship. |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | NA | 12. Helped me locate and obtain teaching resources and materials. |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | NA | 13. Related my internship experience to conditions I would probably meet in my career. |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | NA | 14. Made me feel an integrated member of the school community. |

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- | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|----|--|
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | NA | 15. Treated me as a colleague. |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | NA | 16. Acquainted me with routine teaching details (i.e., progress reports, fire drills, safety procedures, etc). |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | NA | 17. Discussed the general scope and sequence of the curriculum I was to teach. |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | NA | 18. Allowed and encouraged me to use a variety of the curriculum I was to teach. |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | NA | 19. Allowed me sufficient opportunity for complete responsibility and Management of the class. |

DIRECTIONS: Please respond to the following:

My Cooperating Teacher was most helpful to me by . . .

My Cooperating Teacher could have been more helpful to me by . . .

Additional comments attached? Yes No

List any additional teachers (& the grade they teach) at your placement site that you would recommend as Cooperating Teachers:

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Appendix B

College of Education Evaluation of the Cooperating Teacher Form

<i>Example Rating Scale used for Cohorts 4, 5 and 6</i>
DIRECTIONS: <i>Please rate your Cooperating Teacher on the scale 3-0 by circling the appropriate number.</i>
3 = Exemplary 2 = Proficient 1 = Partially evident or needs work 0 = Lacking

My Cooperating Teacher:

- 0 1 2 3 1. Discussed purposes and objectives of lessons.
- 0 1 2 3 2. Required and discussed written lesson plans.
- 0 1 2 3 3. Provided time for cooperative planning.
- 0 1 2 3 4. Observed my teaching and provided helpful feedback on my lessons in a timely manner.
- 0 1 2 3 5. Provided time for follow-up conferences.
- 0 1 2 3 6. Helped identify problems and plan several possible alternative solutions.
- 0 1 2 3 7. Helped me plan a variety of teaching techniques.
- 0 1 2 3 8. Allowed me to make independent decisions in my teaching.
- 0 1 2 3 9. Kept me informed of my strengths and weaknesses throughout the term.
- 0 1 2 3 10. Encouraged openness so that I could question procedures which I did not understand.
- 0 1 2 3 11. Made me feel comfortable in discussing any problems in connection with my internship.
- 0 1 2 3 12. Helped me locate and obtain teaching resources and materials.
- 0 1 2 3 13. Related my internship experience to conditions I would probably meet in my career.
- 0 1 2 3 14. Made me feel an integrated member of the school community.
- 0 1 2 3 15. Treated me as a colleague.
- 0 1 2 3 16. Acquainted me with routine teaching details (i.e., progress reports, fire drills,

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safety procedures, etc).

- 0 1 2 3 17. Discussed the general scope and sequence of the curriculum I was to teach.
- 0 1 2 3 18. Allowed and encouraged me to use a variety of the curriculum I was to teach.
- 0 1 2 3 19. Allowed me sufficient opportunity for complete responsibility and management of the class.

DIRECTIONS: Please respond to the following:

My Cooperating Teacher was most helpful to me by . . .

My Cooperating Teacher could have been more helpful to me by . . .

Additional comments attached? Yes No

List any additional teachers (& the grade they teach) at your placement site that you would recommend as Cooperating Teacher

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Appendix C

Examples of Student Teacher Survey Comments about their Cooperating Teachers

Please note: Where the student teacher comments are bolded this comment was coded into two different themes.

Themes	Subthemes	Examples of Student Teacher Survey Comments Open form question number two: <i>“My Cooperating Teacher (CT) could have been more helpful to me by . . .”</i>
Communication Styles and Skills	Ability to give feedback	<p>“My CT could have been more helpful to me by giving me more criticism of where I needed to improve.”</p> <p>“She is a kind person that I think occasionally hesitated to suggest improvements.”</p> <p>“Sometimes I felt that I was doing well but was unsure what was good about my work and what needed attention.”</p> <p>“More feedback on formal and informal observations.”</p> <p>“My CT could have been more helpful to me by communicating more about how I was doing.”</p> <p>“explaining what she was doing and why in terms of instructional methods.”</p> <p>“My CT could have been more helpful to me by providing <u>more</u> feedback about the ways I could improve my teaching.”</p> <p>“suggestions for improving specific strategies.”</p> <p>“My CT could have been more helpful to me by giving me more guidance at the beginning of my teaching experience.”</p> <p>“My CT could have been more helpful to me by being a little more approachable.”</p> <p>“communicating more of her ideas, etc., to me.”</p> <p>“more open communication.”</p> <p>“providing more specific feedback.”</p> <p>“helping me think through lesson ideas and providing consistent and detailed feedback about my lessons and teaching.”</p> <p>“Volunteering more feedback about my practice. I sometimes felt that she had something to say or advice to give about a choice I made but she wouldn’t comment unless I asked.”</p>

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		<p>“My CT could have been more helpful to me by providing me with more critical feedback.”</p> <p>“My CT could have been more helpful to me by being more communicative about areas which are my weaknesses or potential problem areas.”</p> <p>“I personally would like to have had more criticism. I do well when my errors have been pointed out clearly.”</p> <p>“My CT could have been more helpful to me by being more communicative with me on my weaknesses or what she wanted from me.”</p>
	Giving a balance of negative and positive feedback	<p>“There were possibly a few times she could have let me struggle a little more.”</p> <p>“talking about my strengths and weaknesses (specific strategies) more often.”</p> <p>“giving me more positive feedback.”</p> <p>“Rare to receive any positive feedback.”</p> <p>“help me identify strengths.”</p> <p>“My CT could have been more helpful to me by not being so discouraging.”</p> <p>“by giving me some positive feedback. Not just what I was doing wrong or ineffectively.”</p> <p>“giving some positive feedback.”</p> <p>“There was a significant lack of encouragement and support throughout the term. She made me feel uncomfortable and nervous on a daily basis. Her mood was unpredictable but mostly negative.”</p>
	Timely feedback	<p>“My CT could have been more helpful to me by providing informal feedback on my teaching earlier in the term to help guide me toward improvement.”</p> <p>“My Ct could have been more helpful to me by allowing me more daily feedback.”</p> <p>“More informal feedback on a daily/weekly basis.”</p> <p>“timely feedback.”</p>
	General communication skills	<p>“At first, we had some issues regarding timeliness of email and telephone communication, but this is much improved now.”</p>
Cooperating Teacher Expectations	Clarifying Cooperating Teacher	<p>“My CT could have been more helpful to me by being more <i>consistent with expectations for her classroom.</i>”</p> <p>“To make this fit with the CT the student teacher has to</p>

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	<p>expectations</p>	<p>be highly organized.”</p> <p>“My CT could have been more helpful to me by being more communicative with me on my weaknesses or what she wanted from me.”</p> <p>“It was hard to get to know her <i>expectations</i> and teaching style.”</p> <p>“She has high <i>expectations</i> without providing a lot of guidance or directions.”</p> <p>“My CT could have been more helpful to me by taking on the role of a mentor instead of the role of a boss.”</p> <p>“My CT could have been more helpful to me by letting me <i>go</i> so I could be more creative in developing my own lesson plans.”</p> <p>“I would have liked to have been informed that I was lacking earlier rather than via email a few days prior to the scheduled Three Way Evaluation meeting.”</p> <p>“I feel her expectations for a student teacher were unrealistic and impractical making the term extremely challenging.”</p> <p>“I could have used more guidance from the beginning.”</p> <p>“At first, we had some issues regarding timeliness of email and telephone communication, but this is much improved now.”</p>
<p>Being Part of the School Community</p>	<p>Feel a part of the class and school community</p>	<p>“Acknowledging me in the beginning.”</p> <p>“My CT could have been more helpful to me by establishing my role as a <i>teacher</i> in the class.”</p> <p>“integrating me into the classroom/school.”</p> <p>“My CT could have been more helpful to me by encouraging relationships with other staff.”</p> <p>“My CT could have been more helpful to me by making me feel more a part of the team. I still feel like an outsider and that I was on my own to work my way in.”</p> <p>“making me feel like a member of the school community.”</p> <p>“sharing a few more policies of the school and some class responsibilities.”</p>
	<p>Invitation to meetings and other school</p>	<p>“My CT could have been more helpful to me by helping me feel more comfortable at this school. Inviting me to IEP meetings.”</p>

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	events	<p>“including/informing me of the PLC, staff and other important meetings that could create learning opportunities.”</p> <p>“I was not invited to attend any parent teacher meetings. They were all kept private. If another student teacher is placed with this CT they need to be highly motivated.”</p>
	Part of the curriculum planning process	<p>“My CT could have been more helpful to me by inviting me into her lesson planning process.”</p> <p>“My CT could have been more helpful to me by incorporating me into her planning.”</p> <p>“I wish we had planned more together. He is very spontaneous and I am more of a planner.”</p>
Curriculum	Planning for instruction	<p>“My CT could have been more helpful to me by giving me more guidance in the material and strategies to present the curriculum.”</p> <p>“identifying resources for lesson ideas.”</p> <p>“My CT could have been more helpful to me by requiring lesson plans.”</p> <p>“My CT could have been more helpful to me by requiring to look over my lesson plans.”</p> <p>“discussing lessons in more detail.”</p>
	Diverse learners and accommodations	<p>“My CT could have been more helpful to me by discussing the specific needs of the diverse learners in the class.”</p> <p>“verbalizing more about how she makes and implements accommodations and extensions in the classroom.”</p>
	District based curriculum	<p>“My CT could have been more helpful to me by connecting learning activities to district curriculum more specifically.”</p>
	Lesson objectives	<p>“My CT could have been more helpful to me by in some cases diving a little deeper into her objectives for each assignment given to the students.”</p> <p>“My CT could have provided me with lesson ideas and objective ideas.”</p> <p>“My CT could have been more helpful to me by discussing purposes and objectives.”</p>
	Work samples	<p>“Specific objectives I could have focused on in my work sample.”</p> <p>“providing more guided instruction on my work sample</p>

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		<p>planning.”</p> <p>“Being more specific on what needed to be covered for my work sample. Changes happened often and a change in curriculum came in the middle of the work sample.”</p>
Teaching Time	Amount of time the student teacher was allowed to teach	<p>“My CT could have been more helpful to me by allowing me to teach more whole group activities.”</p> <p>“I wish she would have given me more opportunities to teach maybe math or writing.”</p> <p>“My CT could have been more helpful to me by allowing me to feel free to bring my own style into teaching for the three weeks I taught all day. “</p> <p>“making me teach more.”</p> <p>“My CT is a very efficient, productive, type ‘A’ personality teacher. She allowed and wanted me to teach as much as possible but she had a hard time 100% letting go when I was teaching a lesson.”</p> <p>“Allowing me a bit more time to teach. After my work sample concluded, I had to continually ask for opportunities to teach. For much of the term I felt as though my value was really as an Educational Assistant. I displayed lots of student work and filed lots of papers.”</p> <p>“allowing me to teach other than the work sample and formal observations.”</p> <p>“allowing me to teach during my thee weeks of full-time student teaching without hovering all the time.”</p> <p>“My CT could have been more helpful to me by allowing me to assume responsibility of the class more often – <i>to act as a teacher.</i>”</p>
Time to Meet Together	Time to talk and discuss together	<p>“Setting time aside to discuss lessons. She is so busy, and has so many duties. I felt a little bit like I was part of her multi-tasking instead of getting one-on-one quality time.”</p> <p>“Honoring and valuing time to meet.”</p> <p>“Planning how we would score and evaluate students. This was something that we would always run out of time for.”</p>
	Time for collaboration	My CT could have been more helpful to me by saving more time for collaboration.”
	Time for joint planning of	My CT could have been more helpful to me by helping to plan more time for working together to plan curriculum.”

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	general curriculum	“Allowing more time to discuss teaching strategies and curriculum.”
	Time to discuss informal and formal observations of teaching	<p>“My CT could have been more helpful to me by providing more feedback on formal and informal teaching observations.”</p> <p>“We had very little time to meet for debriefing.”</p> <p>“My CT could have been more helpful to me by providing more debriefing time that was routine/uninterrupted.”</p>
	Time to plan the Work Sample	“My CT could have been more helpful to me by providing more time for discussion of the work sample unit overall.”
Other Items	Organization al skills	<p>“My CT could have been more helpful to me by being more organized – I struggle with organization as well, so we both had papers everywhere.”</p> <p>“Being a bit more organized (classroom space, time usage).”</p> <p>“She has everything so well laid out and planned ahead it was hard at times to see her routine.”</p>
	Presence	“My CT could have been more helpful to me by being a full-time teacher and being present on Mondays and Fridays.”