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 preparation” (Zeichner, 2005, p. 59).
• An examination of key personnel involved with student teaching is a vital component to continuous improvement and preparation 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.

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?

Research Question 1: Teacher Candidate

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): 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

Results

Research Question 2: Cooperating Teacher & University Supervisor

Content
• Program Requirements
• Handbook
• Forms & Evaluations
• Course Offerings

Process
• More Time in the Classroom
• Licensure Process
• Field Placement Process
• Faculty Classroom Experience
• Experiences
• Capstone Project
• Advising Process

Practical
• Prepared to Teach
• Opportunity for Reflection
• Literacy Instruction Skills
• Employment Skills
• Content Knowledge
• Classroom Management Skills
• Dispositions
• Assess Student Learning Skills

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 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