Thematic Analysis: A Three Dimensional Perspective of a Teacher Education Program

Chelsie A. Hess M.A.[1], Elizabeth C. Leeper, M.A.[2], Heng-Yu Ku, Ph.D[3] , Scott Kreider M.S.[4], Nancy Sileo, Ed.D[5], Eugene P. Sheehan, PhD[6]

[1]School of Psychological Sciences, [2]Department of School Psychology, [3]School of Teacher Education, [4]Applied Statistics & Research Methods, [5&6]CEBS Dean's Office
Methods University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, CO

Abstract

The current climate surrounding colleges of education demands increased evidence for the quality of teacher preparation programs and their graduates. This qualitative study explored perceptions of teacher candidates, cooperating teachers, and university supervisors who had completed the teacher education program or been involved as mentors or supervisors in the Rocky Mountain region. Data was collected from a student teaching evaluation survey. Findings included three major themes Practical Skills, Program Process, and Content Process. Classroom management skills, earlier field experience, and the capstone project were among the themes that will lead to future program changes.

Introduction

- "The effectiveness of different teacher education programs, organizational structures, and entry routes to teaching is one of the most hotly contested issues in teacher preperation" (Zeichner, 2005, p. 59).
- An examination of key personnel involved with student teaching is a vital component to continuous improvement and preperation of teacher candidates.
- The triad model (teacher candidates, cooperating teachers, and university supervisors) has been implemented into teacher education programs as model of student teacher training, and qualitative data has been collected as a way to monitor the effectiveness of the triad dynamic (Goodnough, Osmond, Dibbon, Glassman, & Stevens, 2009).
- The insight from feedback of the teacher candidates, cooperating teachers, and university supervisors provides the information needed to better prepare teacher candidates in an education program.

Purpose

- Examine the qualitative data gathered from a student teaching evaluation survey that assessed teacher candidates', cooperating teachers', and university supervisors' perceptions of the overall program experience, and impact of those perceptions on the preparation program.

Methods

A thematic analysis using the qualitative program NVIVO was conducted to identify emerging themes and patterns.

Who:

- **Cooperating Teacher (CT):** Practicing teacher in the k-12 setting.
- **Teacher Candidate(TC):** Teacher in training.
- **University Supervisor(US):** Affiliated with the University and serves the CT and TC.

When: Student Teaching Semester

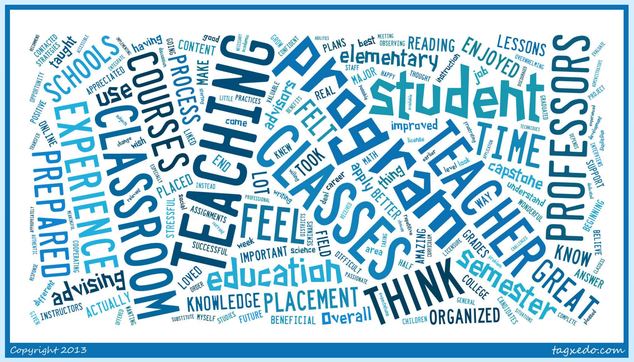
- **CT & US** → 2012-2013
- **TC** → 2011-2012, 2012-2013

Research Questions

1. What were the teacher candidates' perceptions toward the teacher education program regarding student teaching and overall program experience?
2. What were cooperating teachers and university supervisors' perceptions toward the teacher education program regarding student teaching and overall program experience?
3. Were any of the emerging themes consistent among the three respondent groups?

Results

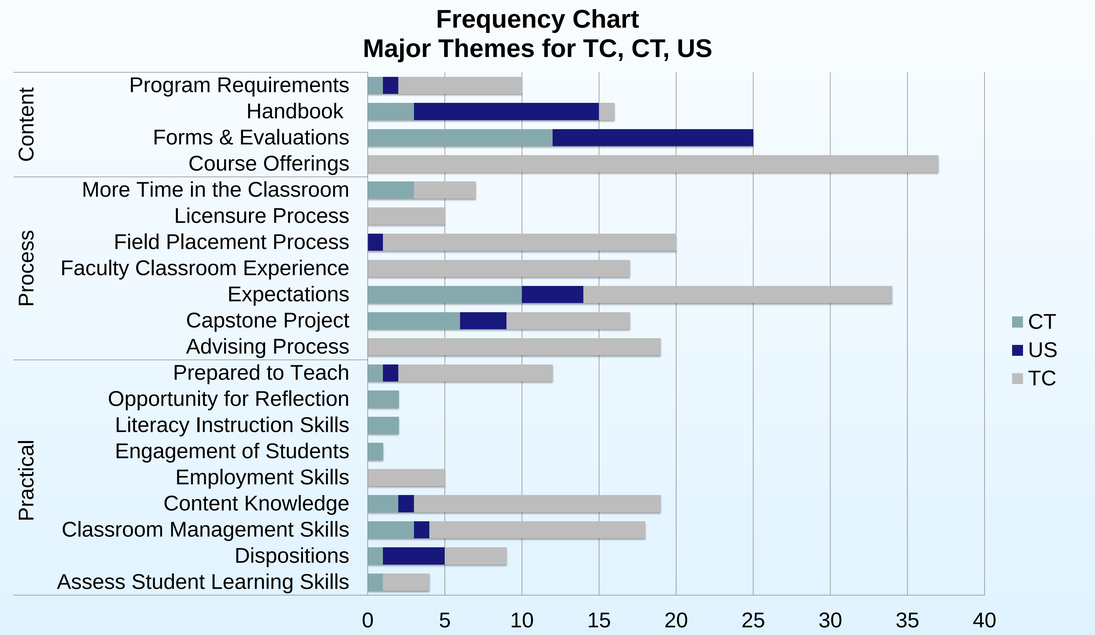
Research Question 1:
Teacher Candidate



Results

Research Question 2:
Cooperating Teacher & University Supervisor

Research Question 3:
Consistent Themes CT, US, TC



Conclusions

- **Q1:** ***Teacher Candidates***
  - Preparedness in content knowledge, skills, and dispositions.
- **Q2:** ***Cooperating Teacher & Supervisor***
  - **CT:** Process of the program
  - **US:** Content of the program
- **Q3:** ***3 Groups***
  - Expectations
  - Earlier field placement
  - Practical based rather than theoretical
- ***Implications***
  - Field placement coordinator position
  - Earlier field placement component
  - Redesign of Capstone Course includes research to practice component
- ***Implications cont.***
  - Classroom behavior & management course & field requirements
  - International Student Handbook & Current Student Teaching Handbook
  - Data management system to enhance communication & expectations

Contact Information

For references or further information please contact:
Chelsie.Hess@unco.edu
Elizabeth.Leeper@unco.edu

International Conference On Education
12th Annual Conference
January 5-8, 2014
Honolulu, Hawaii