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# Methods of Improving the Student Teaching Experience at the Elementary and Junior High School Levels as Identified by Cooperating Teachers, Student Teachers and First Year Teachers

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Methods of Improving the Student Teaching Experience  
at the Elementary and Junior High School Levels  
as Identified by Cooperating Teachers, Student  
Teachers and First Year Teachers

(TITLE)

BY

Darrell L. Sy

**FIELD EXPERIENCE**

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE DEGREE OF

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IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY  
CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

1991  
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Methods of Improving the Student Teaching Experience  
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EDA 6910 & 6920, Fall, 1991

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## Abstract

The purpose of this field experience was to identify how the student teaching experience could be improved based upon recommendations by cooperating teachers, first year teachers and student teachers who completed a questionnaire. Each group was asked its opinions of the current status of the student teaching experience and how the process could be improved.

Cooperating teachers provided information relative to the special types of activities they conducted to better prepare student teachers for the profession. Current student teachers were asked to determine the teaching skills with which they needed the most assistance. First year teachers provided information that compared the student teaching experience to the reality of the first year on the job and what teaching skills needed to insure educational survival in the first year of teaching.

This survey was conducted in conjunction with the Office of Clinical Experiences at Eastern Illinois University, Charleston, Illinois under the direction of Dr. Francis Summers. Findings from this study include (a) feelings by all groups that a semester of student teaching was ample time to effectively conduct the experience, (b) a listing of possible activities that could be used to

effectively orient the student teacher to teaching profession, (c) while the working relationships between student and cooperating teachers were good, stress factors revolved around the student teachers' inability to effectively discipline the classes, (d) the video camera is an effective but little utilized tool for self-evaluation during student teaching, (e) feedback from cooperating teachers to student teachers has been continuous, productive and positive, (f) teacher preparatory college classes are preparing students for the teaching profession except for the subject of disciplining students and (g) the role of the university coordinator includes the functions of an evaluator and counselor for the student teacher along with being a liaison/administrator for the teacher education program and periodically a trouble shooter when problems arise between the student and cooperating teacher.

Major recommendations were (a) for colleges of education in universities across the nation to devote at least one methods class to prepare student teachers for the rigors of disciplining students and (b) that the position of university coordinator must include the role of identifying and weeding out cooperating teachers who do not provide a high quality student teaching experience.



## Chapter 1--Introduction

Background and Significance of the Field Study

Student teaching has given the prospective teacher the opportunity to experiment in a classroom of children, under the supervision of a veteran teacher, where mistakes can be made safely and teaching skills can be developed. As with any process that exists through time, changes must be made to maintain or improve the overall product. The responsibilities of teaching today differ from those of one hundred years ago and even ten years ago. New legislation and a changing society place even greater demands upon the teaching profession. To survive, the profession must alter its methods to prepare teacher candidates to face the realities of the job.

Rationale

Nine years of school administrative experience has led this researcher to the conclusion that, while there are many elementary and junior high teacher candidates available when a position becomes vacant, possibly only half of them would be successful during their first year of teaching. Hundreds of resumes and credentials have been read and a small percentage of those candidates were interviewed.

During the interview process, some of the most promising candidates made errors that indicated they would not survive the first year as teachers when dealing with students, parents and other teachers. Most candidates have stated that the student teaching experience was the most meaningful facet of their college education. Most candidates who became first year teachers also stated that the experience of being the teacher differs widely from being a student teacher. The student teaching experience must continue to move toward a more lengthy, hands-on experience for those choosing this profession.

#### Project Goal

The goal of this project was to determine what changes should be made in the student teaching experience, as perceived by (a) veteran cooperating teachers, (b) current student teachers and (c) first year teachers on the job, that would improve the profession and increase the chances of success and survival of new teachers during their first year on the job. All three levels of teaching practitioners listed above were surveyed from their perspectives as to the strengths and weaknesses of the clinical teaching experience. Information gathered from this project will be available for dissemination to future cooperating teachers through handbooks and/or curriculums

used by the Department of Elementary and Junior High Education at Eastern Illinois University in the courses currently offered to train prospective cooperating teachers.

Specific Field Experience Objectives

Objective one. To determine the necessary length of time needed to conduct the student teaching experience as perceived by student, cooperating and first-year teachers.

Objective two. To develop a list of special activities that cooperating teachers and schools conduct to familiarize student teachers with their surroundings and the profession.

Objective three. To assess the climate of student teaching with regard to working relationships between the student teacher and cooperating teacher.

Objective four. To determine the extent of usage and effectiveness of video taping equipment as a self-evaluation tool during the student teaching experience.

Objective five. To determine, from the viewpoints of the student teachers and first year teachers, the extent of feedback given to them by their cooperating teachers concerning their performance.

Objective six. To ascertain the teaching areas/skills needed to be a successful teacher that were not being addressed in college course work.

Objective seven. To define the role of the university coordinator as perceived by the student, cooperating and first year teachers.

Field Experience Setting

The field experience was carried out in approximately one hundred elementary and junior high schools that received student teachers and first year teachers from Eastern Illinois University. Information was gathered via (a) mailings to first year teachers, (b) hand carried surveys to cooperating teachers and (c) surveys completed by student teachers at their regularly scheduled workshops on campus.

Effect Upon Present Educational Practices

It is hoped that data collected from this study will be useful to the Department of Elementary and Junior High Education at Eastern Illinois University. It should give university administrators information needed to adjust the teacher education curriculum to meet the needs of students going into the field. There has already been research conducted that validates many assumptions of this study. The question still remains, "Why are colleges of education

slow in reacting to the needs of their graduates?" This study can be one more added to the collection. Hopefully, it may be the final study that leads to significant change in teacher preparation at Eastern Illinois University.

Dr. Francis Summers (1990), Chair of the Department of Student Teaching at Eastern Illinois University, suggested that the results of this study be presented at the national conference of the Association of Teacher Educators (ATE). Should that happen, the study could have nationwide effects. A more realistic view on the scope of this project is that it would provide Eastern Illinois University administrators and department chairs with information that would alter/upgrade the curriculum to better fit the needs of future elementary and junior high teaching candidates.

#### Definition of Terms

Student teacher. A college student seeking a degree in education who is in his/her final year. The student has been assigned to an elementary or junior high school building where he/she can practice the educational theories taught in methods classes under the direct supervision of a veteran teacher.

Cooperating teacher. A veteran teacher currently employed by a school district and charged with providing

for the general welfare and educational needs of elementary or junior high school students. Throughout this study, quotes from other authors may refer to this individual as a supervising teacher.

University coordinator. A member of the university community employed for the purpose of supervising the student teacher educational placements in the field. At present, the university coordinator is responsible for (a) co-evaluation of the student teacher along with the cooperating teacher, (b) providing assistance to the cooperating teacher when needed, (c) problem solving when a conflict arises between the student teacher and cooperating teacher, and (d) a multitude of other tasks related to pre-service education. Throughout this study, other authors may refer to this individual as the university supervisor.

Student teaching experience. A period from seven (7) to fifteen (15) weeks during which time the student teacher progresses from observer of the classroom to a professional having total responsibility for all aspects of classroom instruction and learning situations. This may also be referred to as the clinical experience.

Internship. A period of one (1) year during which time the student teacher (intern) goes through a more comprehensive student teaching experience.

First year teacher. A fully certified teacher hired by a school district who is completing his/her first full year of teaching.

Assumptions

During the course of this study, the following assumptions will be made:

Assumption #1. Student teachers receive basically the same quality of student teaching experience regardless of the school to which they are assigned.

Assumption #2. Cooperating teachers who are open and honest with their student teachers provide them with much better learning experiences.

## Chapter II--Review of the Literature and Research

Numerous studies indicate that there has been a lack of preparation on the part of student teachers for the realities of trying to discipline students and that this has been a major concern. Burstein (1988) stated, "The only overall concern indicated by student teachers over the course of student teaching was discipline. Each student teacher, at some stage of student teaching and usually throughout student teaching, noted discipline as a problem (p. 13)."

Maxie (1989) stated, "The concerns of elementary level student teachers are generally those...of self-adequacy and survival related to student discipline, classroom management, and student motivation (p. 30)."

Barton and Morrison (1988) claimed:

Having supervised many field experience students and student teachers, we have found that the areas in which students are least prepared are classroom management and discipline, without which effective teaching cannot take place. A large majority of those leaving teaching do so because of the problems with discipline. It is impossible to even get started without



discipline. Knowledge of subject matter alone does not make a good teacher (p. 30).

Hall, VILLEME, and PHILLIPPY (1988) reported:

Across the six teacher preparation domains, ratings on the effectiveness of preparation for the Control of Student Conduct correlated most highly with the Teacher Burnout Scale (TBS) Total, as well as with each of the four TBS subscale scores. These patterns of teachers' feeling of adequacy in student discipline are a relatively important indicator of predisposition for burnout (p. 16-17).

The direct result of the inability to manage student discipline has become teacher burnout. Edelwich and Brodsky (1980) define burnout by stating that, "We can use the term burnout to refer to a progressive loss of idealism and purpose experienced by people in the helping professions as a result of the conditions of their work (p. 14)." Burnout for teachers has been characterized by feelings of exhaustion and negative attitudes toward work and may be a direct result of uncontrolled stress due to discipline problems.

Studies have indicated that the most frequently observed problem of beginning teachers has been the disciplining of students. Dee-Zafra (1979) stated:

The career of many a potentially fine teacher has floundered upon the school-student discipline. Good discipline is imperative for the establishment and development of the successful teacher's career. It is important, therefore, that pre-service teachers be given the opportunity to develop the discipline skills that they will need (p. 2).

Reed (1989) noted in a study of over 300 student teachers that there were seventeen areas of concern related to discipline. She stated:

If experienced teachers are concerned about discipline problems in the classroom, one can imagine how distressed student teachers must be about such problems. In fact, other studies have indicated that problems with class control and discipline create the greatest anxieties in student teachers (p. 60).

As a result of the concerns over discipline problems in the classroom, Henry (1986) noted, "It is no secret that the first years of teaching are considered to be

difficult. This observation has to be taken seriously since twenty-six percent of new teachers leave after the first two years and sixty percent leave after the first five years (p. 10)."

The bottom line for continued employment of teachers came from Reigle (1985) when he stated, "Administrators reported that the leading cause for teachers having job threatening problems was their inability to organize and control the classroom setting (p. 17)."

No literature could be found that supported the assumption that student teachers who do their student teaching experience during the fall semester were more capable of disciplining students and managing a classroom than their counterparts who did their student teaching experience during the spring semester. The literature also did not make a distinction between first year teachers having the same problems as student teachers with regard to dealing with the disciplining of students.

Research indicated that cooperating teachers who were open and honest with their student teachers during the evaluation process provided a much better learning experience. Henry and Beasley (1976) supported the concept that daily evaluation is the only way to help student teachers grow. They stated:

The process of evaluation rests primarily with the supervising teacher. He devotes more time to the student teacher than any other professional and understands the learning environment better. He will therefore be in the best position to observe the progress of a teaching candidate. The student teacher, for obvious reasons, will place more reliance upon the supervising teacher's estimates than those of any other individual's. If he does not receive any continuous assessment from the supervisor, he will likely perform on a plateau, showing little or no progress.

Evaluation should be just another day as far as the involved parties are concerned. It should be an intrinsic part of the whole process which helps interpret and give meaning to all aspects of clinical activity. It should be as routine as teaching itself and involve every aspect of the experience. Evaluation should be a tool, and not an end product. It should stress analysis and reflection rather than criticisms and fault findings. It is an intellectual process involving 'hows and whys'

instead of a report of goods and bads. It looks at plans, procedures, alternatives and implications with an objective of understanding the process thoroughly so that performance may be better. It is not a final score, it is the game itself (p. 185-6).

The rationale for providing a high quality student teaching experience was stated in the philosophy of McGrath, Egbert and Associates (1987), "Education in the nation's schools, in short, can be no better than our teachers. Put another way, the quality of teachers, the quality of education in the schools, and the quality of teacher education are inseparable (p. 1)."

Hunter (1962) underscored the basic responsibility of the cooperating teacher to be truthful and honest during the evaluation process, sometimes even painfully so, when he said:

One of the principal characteristics of a profession is that it assumes the responsibility for the competence of those who practice. A cooperating teacher bears an unusually heavy share of this responsibility because he has the closest contact with the beginning practitioner; thus, he actually has more and better evidence

than anybody else on which to base an evaluation of a beginning teacher. It takes a great deal of courage and integrity, especially when his future may well depend upon the appraisal (p. 86).

The literature demonstrated wide consensus that the cooperating teacher was the most important part of the student teaching triad. There was a dichotomy here though. As Cornish (1979) states, "If one accepts the importance of the cooperating teacher and the university supervisor on the student teacher, then one must be amazed that in our multi-million dollar educational system that so little is done to give the proper training to these two key personnel. There is a need for a well-organized educational program for these people working with student teachers (p. 17)."

Wood (1989) also supported the concept that cooperating teachers have been ill-prepared for the responsibility of teaching a student teacher by saying:

The supervisory styles of cooperating teachers may be the most overlooked, yet most powerful, of the supportive techniques. There appears to be limited emphasis in the research on different supervisory styles and their effectiveness. It

appears that supervisory style just 'happens' probably based more on how the cooperating teachers were supervised as student teachers or how they had been supervised by administrators rather than any research base (p. 11).

Cooperating teachers should not be overly kind when it comes to evaluating student teachers. Melnick (1989) indicated that there may have been too much nicety when it came to evaluation time when he states:

By the end of the student teaching semester, the overwhelming majority of student teachers are rated very high by their cooperating teachers on formal evaluation instruments. This lack of substantial variation may indicate that cooperating teachers are in need of additional training in supervision (p. 1).

There should have been no need for fear. The student teachers were there to learn. A cooperating teacher who does not follow the philosophy of learning from mistakes should probably not take on the responsibility of a student teacher. Not telling them about possible problems is doing them an injustice.

Many of cooperating teachers' communication disorders could probably have been corrected with extra course work.

Morrissey (1980) stated, "Cooperating teachers must be trained in observation and evaluation (p. 13)". Since cooperating teachers view and report on basically the same type of teaching behaviors as do principals, possibly cooperating teachers should attend classes similar to the Illinois Principal's Academy for this training.

The mentor approach was also another important concept proposed by some. The mentor would work closely with the student teacher on a colleague basis and provide direction and advice when needed. Wood (1989) claimed:

An effort should be made to select and train cooperating teachers to fit into a mentor-ship type mold. The supportive, inquiry oriented, reflective type of supervisor appears to be most beneficial in the development of competent, reflective teachers.

Given the developmental process of student teachers, cooperating teachers need to be able to use a situational supervisory style, be more directive at the outset of the student teaching experience and then move toward a more indirective, reflective mode. We need to recognize that most student teachers go through



a developmental process and supervision of them must reflect their stage of development (p. 16).

The university coordinator/supervisor position has been a misunderstood role by cooperating teachers and student teachers alike. Marrou (1988) noted:

Yet, in many ill-defined and frequently misunderstood ways, the university supervisor is critical to the successful process of student teaching. Few job descriptions for role behavior of university supervisors exist, and when they do, they are lacking in breadth and depth (p. 13).

To make the evaluation process of the total student teaching experience work more smoothly, this author believes that there should be a hierarchy instead of a triad in the process of supervision and evaluation. Instead evaluating the student teacher in conjunction with the cooperating teacher, the university coordinator may be more effective assuming the role of supervising the cooperating teacher. There would be no direct authority over the cooperating teacher but the university coordinator's advice would be respectfully considered, just as in any working relationship. The cooperating

teacher's emphasis would remain that of evaluating the student teacher's progress.

Job descriptions for university coordinators should be (1) to supervise the coordinating teacher's role in the student teaching experience, and (2) to 'trouble shoot' problems that may exist between the student and cooperating teachers, i.e. act as a mediator.

The concept of a full year internship as being a better method of preparing student teachers to enter the profession versus a semester length program was held by some to be true. Soares (1989), at great length, outlined the benefits of an internship by stating:

Interns would be assigned to one school building throughout the academic year after interviewing and being accepted by both the university and the school district. They would provide paraprofessional duties every day, consisting of substitute teaching, tutoring, small group instruction, classroom instruction, assessing student characteristics and performance, team teaching, curriculum planning, developing materials, monitoring student progress, supervising special units (e.g. music room, library room, computer room, science laboratory,

etc.), group discussion, supervising extracurricular activities, overseeing laboratory exercises and conducting ethnographic research. The interns would undertake supervised observations of each instructor in their assigned school building. They would reflect upon their observations and discuss with both other interns and their supervisors the varied techniques of each school's instructional staff.

Their training at the beginning would consist of survival skills in all the disciplines, classroom activities and basic information about the functioning of contemporary schools. Workshops and seminars throughout the year would be conducted to discuss their observations, reflect on their own teaching and role playing as well as similar activities of other interns, provide information about school board policies on such topics as drugs and firearms, and share results of research they have undertaken at their placements. The interns would learn their craft by watching a variety of teachers and trying out

their techniques and then experimenting with their own approaches in various settings, with a great variety of student ability and interest, and in the various disciplines besides their own speciality. They would be called upon to substitute in any of the disciplines, with first choice given in their major. University supervisors would be assigned to visit their interns several times throughout each semester, holding periodic conferences with them and with their placement coordinators. Interns would be seen as a regular member of the staff, although in training. They would be available to take over a class in the event of an emergency or the scheduling of parent teacher conferences. They could confer with a teacher before and after a planned absence, such as surgery or maternity leave.

While the interns are reporting to their placements every day, they would attend seminars with their peers and with their supervisors in the field, and other seminars and workshops at their university to reflect and assess their experience and pursue their academic studies in

a pre-service program or in some specialization during the evenings, the summer months, and on weekends. Later in the spring semester, the interns may be able to take on long term sub assignments or participate in team teaching arrangements with partial responsibilities in curriculum development and instructional planning. Since the interns would not be considered as a school employee, the university would function as a broker, bring together a school district and one or more interns. The participating school districts would pay the university a sum of dollars under a collaborative, contractual arrangement for each interns' masters degree program. The university would also provide a monthly stipend to the intern for books, travel, special course fees like labs and clinics, liability insurance and so forth (p. 14-16).

Soares (1989) also proposed the concept of a residency year of student teaching. While this may seem feasible in theory, it may not in reality. The residents could not be guaranteed positions where they performed their residencies. McGrath, Egbert & Associates (1987)

recommended, "the establishment of a full year internship for prospective new teachers following the completion of their academic studies" and in addition recommended that during the internship, "prospective teachers would receive a provisional teaching certificate upon completion of their teacher education program, and they would then work as teachers at full starting pay--but clearly as interns under probation (p. 6)."

If the teaching profession requires more intensive hands-on experience, as do other professions i.e. the medical profession, then some claim that teachers should receive pay on a level more in line with the other professions. McGrath, Egbert & Associates (1987) indicated, "Teachers' salaries should be increased to levels commensurate with salaries in other professions that require comparable training and experience (p. 4)."

This raise in salaries may offset the uneasy feelings that interns may feel by being only temporary help during their first year in the field.

## Chapter III--Design of the Study

Sample and Population

The survey of cooperating teachers, student teachers and first year teachers was limited to those individuals who are presently affiliated with Eastern Illinois University through the Office of Clinical Experiences or have attended Eastern in the recent past. To include state-wide universities would have created a project too large in scope for a field experience.

The sample size included (a) eighty-six cooperating teachers, with fifty responding, (b) eighty-six student teachers, with all eighty-six responding and (c) sixty first year teachers, with forty-one responding. Student teachers and cooperating teachers were selected from the available pool of individuals listed with the Office of Clinical Experiences. Student teachers responded to their surveys during their regularly scheduled teacher on-campus seminars during the spring of 1991. Student teachers then hand carried a survey to their cooperating teachers who responded and returned the surveys via the postal service. First year teacher surveys were sent and returned through the postal service.

The majority of the student and first year teachers polled had spent from twelve to 15 weeks in their student

teaching assignment. All of the student teachers were conducting their experience during the spring semester of 1991. Of the first year teachers responding, eighteen had student taught during a fall semester and twenty-three had student taught during a spring semester.

#### Field Experience Procedures

Information for this project was provided from three sources. First, Eastern Illinois University student teachers who were currently assigned to an elementary or junior high school during the Spring, 1991 semester were asked their perceptions of their student teaching experience. Secondly, the cooperating teachers assigned to supervise the Spring, 1991 student teachers were asked their perceptions of past and present student teachers who have been in their classrooms. The last group to be polled were teachers who had received their degrees from Eastern Illinois University and were currently employed in their first year of teaching at the elementary or junior high level.

#### Data Collection and Instrumentation

The data being considered came from the three above mentioned groups being asked to complete an opinionnaire. Questions for the opinionnaires were developed with assistance from the Office of Clinical Experiences at



Eastern Illinois University. Participants were obtained through the assistance of the Office of Clinical Experiences and the Placement Office at Eastern Illinois University.

On March 15, 1991, at a scheduled student teacher seminar, student teaching coordinators distributed to eighty-six student teachers the materials needed to conduct a portion of this study. A letter to the student teachers explained the purpose of the survey (see Appendix A) and was attached to the survey (see Appendix B). Student teachers were asked to reflect upon their current student teaching assignment and answer the questions based mostly upon their opinion. At the end of the seminar, the student teachers were instructed to return the surveys to their coordinators.

The final two questions of the survey dealt with information requested by the Office of Clinical Experiences. Data from these questions were not summarized for this study.

Student teachers were then asked to hand carry an introductory letter (see Appendix C) attached to a survey which polled the opinions of their present cooperating teachers (see Appendix D). Cooperating teachers were asked to reflect upon their present and past student

teachers and answer the questions accordingly. A self-addressed, stamped envelope to the Department of Student Teaching was enclosed along with the survey for the convenience of the cooperating teachers.

The deadline date for returning the cooperating teacher surveys was March 29, 1991. The Office of Clinical Experiences forwarded both the cooperating and student teacher surveys to the author of this field study after this date. Of the eighty-six surveys that were hand carried to the cooperating teachers, fifty (58%) were returned.

The final five questions of the survey dealt with information requested by the Office of Clinical Experiences. Data from these questions were not summarized for this study.

On April 22, 1991, sixty first year teachers were sent an introductory letter (see Appendix E) attached to a survey dedicated to their experiences (see Appendix F). First year teachers were asked to reflect upon their student teaching experience and their first year of teaching to express their opinions. A self-addressed, stamped envelope to the author of this study was enclosed for the convenience of the first year teachers. The

deadline date to return the surveys was June 1, 1991. Of the sixty surveys sent, forty-one (67%) responded.

The final two questions of the survey dealt with information requested by the Office of Clinical Experiences. Data from these questions were not summarized for this study.

Thoughts For The Profession (see Appendix G) was included as an expression of gratitude to all three groups for taking time from their busy schedules to complete the surveys.

## Chapter IV--Results

Results of Objective One

The purpose of the first objective was to determine the length of time needed to conduct the student teaching experience as perceived by student, cooperating and first year teachers.

Cooperating teacher responses. Of the cooperating teachers (N=50) responding to the survey, 60% indicated that a semester's length of time, approximately fifteen weeks, was sufficient to conduct the student teaching experience. Thirty-eight percent felt that a year would be more beneficial and 2% had no response to the survey item. Several respondents commented that having a student teacher in the classroom for a full year was not fair to the students in that classroom or the students' parents since they expected to receive the services of a veteran teacher.

Student teacher responses. Of the student teachers (N=86) responding to the survey, 77% indicated that, in their opinion, a semester's length of time was sufficient for them to complete the student teaching experience. Twenty-three percent said that they would have preferred a full year of student teaching. Of the student teachers who chose a semester of student teaching, several stated

that there was a financial consideration involved in their decision. Many also worked part time jobs to pay for tuition and living expenses. In reality, this would be equivalent to working two jobs during the student teaching experience and several felt that this was more work than they could handle for a full year.

First year teacher responses. Of the first year teachers (N=41) responding to the survey, 83% preferred a semester of student teaching. Seventeen percent chose a year of student teaching. Many of the comments made by first year teachers reflected the same financial considerations of the student teachers.

#### Results of Objective Two

The purpose of the second objective was to develop a list of special activities that cooperating teachers and schools conduct to familiarize student teachers with their surroundings and the profession. The following is a list of activities as noted by cooperating, student and first year teachers.

1. Student teachers were asked to make contact with their assigned cooperating teacher and visit the classroom for a half day before the start of the student teaching experience.

2. Cooperating teachers gave the student teachers personal introductions to the other faculty members, administration, support personnel and the students with whom they would be working.

3. Student teachers were required to develop an information board, using a sheet of posterboard, which included their name, their cooperating teacher's name, and pictures of the student teacher with captions. These information boards were then displayed in a prominent area of the school.

4. Cooperating teachers gave the student teachers a tour and map of the building.

5. Prior to their first day of student teaching, student teachers were sent packets of information, which included school handbooks, cooperating teacher expectations of a student teacher, community information, etc., pertaining to the school where their student teaching experience would be conducted.

6. Student teachers were expected to make home visits with the cooperating teacher, make phone calls to parents when needed and sit in on parent-teacher conferences.

7. Student teachers were expected to learn how to use all instructional equipment available to them in the building.

8. Student teachers were required to attend school functions such as parent teacher organizational (PTO) meetings, open house, extra curricular night activities and the local school board meeting.

9. Student teachers were required to attend workshops, inservices, staff meetings, and individualized education program (IEP) meetings for special education students along with their cooperating teachers.

10. Student teachers were allowed to visit and make observations of other classrooms and school buildings in the district where their student teaching experience was conducted.

11. Student teachers attended and assisted with class field trips.

12. Student teachers were expected to perform many of the nonteaching duties, i.e. playground duty, bus duty, etc., along with the cooperating teacher.

13. During the initial phase of their student teaching experience, student teachers conducted individualized testing of students to help them become more familiar with the students in the classroom.

14. Student teachers were video taped for self-evaluation and improvement purposes.

15. The principal of the school conducted "mock" interviews with student teachers to give them a first experience with interviewing and seeking a job.

#### Results of Objective Three

The purpose of the third objective was to assess the climate of student teaching with regard to the working relationships between the cooperating teacher and student teacher. Inquiries regarding stress, personality matches, amounts of planning time, and discipline problems were asked of all three groups.

Personality matches. All of the cooperating teachers (N=50) indicated that their personalities had meshed well with the student teachers' personalities that had been assigned to their classroom. Several respondents underlined the words in general on the survey question which may have indicated an average response based upon multiple student teacher assignment experiences.

Ninety-one percent of the student teachers (N=86) stated that they had experienced a good working relationship with their cooperating teacher. The balance, 9%, indicated that there had been problems. Eighty-three percent of the responding first year teachers (N=41) noted a positive



working relationship with their cooperating teachers. Seventeen percent indicated that they had not worked well with their cooperating teachers.

Master teachers. Student teachers and first year teachers were then asked if they considered their cooperating teacher a master teacher. Seventy-seven percent of the student teachers felt that their cooperating teacher was a master teacher. First year teachers had a somewhat higher regard for their cooperating teacher's abilities by indicating that 85% of these professionals were master teachers. It is interesting to note that five of the eight student teachers who responded that their personality did not work well with the cooperating teacher's personality still considered them to be master teachers. Likewise, four of the seven first year teachers who indicated a mismatch in personalities considered their cooperating teacher to be a master of the profession.

Stress for the cooperating teacher. Cooperating teachers noted the following factors as causing them stress while supervising a student teacher. Multiple responses are noted.

1. The inability of the student teacher to maintain classroom discipline and manage behavior (20 responses),

2. The cooperating teacher having to let go of his/her students so that the student teacher could take total control of the class (9 responses),

3. The inability of the student teacher to handle the necessary paperwork, i.e. grading papers, taking attendance, etc. (4 responses),

4. The inability of the student teacher to effectively manage the classroom (4 responses),

5. The amount of paperwork and time necessary, on the part of the cooperating teacher, to evaluate the student teacher (3 responses),

6. Finding enough time to adequately plan with the student teacher (2 responses),

7. The student teacher's lack of commitment and enthusiasm to work hard during the student teaching experience (2 responses),

8. The student teacher's inappropriate use of grammar in written and oral expression,

9. Personality differences,

10. The student teacher's inability to effectively use instructional equipment, and

11. Being watched daily by a student teacher.

Stress for the student teacher. Student and first year teachers noted the following factors as causing them

stress during the student teaching experience. Multiple responses are noted.

1. Handling discipline problems (22 responses),
2. Details of lesson planning (22 responses),
3. Being evaluated by the cooperating teacher and the university coordinator (18 responses),
4. Lack of time to prepare and get the job completed daily (18 responses),
5. Details of classroom management (10 responses),
6. Completing necessary paperwork and grading student work (7 responses),
7. Accepting the teaching style of the cooperating teacher (6 responses),
8. Teaching too many subjects too quickly (3 responses),
9. Driving a long distance to student teaching site (3 responses),
10. Adequate knowledge of curriculum (2 responses),
11. Teaching behavior disorder (BD) and/or hyperactive students (2 responses),
12. Meeting parents/attending open house (2 responses),
13. Lack of income during student teaching (2 responses),

14. Extra curricular coaching assignment,
15. Remembering student names,
16. Dealing with an unsupportive principal,
17. Meeting graduation requirements,
18. Attending university seminars,
19. Constantly being tired, and
20. Teaching a classroom of students with a wide range of capability.

Planning time. Student teachers (N-86) and first year teachers (N-41) were asked how many times per week did they and their cooperating teacher formally make teaching plans. Responses are listed on a percentage basis (see Table 1).

Table 1

Planning Times Per Week


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Times per week	Student teachers	First year teachers
1x	30%	29%
2x	19%	7%
3x	5%	10%
Daily	40%	49%
Seldom	7%	2%
No response	0%	2%

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Honest evaluations. Student teachers (N=86) and first year teachers (N=41) were asked if they felt their cooperating teacher was open and honest with them concerning strengths and weaknesses in teaching. Ninety-five percent of the student teachers indicated that they did receive open and honest evaluations. The balance of 5% did not feel that their cooperating teacher had been open and honest with them in their evaluations. Ninety-three percent of the first year teachers polled indicated that they had received open and honest evaluations from their cooperating teachers. Of the balance, 2% felt that they had not and 5% had no response.

Undermining authority to discipline. Student teachers (N=86) and first year teachers (N=41) were asked if, at any time during the student teaching experience, their cooperating teacher undermined their authority to discipline by overriding them. Fifteen percent of the student teachers indicated that they had been overridden by their cooperating teacher and 85% said that they had not. With similar results, 12% of the first year teachers said that their cooperating teacher had stepped in to take over their authority to discipline, while 88% indicated that their authority had never been undermined.

Student and first year teachers were then asked to express how having their authority undermined made them feel. Both groups indicated that there were negative feelings of inadequacy, lack of control, embarrassment, frustration and defensiveness on their parts. Several respondents stated that the children showed less respect for them as student teachers after the incident. One student teacher related that the children began to double check with the cooperating teacher whenever she administered discipline. On a positive note, several respondents stated that they were glad when the cooperating teacher stepped in to help and had learned from the experience.

Intervention by cooperating teachers. Cooperating teachers (N=50) were also asked if they had felt the need to intervene or override their student teacher's authority to discipline the class. Of those responding, 60% said that there had been a need to override their student teacher's authority while 40% did not see the need. When asked about their student teacher's reaction to being overridden, the cooperating teachers noted that some did not like it, became embarrassed or subdued. One respondent mentioned that she only stepped in when student safety was in jeopardy. In general, the cooperating

teachers noted a positive response to their intervention. They stated that many times the student teachers were relieved to be receiving the reinforcement and that the student teachers usually followed through with suggestions from the cooperating teacher for improvements.

Fall vs. Spring. Cooperating teachers were also asked if they could determine if student teachers who conducted their student teaching experience in the Fall of the year became better disciplinarians than their counterparts who student taught in the Spring of the year. The cooperating teachers (N=50) related that 20% of them felt that Fall student teachers became better disciplinarians, 20% felt that Spring student teachers became better disciplinarians, 40% could tell no difference and 20% had no response at all. Many respondents made the comment that time of the year was of no consideration; it was the personality of the student teacher that made the difference. Several cooperating teachers also noted that they only accept Spring student teachers as assignments.

#### Results of Objective Four

The purpose of the fourth objective was to determine the extent of usage of video taping equipment as a self-evaluation tool during the student teaching

experience. Cooperating teachers ( $N=50$ ), student teachers ( $N=86$ ) and first year teachers ( $N=41$ ) were asked if a video tape recorder and video camera had been used in their classroom as an evaluation tool during the student teaching experience. Their responses are listed on a percentage basis (see Table 2).

Table 2

Usage of Video Taping Equipment for Self-Evaluation

Group	Yes	No	No response
Cooperating teachers	30%	70%	0%
Student teachers	21%	79%	0%
First year teachers	17%	80%	3%

Respondents, indicating that a video camera and recorder were employed during the student teaching experience, made the same comments. All three teaching groups stated that improvements were made in teaching ability because mistakes could be viewed from a third party perspective. Student teachers could actually see and hear the reasons for criticism that they might have received. Many cooperating teachers felt that the video taping was a good buffer for some student teachers.



fragile emotions and nervousness with evaluations and allowed the student teachers to view the tape in private.

Student teachers and first year teachers stated that they became more aware of how others perceived them by watching their own body language, frequency of eye contact, facial expressions and listening to their own voice qualities. Student teachers also indicated that video taping made them more aware of students who were not involved in the learning process. They saw those hidden mistakes that they could not perceive from the front of the classroom.

Several respondents claimed that a video camera and tape recorder was not available to them in their school. They would have used this medium for self-evaluation purposes provided they had access to the equipment and knowledge of how to operate it.

#### Results of Objective Five

The purpose of the fifth objective was to determine, from the viewpoint of present and past student teachers, the extent and quality of feedback given to them by their cooperating teachers with regards to their performance. Student teachers (N-86) and first year teachers (N-41) were asked if they thought their cooperating teachers gave them enough feedback on their performance. The majority

felt that the cooperating teachers did a good job of providing them with feedback (see Table 3).

Table 3

Enough Feedback Given by Cooperating Teachers

Group	Yes	No	No Response
Student teachers	83%	17%	0%
First year teachers	93%	5%	2%

Student teachers (N=86) and first year teachers (N=41) were asked if their cooperating teacher gave them positive and constructive criticism during their student teaching experience. Responses to this question closely paralleled the responses in the previous question. The vast majority felt that the criticism was of value (see Table 4).

Table 4

Positive/Constructive Criticism Was Given

Group	Yes	No	No Response
Student teachers	98%	2%	0%
First year teachers	88%	10%	2%

Student teachers (N=86) and first year teachers (N=41) were asked if their cooperating teacher had been open and honest with them concerning their strengths and weaknesses. The vast majority of both groups indicated that their cooperating teachers had been open and honest with them (see Table 5).

Table 5

Cooperating Teacher Was Open and Honest

Group	Yes	No	No Response
Student teachers	95%	5%	0%
First year teachers	93%	2%	5%

Lastly, student teachers (N=86) and first year teachers (N=41) were asked if their cooperating teacher gave them negative feedback in a demeaning manner during their student teaching experience. The inverse of the previous questions was apparent with their responses. The vast majority stated that no negative feedback was given (see Table 6).

Table 6

Negative Feedback Was Given By the Cooperating Teacher

Group	Yes	No	No Response
Student teachers	6%	94%	0%
First year teachers	17%	81%	2%

Results of Objective Six

The purpose of the sixth objective was to ascertain the teaching areas/skills needed to be a successful teacher, as perceived by cooperating, student and first year teachers, that were not being addressed in college course work. Cooperating teachers ( $N=50$ ), student teachers ( $N=86$ ) and first year teachers ( $N=41$ ) were asked if they felt that the methods classes being taught at Eastern Illinois University had prepared student teachers for the student teaching experience. The majority felt that the methods classes had prepared the student teachers for the student teaching experience. Unfortunately, it was not a resounding majority (see Table 7).

Table 7

Method Classes Had Prepared Student Teachers

Group	Yes	No	No Response
Cooperating teachers	58%	42%	0%
Student teachers	65%	35%	0%
First year teachers	54%	46%	0%

Respondents answering no were then asked to suggest areas/skills that should be emphasized in the methods classes. Their responses are as follows with multiple responses indicated.

1. Provide more hands on experience in an actual classroom as opposed to merely presenting an ideal situation (19 responses),

2. How to handle student discipline (16 responses),

3. How to handle classroom management (12 responses),

4. Use real teacher editions as the textbook for the methods class (6 responses),

5. Bring in teachers who presently teach in the public schools as resources (4 responses),

6. Provide a more realistic concept of lesson planning in the classroom (4 responses),
7. Learn how to integrate subjects through whole language teaching (2 responses),
8. Emphasize the teaching of writing and grammar (3 responses),
9. Observe parent-teacher conferences,
10. Learn how to evaluate/form reading and math groups,
11. Provide Teacher Expectations and Student Achievement (TESA) instruction,
12. Provide age appropriate methods classes, i.e. K-3, 4-6, and 7-8 as opposed to a K-8 methods class,
13. Learn how to use all types of audio visual equipment,
14. Learn how to work with the slow learner,
15. Learn how to recognize and deal with socio/economic problems facing children, and
16. Understand the phases of child development.

Respondents stated several times that the methods classes were too general in nature, there was too much busy work and entirely too much emphasis on writing term papers as opposed to learning ways to teach and interact with children. Several student teachers expressed the

thought that nothing can prepare one for student teaching except student teaching itself.

Student teachers (N=86) and first year teachers (N=41) were asked if they felt that Block I and Block II practicum experiences prepared them for the student teaching experience. The majority felt that these practicums did prepare them for student teaching. Again, it was not a resounding majority (see Table 8).

Table 8

Blocks I and II Had Prepared Student Teachers

Group	Yes	No	No Response
Student teachers	57%	36%	7%
First year teachers	63%	32%	5%

Respondents answering no were then asked to suggest areas/skills that should be emphasized in Blocks I and II. Their responses are as follows with multiple responses indicated.

1. Provide more time in placements for interaction with students (28 responses),

2. Provide more instruction on disciplining (3 responses),

3. Provide more instruction on classroom management (2 responses),

4. Be allowed to teach more than one subject (2 responses),

5. Provide more instruction on lesson planning,

6. Teach at various grade levels, and

7. More discussion of real teaching experience by those practicing in the field.

The same comments were made that the Block I and II practicums were too general in nature. One surprising comment from a current student teacher was that she felt as if the public school classroom teachers did not want Block I & II students in their rooms.

Student teachers (N=86) and first year teachers (N=41) were asked if they had the opportunity to sit in on a special education multidisciplinary conference (MDC) during their student teaching experience. Sadly, many did not (see Table 9).



Table 9

Number of Student Teachers Attending an MDC

Group	Yes	No	No Response
Student teachers	17%	83%	0%
First year teachers	24%	76%	0%

Student teachers (N=86) and first year teachers (N=41) were asked if they had the opportunity to sit in on a parent-teacher conference with their cooperating teacher. Many more had this opportunity (see Table 10).

Table 10

Number of Student Teachers Attending a PT Conference

Group	Yes	No	No Response
Student teachers	62%	38%	0%
First year teachers	80%	20%	0%

First year teachers (N=41) were asked what kinds of problems had they encountered during their first year of teaching that they wished they could have experienced

during student teaching. Their responses are as follows with multiple responses indicated.

1. Working with parents who may be in conflict with the teacher (10 responses),
2. A variety of discipline problems (8 responses),
3. Working with learning disabled (LD), attention deficit disordered (ADD) and behavior disordered (BD) students (8 responses),
4. Knowing how to initially set up the classroom and handle classroom management (8 responses),
5. Time management and grading papers (5 responses),
6. Working with the special education referral process (3 responses),
7. Providing instruction for a wide range of student abilities (3 responses),
8. Not being allowed to voice one's opinion as the newest member of the staff,
9. Bilingual education,
10. Working with the unmotivated child,
11. Planning long range assignments,
12. Seeking administrative support,
13. Developing tests, and
14. Working with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS).

Student teachers (N-86) were asked in what areas did they feel least prepared when they first set foot in the student teaching classroom assignment. Their responses are as follows with multiple responses indicated.

1. Disciplining students (45 responses),
2. Knowledge of curriculum (29 responses),
3. Classroom management (27 responses),
4. Conflict resolution skills (16 responses),
5. Lesson planning (11 responses),
6. Communication skills (4 responses), and
7. Record keeping and grading papers (2 responses)

First year teachers (N-41) were asked in what areas did they feel least prepared when they first set foot in their student teaching classroom assignment. Their responses are as follows with multiple responses indicated.

1. Discipline (19 responses),
2. Classroom management (15 responses),
3. Knowledge of curriculum (15 responses),
4. Conflict resolution skills (7 responses),
5. Communication skills with parents (7 responses),
6. Ability to plan lessons (5 responses),
7. Counseling students with problems,
8. Handling all the paperwork,

9. How to begin and end the year, and
10. Teaching a wide range of student abilities

Finally, first year teachers (N=41) were asked in what areas did they feel least prepared when they initially set foot in their own classroom when hired for their first position. Their responses are as follows with multiple responses indicated.

1. Discipline (14 responses),
2. Knowledge of curriculum (14 responses),
3. Classroom management (8 responses),
4. Conflict resolution skills (5 responses),
5. Conducting parent-teacher conferences (3 responses),
6. Planning a daily schedule; how much time and what is important to teach (2 responses),
7. Evaluation of and completing student work (2 responses),
8. Working with special education,
9. Understanding the needs of kindergarten students,
10. Understanding age appropriate behavior and skills,
11. Time management,
12. Performing extra duties,
13. Teaching sex reproduction to sixth graders,

14. Lesson preparation,
15. Pacing instruction,
16. Working with an attention deficit disorder (ADD) child, and
17. Working with gifted children.

One first year teacher stated that she felt she had learned more in her first year of teaching than her students did. This is probably a natural occurrence for all professionals new to the field.

#### Results of Objective Seven

The purpose of the seventh objective was to define the role of the university coordinator as perceived by current and past student teachers. Student teachers (N=86) and first year teachers (N=41) were asked if they were nervous when the university coordinator came by their classrooms to visit. Over half of the student teachers indicated that they were indeed nervous when the university coordinator visited (see Table 11).

Table 11

Student Teachers Who Were Nervous

Group	Yes	No	No Response
Student teachers	63%	37%	0%
First year teachers	61%	39%	0%

Those answering yes were asked to tell why. Their comments are listed below with multiple answers indicated.

1. Being watched and evaluated (37 responses)
2. Did not know what to expect (11 responses)
3. Not a problem but a natural response (6 responses)
4. Coordinator was intimidating (5 responses)

Several respondents stated that the university coordinator assigned to them was extremely helpful, supportive and gave them good advice. These comments many times came from student teachers whose personalities had not meshed well with their cooperating teachers. These student teachers were apparently looking for support from some source since they were not receiving any from their cooperating teachers.

Cooperating teachers (N=50), student teachers (N=86) and first year teachers (N=41) were asked if they viewed the university coordinator as a counselor for the student teacher when problems arose. All three groups reported, in the above 80 percent range, that this was their perception (see Table 12).

Table 12

University Coordinator: Counselor for the Student Teacher

Group	Yes	No	No Response
Cooperating teachers	82%	18%	0%
Student teachers	85%	15%	0%
First year teachers	85%	15%	0%

Cooperating teachers (N=50), student teachers (N=86) and first year teachers (N=41) were asked if they viewed the university coordinator as a counselor for the cooperating teacher when problems arose. Approximately one half of the cooperating teachers indicated that this was their perception. Forty percent of the student teachers and 39% of the first year teachers viewed the university coordinator in this role (see Table 13).

Table 13

University Coordinator: Counselor for the Cooperating  
Teacher

Group	Yes	No	No Response
Cooperating teachers	48%	52%	0%
Student teachers	40%	60%	0%
First year teachers	39%	61%	0%

Cooperating teachers (N=50), student teachers (N=86) and first year teachers (N=41) were asked if the university coordinator should evaluate the progress of student teachers. The vast majority, in excess of 80 percent in each group, reported that this was their perception (see Table 14).



Table 14

University Coordinator: Evaluator of Student Teacher  
Progress

Group	Yes	No	No Response
Cooperating teachers	82%	18%	0%
Student teachers	86%	14%	0%
First year teachers	88%	12%	0%

Cooperating teachers (N-50), student teachers (N-86) and first year teachers (N-41) were asked if the university coordinator should evaluate the supervisory skills of the cooperating teacher. A minority, all within the 30 percent range, reported that this should be the function of the university coordinator (see Table 15).

Table 15

University Coordinator: Evaluator of Cooperating Teacher  
Supervisory Skills

Group	Yes	No	No Response
Cooperating teachers	30%	70%	0%
Student teachers	31%	69%	0%
First year teachers	32%	68%	0%

Cooperating teachers (N=50), student teachers (N=86) and first year teachers (N=41) were asked if the university coordinator should take on the role of a trouble shooter when problems arose between the student teacher and the cooperating teacher. More cooperating teachers (66%) felt that this was an appropriate function of the university coordinator than did the student teachers or first year teachers who reported favorably with 53% and 59% respectively (see Table 16).

Table 16

University Coordinator: Trouble Shooter

Group	Yes	No	No Response
Cooperating teachers	66%	34%	0%
Student teachers	53%	47%	0%
First year teachers	59%	41%	0%

Cooperating teachers (N=50), student teachers (N=86) and first year teachers (N=41) were asked if the university coordinator should act as a liaison for the university and as the administrator of the college's teacher education program. Seventy-four percent of the cooperating teachers indicated that this was an appropriate role. Fifty-nine percent of the student teachers and 58% of the first year teachers stated that they viewed the university coordinator in this role (see Table 17).

Table 17

University Coordinator: Liaison/Administrator

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Group	Yes	No	No Response
Cooperating teachers	74%	26%	0%
Student teachers	59%	41%	0%
First year teachers	58%	42%	0%

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Chapter V--Summary, Findings, Conclusions and  
Recommendations

Summary

Sixty first year teachers and eighty-six student and cooperating teachers were surveyed during the spring of 1991 to determine their perceptions of the student teaching experience. Their perceptions provided a basis for determining (a) the length of time needed to conduct the experience, (b) a list of special activities that have been conducted in the field to familiarize student teachers with their assignment and surroundings, (c) the climate of present student teaching assignments with regard to the working relationships developed between student and cooperating teachers, (d) the extent of usage of video taping equipment for the purpose of self-evaluation on the part of the student teachers, (e) the extent and quality of feedback given by cooperating teachers to present and past student teachers, (f) the areas/skills needed to be successful in the student teaching experience that were not being addressed in college course work and (g) the role of the university coordinator in the student teaching experience.

Student teachers responded to the survey during one of their regularly scheduled seminars on campus. Student

teachers then hand carried surveys to their cooperating teachers. First year teachers were identified through the Placement Office of Eastern Illinois University and sent a survey dedicated to receive their input. Cooperating and first year teachers were provided with stamped, self-addressed envelopes in which to return the surveys to the Office of Clinical Experiences at Eastern Illinois University and to this author. Fifty cooperating teachers, forty-one first year teachers and eighty-six student teachers responded to the survey. Responses were tallied and reported as findings under each of the objectives listed below.

#### Objective One

Findings. Regarding the length of time needed to adequately conduct the student teaching experience, 60% of the cooperating teachers (N=50), 77% of the student teachers (N=86) and 83% of the first year teachers (N=41) polled felt that a semester of student teaching was sufficient.

Conclusions. It appears that a majority of veteran teachers feel that their new counterparts coming into the profession could use more hands on time. Student teachers and first year teachers alike were eager to get started and did not feel that another delay of fifteen weeks would

help them. Notations made by student teachers indicated that financial considerations had to be taken into account during this time period. Some had to work a part time job just to pay for tuition. This could easily take a toll on a person's available time and endurance for a full year.

Recommendations. With the present financial conditions of public schools and universities, one semester should remain the appropriate amount of time for the student teaching experience. Should the overall financial conditions for education improve dramatically, the teacher induction programs could (a) eliminate the required entry level courses taken by freshmen and sophomores so that these students would be allowed to become involved in their education major at an earlier time, (b) develop a full year internship, at the senior level of college, for student teachers in conjunction with the public schools and (c) pay student teachers a stipend for the year of internship and/or waive tuition.

For any of these recommendations to happen, federal and state governments would have to make a major financial commitment to the education of the nation's youth. Considerable planning would need to take place between universities and public schools so that the internship's focus remains on teaching and the development of a high

quality teacher instead of becoming a teaching/clerical aide position.

### Objective Two

Findings. There was a wide variety of responses to how cooperating teachers and the schools inducted student teachers into their local experience. Many listed no activities which would have familiarized them with their surroundings. Other respondents listed several activities and expectations of the local school which helped the student teacher become better acquainted with the educational process.

Conclusions. Hopefully, those responding that there were no special activities used to familiarize them as student teachers to their surroundings were not left in a social/educational void. Too often the horror story is told that when the student teacher walks into the classroom, the teacher walks out, never to be seen again until the student teacher is finished, in one way or another. One respondent to this survey indicated that this had happened to him/her.

In most settings, the receiving of a student teacher could have been likened to meeting the new kid on the block or the new neighbors. Introductions were made and



the majority of the staff tried to help in any way possible.

Recommendations. While the "meeting the new neighbors" approach may accomplish the task of inducting the new student teacher into the profession, too many times it is the student teacher who must ask all the questions. To make the process as beneficial to student teachers as possible, cooperating teachers should use a checklist of activities to be conducted during the student teaching experience (see Appendix H).

#### Objective Three

Findings. With regards to the overall climate and working relationships between cooperating teachers and student teachers, all of the cooperating teachers indicated that they and their student teachers, in general, had worked well together. Ninety-one percent of the student teachers reported that they thought they had a good working relationship with their cooperating teacher. A lesser amount, 83%, of the first year teachers felt that there had been a productive working relationship between them and their cooperating teachers.

The vast majority, 85% of the first year teachers, rated their cooperating teachers as master teachers. Student teachers felt that 77% of their placements were

with master teachers. It was interesting to note that nine out of fifteen student and first year teachers who noted that there had not been good working relationships still rated their cooperating teachers as masters of the profession.

Stress for the cooperating teacher evidenced itself in the areas of the student teacher (a) not being able to discipline the class, (b) taking over the class and leaving out the cooperating teacher, (c) not doing all of the necessary paperwork, (d) not being able to manage the classroom, (e) not showing a commitment to teaching, (f) not acting as a proper role model with regards to grammar usage in written and oral expression and (g) not being able to use the audio visual equipment available.

Personally, the stress for cooperating teachers came from (1) not having the time to adequately plan with the student teacher, (2) the abundance of paperwork needed to evaluate the student teacher, (3) personality differences between the two and (4) having another adult in the classroom watching everything that happens.

Student teachers noted stress factors involved during the student teaching experience to be (1) disciplining students, (2) excessive lesson planning, (3) continuous evaluations, (4) lack of time to do the job, (5) not

managing the classroom well, (6) too much paperwork, (7) conflicts between their teaching style and that of their cooperating teacher, (8) too much teaching responsibility too quickly, (9) making a long drive to the student teaching site, (10) not knowing enough about the existing curriculum, (11) teaching BD and AD-HD students, (12) dealing with parents, (13) no income, (14) being assigned to extra curricular coaching assignments, (15) the inability to remember student names, (16) working with an unsupportive administrator, (17) meeting the university's graduation requirements, (18) attendance at university seminars, (19) physical exhaustion from the job and (20) how to teach a diverse group of children with different ability ranges.

A majority of the student teachers and first year teachers indicated that, on the average, they either planned once a week (29.5%) or daily (44.5%). The balance of the time spent in planning was 13% for twice a week, 7.5% for three times a week, 4.5% responded that they seldom planned together and 1% had no response.

Ninety-five percent of the student teachers indicated that their cooperating teachers had evaluated them openly and honestly. Ninety-three percent of the first year

student teachers felt that this had also happened in their experiences.

Only 15% of the student teachers and 12% of the first year teachers noted that their cooperating teacher had overridden their authority to discipline the classroom. The majority of those responding that this had happened indicated a negative feeling toward their cooperating teacher and the situation in general. A few stated that it had been appreciated and was a good learning experience. A higher percentage (40%) of the cooperating teachers said that there had been at least one time when they needed to step in to restore discipline in the classroom. Their perception of the student teachers' reactions to this intervention was basically the same as reported by the student teachers.

Cooperating teachers indicated that they could make no distinction between fall student teachers and spring student teachers with regards to which group became the better disciplinarians. Many only accepted student teachers during the spring semester. A few comments were made stating that time of year was not important; the personality of the student teacher was.

Conclusions. In general, it appears that the Office of Clinical Experiences at Eastern Illinois University is

doing a good job of placing student teachers with high quality professionals in the field who know how to get along with inexperienced newcomers.

The stress factors related to the cooperating teachers seem normal with wanting the student teachers to perform well. The number one reason for stress was the student teacher's inability to effectively discipline the classroom. There may be at least one cooperating teacher in the field during this survey who should not be offering services, especially if having a student teacher in the classroom who is watching/trying to learn bothers them.

Stress for the student teacher resulted mainly from the normal rigors of the teaching day, i.e. discipline, lesson planning, evaluations, lack of time, classroom management, paperwork, etc. Disciplining the class was still the first major concern of this group just as with the cooperating teachers. The Hunter method of lesson planning must have also been a source of irritation to both groups. Student teachers mentioned on numerous occasions that this requirement was not the real world.

The amount of planning time devoted per week cooperatively by the student and cooperating teacher led one to believe that there were two main philosophies in the public schools; either plan with the student teacher

daily or once a week is enough. It is unfortunate that there had to be any responses stating that cooperative planning seldom took place. Some cooperating teachers are apparently still functioning under the "sink or swim" philosophy of preparing student teachers.

The vast majority of cooperating teachers must have had a good rapport with and had won the confidence of their student teachers. With 95% of the student teachers and 93% of the first year teachers reporting that they felt evaluations were open and honest, student teacher satisfaction with feedback was evident.

It was apparent that cooperating teachers remembered more times when they felt that overriding the student teacher's authority to discipline was necessary than did the student teachers. Forty percent of the cooperating teachers indicated that they had, on occasion, stepped in to restore classroom discipline. Only 15% of the student teachers and 12% of the first year teachers remembered this happening. Possibly what was normal intervention and reported as such, on the part of the cooperating teachers, was not viewed by the student and first year teachers as being a situation where they were overridden. It was refreshing to note that some student teachers had appreciated the help and considered the situation as a

learning experience. With the remainder, there had to have been one of two situations. Either an emotionally fragile and insecure student teacher felt disciplined also when the teacher took charge or the cooperating teacher lacked good judgment, disregarded being tactful and charged in. In either case, human working relationships suffered.

Beginning the year as a student teacher or coming in at second semester should make no difference with regard to student teachers becoming better disciplinarians. Student teachers who were willing to work, got along well with children and fellow adults, and had strong personalities made the best disciplinarians regardless of when they student taught.

Recommendations. There is never a guarantee that a student teacher and cooperating teacher are going to develop a good working relationship. There is no guarantee that every student teacher will be assigned to a master teacher. What could be done by the Office of Clinical Experiences though is to keep a track record of cooperating teachers based upon surveys completed by student teachers after their experience is completed. If there are repeated reports of personality conflicts with a

given cooperating teacher, then possibly assigning student teachers to that professional should be reconsidered.

It is recommended that the College of Education at Eastern Illinois University, and all universities for that matter, make a commitment to introduce a course of study for all education majors that deals specifically with discipline. Cooperating teachers, student teachers, and first year teachers alike noted this as their stress area of greatest concern. If half of the teachers who begin teaching are out of the business in five years due to the stress of disciplining students and there supposedly is a teacher shortage brewing in the future, then it makes complete sense to address this issue in depth at the college level. While not trying to promote any one packaged program as the program to instruct teaching candidates how to discipline, any systematic method of providing consistent and fair discipline would be better instruction than telling college students "not to smile before Christmas".

It is also recommended that cooperating teachers who (a) do not want to let go of their students to a student teacher or (b) do not like being watched by a student teacher should not consider taking on this responsibility. Let those who truly know how to (a) teach, (b) step back



and let go, (c) allow a young upcoming professional to learn the trade (d) and monitor the situation to make sure that all students in the classroom are learning, teach the next generation of teachers.

It seems apparent that, if available, cooperating teachers and education majors should take a test that measures their aptitude for the teaching profession. Many of the stress related factors of the cooperating teachers dealt with high expectations, possibly unrealistic, of how well a student teacher should initially perform. If they expect perfection from student teachers on the first day, then they will be disappointed. An aptitude test for teaching administered to education majors early in their college career might also weed out those who really do not have the heart for this profession. Why not let them know this early and allow them to go in a direction more suited to them?

The ideal student teaching experience would allow for the student teacher and cooperating teacher to discuss the results of the day and plan for the next day's instruction on a daily basis. Cooperating teachers should be required to conduct formal daily planning as opposed to letting the student teacher learn by trial and error with little input from the cooperating teacher.

The results of the survey indicate that cooperating teachers, in general, should be commended for their abilities to be open and honest with their student teachers with regard to evaluations. Again, a survey of student teachers after the experience is completed may indicate patterns of cooperating teachers who consistently are noted as not being open and honest.

It is important that cooperating teachers put themselves in the place of the student teachers and show some empathy for them when discipline goes awry. Tactlessly reprimanding a student teacher, especially in front of the class, can diminish even a strong student teacher's feeling of self-worth. Stepping in unobtrusively or assisting with the situation to make sure nothing gets out of hand and then recounting the problems with the student teacher at a later, less emotional time will help him/her learn. Use of an aptitude test that determines those who would make good cooperating teachers and those who would not is encouraged. Surveying the student teachers after the student teaching experience could possibly cause patterns to develop, with certain cooperating teachers, that would indicate their inability to discipline student teachers in a caring, humane manner.

#### Results of Objective Four

Findings. Relatively few of the respondents used the video camera and tape recorder to evaluate their student teachers. Only 30% of the cooperating teachers stated that they had used this medium. Twenty-one percent of the student teachers and 17% of the first year teachers stated that this form of self-evaluation had been used.

Conclusions. Video taping one's self can be a threatening experience. The camera does not lie. The camera does not miss a thing within its field of view. The video recorder allows one to see one's mistakes over and over again. People, in general, are leery of facing the truth about their performance on camera. But, of those who did use the video camera, there was a much better awareness of themselves, the classroom and the problems that existed. They used another of their senses to grow educationally. Being told about a problem is much less significant than seeing the problem. Those who used the video camera became stronger teachers and now have a new arsenal of equipment to help them with problem solving.

Recommendations. If the Office of Clinical Experiences at Eastern Illinois University wants to train prospective cooperating teachers in evaluation, then it

should teach them how to effectively use a video camera and recorder. It helps the student teachers see actual and potential problems first hand and promotes the concept of continual self-evaluation and educational growth.

Several respondents indicated that their school did not have access to a video camera. The price of video cameras has dropped considerably below the thousand dollar range in the past three years. Video cameras can be used for activities other than self-evaluations. Documentation of student behaviors, production of instructional lessons on tape, public relations messages, and documentation of school events are just a few of the uses of a video camera. In Illinois, this wide a variety of uses qualifies its purchase under several federal programs i.e. Chapter 1 ESEA, Chapter 2 ESEA, and Drug Free Schools. If a school is committed to self-improvement, then video taping instruction is a step in the right direction.

#### Results of Objective Five

Findings. Responses to the surveys indicated and reinforced that the cooperating teachers, in general, are again to be commended for the amount, quality and openness of the feedback given to their student teachers. Positive responses from student teachers and first year teachers to

three questions never dropped below 83% and averaged 92% positive statements for all questions.

Conclusions. The vast majority of the cooperating teachers in the field are conscientious in providing the type of feedback to student teachers that helps them grow as professionals. There are unfortunately those who do not fit this mold. Fortunately, there are relatively few who feel that student teachers have to learn from "the school of hard knocks" without assistance or guidance from the cooperating teacher.

Recommendations. Those cooperating teachers who care about their student teachers' professional growth work hard for every benefit they earn. Perhaps they deserve more. Those whose student teachers indicated that they had not been open/honest, critically positive or just did not take the time to work with the student teacher, do not deserve the benefits provided by the Office of Clinical Experiences or Eastern Illinois University. They need to be identified, if this is a continuous problem, and eliminated from the system of producing teachers.

#### Results of Objective Six

Findings. The majority of respondents felt that the methods classes taught at Eastern Illinois University prepared student teachers for the student teaching

experience. Fifty-eight percent of the cooperating teachers, 65% of the student teachers and 54% of the first year teachers stated that methods classes did the job they were intended to do. Those responding no to this item, were asked to suggest areas/skills that could have been addressed in a methods class that would have met a student teacher's needs prior to student teaching. The group with the largest response indicated that methods classes presented ideal situations. They would rather have had more time in the real world working with children. Again, disciplining students was a major concern of the respondents along with classroom management. Respondents also felt that using actual teacher's editions of presently used curriculums would have made the learning more beneficial. Several indicated that presentations by teachers in the public schools would have given them a good picture of what life after student teaching would be like.

Fifty-seven percent of the student teachers and 63% of the first year teachers indicated that Blocks I and II had prepared them for student teaching. The balance stated that they wished there had been more time in the placements to which they were assigned so that they could interact more with students. A few mentioned the need to

learn about discipline and classroom management techniques.

Very few student teachers (17%) and first year teachers (24%) had the opportunity to attend a special education multidisciplinary conference (MDC) during the student teaching experience. Many more, student teachers (62%) and first year teachers (80%), had attended a parent-teacher conference.

First year teachers were asked what kinds of problems they had encountered during their first year of teaching that they wished they could have experienced during student teaching. Heading the list were (a) handling parent conflicts, (b) dealing with discipline, (c) special education children with behavior problems, (d) knowing how to set up a classroom and (e) time management and grading papers.

Student teachers and first year teachers were then asked, through three separate questions, in what areas did they feel least prepared either during student teaching or during their first full year of teaching. The number one response from both groups to all three questions was discipline. The next highest areas noted shifted positions from group to group but always included (a)

classroom management, (b) knowledge of the curriculum and (c) conflict resolution skills.

Conclusions. It is evident that disciplining students is a major concern of young professionals in teaching. Many of the other noted areas of concern may diminish if disciplining students did not take so much of the student teachers' and first year teachers' instructional time. Disciplining students and settling disputes without losing valuable time for instruction is the real world of conflict for a teacher. Prospective teachers who lack good conflict resolution and communication skills are going to be at a disadvantage in the classroom.

Recommendations. The ever present message being received from cooperating, student and first year teachers alike is that the teaching of discipline methods to pre-student teaching candidates is a necessity. Colleges of education in all universities across the nation must incorporate a methods class on discipline into their teacher education curriculums. Classroom management, basic knowledge of present curriculums being used, conflict resolution skills and communication skills are important and need to be addressed/taught in undergraduate levels of education courses. The thorough teaching of



discipline methods though, must be a first priority to helping new teachers survive their chosen career.

#### Results of Objective Seven

Findings. Sixty-three percent of the student teachers and 61% of the first year teachers indicated that the university coordinator's visit had made them nervous. Being watched/evaluated was the main concern with not knowing what to expect being a secondary response.

Cooperating, student and first year teachers were asked their perceptions pertaining to the role of the university coordinator. Eighty-two percent of the cooperating teachers and 85% of both the student teachers and first year teachers indicated that the university supervisor should be a counselor for the student teacher when problems arise. Almost half, 48%, of the cooperating teachers felt that the university coordinator should be their counselor when problems arise. Fewer of the student teachers and first year teachers, 40% and 39% respectively, felt that this role should be part of the job description for a university coordinator. With regards to the university coordinator being the evaluator of the student teacher's progress, 82% of the cooperating teachers, 86% of the student teachers and 88% of the first year teachers said that this was an appropriate role.

Fewer respondents felt that the university coordinator should enter into the evaluation of the cooperating teacher's ability to provide a meaningful student teaching experience. The results for this question were 30% of the cooperating teachers, 31% of the student teachers and 32% of the first year teachers indicating a yes response. The university coordinator as a trouble shooter received a mixed review from the respondents. Sixty-six percent of the cooperating teachers, 53% of the student teachers and 59% of the first year teachers thought that this should be part of their job. More cooperating teachers felt that the university coordinator should be the liaison/administrator for the university's teacher education program. The yes responses were 74% for cooperating teachers, 59% for student teachers and 58% for first year teachers.

Conclusions. It was obvious from the responses that all three groups felt that the university coordinator's primary responsibilities should be (a) an evaluator of the student teacher's progress and (b) a counselor for the student teacher. Lesser noted responsibilities would include being (a) a liaison and administrator of the teacher education program for the university and (b) a trouble shooter to solve problems between the student

teacher and the cooperating teacher when conflicts arise. The category receiving a fifth place ranking, out of six total, was the area of the university coordinator acting as a counselor for the cooperating teacher. Less than half of the respondents in each group felt that this was an appropriate role. The university coordinator acting as an evaluator of the cooperating teacher's supervisory skills received the least amount of support with only 31%, on the average, of the respondents indicating that this was an appropriate role. Apparently, seven out of ten cooperating teachers do not feel the need for improvement in providing an effective student teaching experience. Just like their student teachers, perhaps they too feel the threat of "one more evaluator" in the classroom.

Recommendations. If evaluation of and providing counseling to student teachers is to be the primary purpose of the university coordinator, then the recommendation has to be made that (a) more on-site visits need to be made instead of just three to four times during the semester and (b) more university coordinators need to be employed to carry out the first recommendation. Universities have already had to limit student teaching assignments due to the distance from campus and the amount of mileage driven by coordinators to supervise these

sites. At present, much of their time is already spent on the road going from site to site.

With regard to the role of liaison and administrator of the teacher education program for the university, it has been this author's experience that the coordinators have done a commendable job. They have inserviced staff members regarding expectations of cooperating teachers, necessary paperwork to be completed, involvement of the student teacher in the classroom and any questions which may come up in the course of the semester. Their only limitation has been that they are "spread too thin" and are not in the classrooms enough.

Trouble shooting when problems arise between the student and cooperating teacher and counseling the cooperating teacher must remain an important part of the coordinator's role. Student teachers have spent three and one half years of college preparing for the student teaching experience and hopefully for employment as a teacher upon completion. It is a little late to make a college career change, at this point, should conflicts develop. In cases where conflicts do arise, it is imperative that coordinators focus their time and efforts on (a) analyzing the situation, (b) mediating between conflicting parties, (c) seeking and implementing

solutions and (d) monitoring results. Possibly there should be a university coordinator who is a specialist in conflict resolution. The specialist would take over for or at least offer support for the coordinator who finds that there is a mismatch between student and cooperating teacher in their assignment. As in any conflict situation, not always is the student teacher at fault. If a mind is a terrible thing to waste, then so is a mind that has worked for over three years only to be stopped by a personality conflict.

The last recommendation of this study is surely the most controversial. All three groups surveyed indicated that the university coordinator's position should not take on the role of evaluating the cooperating teacher's ability to supervise and provide a meaningful student teaching experience. The purpose of evaluation is to improve instruction. The university coordinator must do some supervision of the cooperating teacher to make sure that necessary student teaching experiences are being conducted.

Even during this survey, some student teachers reported that when they walked into the classroom, the cooperating teacher walked out of the classroom and provided little or no guidance from the start. Granted,

this was a small number reporting this type of experience, but even one placement such as this should be eliminated. The cooperating teacher in this situation has completely forgotten, or did not care about, his/her purpose as a teacher of prospective teachers. During these instances, it is imperative that the university coordinator involve the building administrator to help the cooperating teacher understand basic responsibilities, liabilities and their chances of ever receiving another student teacher assignment. If administrators are finding it difficult enough to retain teachers due to their inability to discipline students effectively, then student teachers should not be placed with cooperating teachers who do not know how to discipline themselves.

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Appendix A

Student Teacher Introductory Letter

NORTH WARD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
Tuscola Community Unit School District #301  
400 East Sale Street  
Tuscola, Illinois 61953  
Ph: (217) 253-2712

March 15, 1991

Dear Student Teacher,

I am writing this letter to ask for your help in determining what changes could be implemented, from your perspective, that would improve the student teaching experience and the profession overall. This project is being conducted as an administrative field study under the direction of the Department of Student Teaching.

Attached, please find a short survey that asks specific questions about the experiences you have had. Reflect upon your past student teaching experience and answer accordingly. I am much more interested in candid responses so there are no identifying marks on this survey. Your responses will remain completely anonymous.

Improvement of the student teaching experience is my main goal. I know that student teachers work hard and that this is "one more thing that you have to do during this seminar." Please accept the additional enclosure as "food for thought" with regards to our profession.

Please return this survey to your student teaching coordinator before you leave today. Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

Darrell L. Sy  
Principal

DS

Enclosures

Appendix B

Student Teacher Survey

The purpose of this survey is to determine what changes can be implemented, from your perspective to improve the student teaching experience and better prepare student teachers prior to entering the profession. There are no identifying marks on this survey. Your responses will remain completely anonymous. Thank you for your help in improving our profession.

Circle either YES or NO, check the blank or give a short answer in the space provided.

PART 1: STUDENT TEACHING QUESTIONS

Did you have your student teaching experience during the fall or spring?

\_\_\_\_\_ Fall                      \_\_\_\_\_ Spring

How many weeks of student teaching composed your student teaching clinical experience?

Given no financial constraints, would you have preferred:

\_\_\_\_\_ One fifteen week (semester) of student teaching or

\_\_\_\_\_ One full year (internship) of student teaching?

What kinds of special activities did your cooperating teacher or your school conduct to help you become familiar with the school, students, faculty, staff, etc. and/or enhance your overall clinical experience?

In general, would you say that your personality has "meshed" with the personality of your cooperating teacher?

YES NO

Would you, in your opinion, consider your cooperating teacher to be a "master" teacher?

YES NO

What caused you the most stress during your student teaching experience?

Would you say that your cooperating teacher gave you "enough" feedback on your performance?

YES NO

Did your cooperating teacher give you positive/constructive criticism?

YES NO

Did your cooperating teacher give you negative feedback in a demeaning manner?

YES NO

How often per week did you and your cooperating teacher sit down to plan together?

As a self-evaluation tool, did your cooperating teacher use a video camera and recorder to help you grow as an educator?

YES NO

If YES, did you find that video taping was helpful and how?

In your opinion, was your cooperating teacher open and honest with you concerning your strengths and weaknesses?

YES NO

When you first set foot in the classroom, what areas of teaching did you feel you were least prepared for, i.e. lesson planning, disciplining students, classroom management, communication skills, conflict resolution skills, knowledge of curriculum, etc.?

Do you feel that the Block I and Block II practicum experiences prepared you for the student teaching experience?

YES NO

If NO, how could the Block I and Block II practicum experiences have better prepared you for the student teaching experience?

Do you feel that the methods classes that you took prepared you for the student teaching experience?

YES NO

If NO, how could your methods classes have better prepared you for the student teaching experience?

Did you have the opportunity to sit in on a special education multidisciplinary conference (MDC)?

YES NO

Did you have the opportunity to sit in on a parent-teacher conference with your cooperating teacher?

YES NO

Were you ever "overridden" by your cooperating teacher with regards to your authority to discipline the class?

YES NO

If YES, how did that make you feel?

Were you nervous when the university coordinator came by your classroom to visit during student teaching?

YES NO

If YES, why?

What did you perceive the role of the university coordinator to be? Check as many as apply.

- Counselor for the student teacher
- Counselor for the cooperating teacher
- Evaluator of student teacher progress
- Evaluator of cooperating teacher's supervisory skills



\_\_\_\_\_ Trouble shooter for problems between the student  
teacher and the cooperating teacher

\_\_\_\_\_ Liaison/Administrator for the university's teacher  
education program

PART 2: INFORMATION FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF STUDENT  
TEACHING

Are you familiar with whole language learning?

YES

NO

Are you currently involved in any way with whole language  
learning and if so, how?

Please return this survey to your student teaching  
coordinator today before you leave. Thank you for your  
help.

Appendix C

Cooperating Teacher Introductory Letter

NORTH WARD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
Tuscola Community Unit School District #301  
400 East Sale Street  
Tuscola, Illinois 61953  
Ph: (217) 253-2712

March 15, 1991

Dear Cooperating Teacher,

I am writing this letter to ask for your help in determining what changes could be implemented, from your perspective, that would improve the student teaching experience and the profession overall. This project is being conducted as an administrative field study under the direction of the Department of Student Teaching.

Attached, please find a short survey that asks specific questions about the experiences you have had. Reflect upon your past student teachers and answer accordingly. I am much more interested in candid responses so there are no identifying marks on this survey. Your responses will remain completely anonymous.

Improvement of the student teaching experience is my main goal. I know that cooperating teachers work hard and that this is "one more thing that you have to do this week" if you so choose. Whether you choose to complete the survey or not, please accept the additional enclosure as "food for thought" with regards to our profession.

Please return the survey in the enclosed envelope by Friday, March 29, 1991. Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

Darrell L. Sy  
Principal

DS

Enclosures

Appendix D

Cooperating Teacher Survey

The purpose of this survey is to determine what changes can be implemented, from your perspective, to improve the student teaching experience and better prepare student teachers prior to entering the profession. There are no identifying marks on this survey. Your responses will remain completely anonymous. Thank you for your help in improving our profession.

Circle either YES or NO, check the blank or give a short answer in the space provided.

PART 1: STUDENT TEACHING QUESTIONS

How many weeks of student teaching composed your student teachers' typical clinical experience?

Given no financial constraints, would you prefer:

\_\_\_\_\_ One fifteen week (semester) of student teaching or

\_\_\_\_\_ One full year (internship) of student teaching?

What kinds of special activities do you or your school conduct to help student teachers become familiar with your school, students, faculty, staff, etc. and/or enhance the overall clinical experience?

In general, would you say that your personality has "meshed" with the personalities of your student teachers?

YES

NO

What causes you the most stress with regards to having student teachers in your classroom?

As a self-evaluation tool, did you use a video camera and recorder with your student teacher?

YES NO

If YES, did you find that video taping your student teacher was helpful and how?

Do you feel that the methods classes taken by student teachers prepared them for their student teaching experience in your classroom?

YES NO

If NO, in what areas did you notice an initial "lack" in student teachers' skills that could be addressed in methods classes?

Did you ever feel the need to override your student teachers' authority to discipline the class?

YES NO

If YES, what was your student teachers' reactions to this situation?



Are you currently involved in any way with whole language learning and if so, how?

Please return this survey by Friday, March 29, 1991. A return envelope is attached for your convenience. Thank you for your help.

Appendix E

First Year Teacher Introductory Letter

NORTH WARD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
Tuscola Community Unit School District #301  
400 East Sale Street  
Tuscola, Illinois 61953  
Ph: (217) 253-2712

April 22, 1991

Dear First Year Teacher,

I am writing this letter to ask for your help in determining what changes could be implemented, from your perspective, that would improve the student teaching experience and the profession overall. This project is being conducted as an administrative field study under the direction of the Office of Clinical Experiences.

Enclosed, please find a short survey that asks specific questions about the experiences you have had. Reflect upon your past student teaching experience, also this first year of teaching and answer accordingly. I am much more interested in candid responses so there are no identifying marks on this survey. Your responses will remain completely anonymous.

Improvement of the student teaching experience is my main goal. I know that first year teachers work extremely hard and that this is "one more thing that you have to do this week" if you choose to do so. Whether you choose to complete the survey or not, please accept the additional enclosure as "food for thought" with regards to our profession.



Sincerely,

Darrell L. Sy  
Principal

DS

Enclosures

Appendix F

First Year Teacher Survey

The purpose of this survey is to determine what changes can be implemented, from your perspective, to improve the student teaching experience and better prepare student teachers prior to entering the profession. There are no identifying marks on this survey. Your responses will remain completely anonymous. Thank you for your help in improving our profession.

Circle either YES or NO, check the blank provided or give a short answer in the space provided.

When did you do your student teaching?

\_\_\_\_\_ Fall semester                      \_\_\_\_\_ Spring semester

How many weeks of student teaching composed your clinical experience?

If you had been given a choice in how long you could student teach, which of the two following options would you have chosen?

\_\_\_\_\_ One semester (12-15 weeks)

\_\_\_\_\_ One full school year

During your student teaching experience, what kinds of special activities did you cooperating teacher or the school conduct to help you become more familiar with the school, students faculty, staff, etc. to enhance your overall clinical experience?

In general, would you say that your personality "meshed" with the personality of your cooperating teacher?

YES NO

Would you, in your opinion, consider your cooperating teacher to have been a "master" teacher?

YES NO

What caused you the most stress during your student teaching experience?

Would you say that your cooperating teacher gave you "enough" feedback on your performance?

YES NO

Did your cooperating teacher give you positive/constructive criticism?

YES NO

Did your cooperating teacher give you negative feedback in a demeaning manner?

YES NO

How often per week did you and your cooperating teacher sit down to plan together?

As a self-evaluation tool, did your cooperating teacher use a video camera and recorder to help you grow as an educator?

YES NO

If YES, did you find that video taping was helpful and how?

In your opinion, was your cooperating teacher open and honest with you concerning your strengths and weaknesses?

YES NO

When you first set foot in the classroom, what areas of teaching did you feel you were least prepared for, i.e. lesson planning, disciplining students, classroom management, communication skills, conflict resolution skills, knowledge of curriculum, etc.?

Do you feel that the Block I and Block II practicum experiences prepared you for the student teaching experience?

YES NO

If NO, how could the Block I and Block II practicum experiences have better prepared you for the student teaching experience?

Do you feel that the methods classes that you took prepared you for the student teaching experience?

YES NO

If NO, how could your methods classes have better prepared you for the student teaching experience?

Did you have the opportunity to sit in on a special education multidisciplinary conference (MDC)?

YES NO

Did you have the opportunity to sit in on a parent-teacher conference with your cooperating teacher?

YES NO

Were you ever "overridden" by your cooperating teacher with regards to your authority to discipline the class?

YES NO

If YES, how did that make you feel?

What kinds of problems have you encountered during your first year of teaching that you wished you had experienced during student teaching?

What area do you feel you were least prepared for when you set foot in YOUR classroom for the first time, i.e. lesson plan preparation, understanding the curriculum, communication skills, disciplining students, classroom management, conflict resolution, etc.?

Were you nervous when the university coordinator came by your classroom to visit during student teaching?

YES NO

If YES, why?

What did you perceive the role of the university coordinator to be? Check as many as apply.

- Counselor for the student teacher
- Counselor for the cooperating teacher
- Evaluator of student teacher progress
- Evaluator of cooperating teacher's supervisory skills
- Trouble shooter for problems between the student teacher and the cooperating teacher
- Liaison/Administrator for the university's teacher education program

PART 2: INFORMATION FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF STUDENT TEACHING

Are you familiar with whole language learning?

YES

NO

Are you currently involved in any way with whole language learning and if so, how?

Please return this survey to me using the enclosed envelope. If possible, I would appreciate receiving your response prior to June 1, 1991. Thank you for your help.

Appendix G

Thoughts For The Profession

MAKING THE DIFFERENCE

God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things that I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.

Living one day at a time; Enjoying one moment at a time; Accepting hardship as a pathway to peace.

Taking, as He Did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it; Trusting that He will make all things right if I surrender to His will.

That I may be reasonably happy in this life, and supremely happy with Him forever in the next.

--Reinhold Niebuhr

DEALING WITH CONFLICT

Let us begin anew, remembering on both sides that civility is not a sign of weakness, that sincerity is always subject to proof. Let us never negotiate out of fear, but let us never fear to negotiate.

--John F. Kennedy

EDUCATIONAL REALITY FOR AN EDUCATOR

I have come to the frightening conclusion that I am the decisive element in the classroom.  
It is my personal approach that creates the climate.  
It is my daily mood that makes the weather.  
As a teacher, I possess tremendous power to make a child's life miserable or joyous.  
I can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal.  
In all situations, it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated, and a child humanized or dehumanized.

--Gross and Gross, 1974

CHILDREN LEARN WHAT THEY LIVE

- If a child lives with criticism, he/she learns to condemn.
- If a child lives with hostility, he/she learns to fight.
- If a child lives with ridicule, he/she learns to be shy.
- If a child lives with shame, he/she learns to feel guilty.
- If a child lives with tolerance, he/she learns to be patient.
- If a child lives with encouragement, he/she learns confidence.
- If a child lives with praise, he/she learns to appreciate.
- If a child lives with fairness, he/she learns justice.
- If a child lives with security, he/she learns to have faith.
- If a child lives with approval, he/she learns to like him/herself.
- If a child lives with acceptance and friendship, he/she learns to find love in the world.



Appendix H

Checklist of Extra Activities For Student Teachers

Date Completed	Activity
_____	Student teacher was sent a packet of information about the school, community and cooperating teacher.
_____	Student teacher visited assigned classroom at least one half day prior to beginning student teaching.
_____	A staff directory was given to the student teacher and personal introductions were made to all staff members.
_____	Student teacher developed an information board with personal pictures and interests. Board was displayed in a prominent location in the school.
_____	Student teacher was given a tour and map of the building.
_____	Student teacher made a home visit with the cooperating teacher when appropriate to do so.
_____	Student teacher made a phone call to parents to discuss a situation in the classroom.
_____	Student teacher sat in on a parent-teacher conference.
_____	Student teacher learned to use all instructional equipment available in the school.
_____	Student teacher attended a PTO meeting.
_____	Student teacher attended an extra curricular activity.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Student teacher attended a local school board meeting.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Student teacher attended an MDC/IEP special education meeting.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Student teacher attended a workshop with the cooperating teacher.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Student teacher attended a local inservice.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Student teacher attended a faculty meeting.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Student teacher visited/observed at least one other classroom in the building
- \_\_\_\_\_ Student teacher participated in a class field trip.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Student teacher performed all of the expected non-teaching duties required of the cooperating teacher.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Student teacher was video taped during a lesson presentation for the purpose of self-evaluation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Student teacher was given a "mock" interview with a building level administrator.