



# **Southern Connecticut State University**

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**CCSAR – Center for Community  
and School Action Research**

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**Academic Year 2007-2008**

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**SCSU Educator Preparation Program Evaluation**

**Clinical Field Experience Study**

*An Analysis of Teacher Candidate Responses*

**Fall 2007**

**Clinical Field Experience Study**  
**An Analysis of Teacher Candidate Responses**  
**SCSU School of Education – Fall 2007**

The opportunity to participate in a clinical field experience is provided to all teacher candidates enrolled in an Educator Preparation Program. It is one of the requirements for the successful completion of a certification program. Candidates are exposed to a variety of field experiences as they progress through the various levels, or gates, of their program.

The *Clinical Field Experience Student Self-Assessment* (CFESS) was distributed in the fall of 2007 to all teacher candidates enrolled in education courses with a clinical field placement component. The CFESS is a brief instrument designed to gather information about a teacher candidate's field experience. It provides an opportunity for candidates to reflect on their experience and the knowledge and skills they have gained.

The purpose of this study is to learn about the quality of the field placement experiences provided to SCSU candidates and to ensure that these field experiences are productive and meaningful. The specific goals of this study are:

- to determine the overall quality of the candidates' field experience, e.g., their ability to connect theory to practice, grow as educators, collaborate with practicing teachers, become self-reflective practitioners,
- to determine candidates' perceptions of their experiences at different gates and note any differences in experiences between gates, and
- to use the study results to inform curricula and future clinical field experiences.

## **Method**

### ***Participants***

All candidates enrolled in an education course with a clinical field experience were invited to complete and return a *Clinical Field Experience Student Self-Assessment* (CFESS) during the fall 2007 semester. Candidates enrolled in more than one course with a clinical field experience were asked to complete a separate CFESS for each course. The completion of the CFESS is a requirement in all education courses with a clinical field experience component and is noted as such on the course syllabus. Four hundred forty-five completed *Clinical Field Experience Student Self-Assessments* (CFESS) were reviewed for this study. The number of completed surveys represents 304 candidates who completed one self-assessment; 66 who completed two self-assessments (one for each course, e.g., EDU and SED); and 3 who completed 3 self-assessments.

This sample represents candidates from 33 different courses, at various gate levels. Gate 1 has 151 candidates, gate 2 has 179 candidates and gate 3 has 115 candidates. The majority of candidates were undergraduate candidates (72.8%), with the following areas of certification represented: K-12, Early Childhood Education, Elementary Education, Secondary Education, and Elementary/Special Education Collaborative. Tables 1 and 2 show the specific distribution of this sample.

### ***Apparatus***

School of education faculty and CCSAR staff members collaboratively developed the *Clinical Field Experience Student Self-Assessment* (CFESS). The first section of the assessment asks candidates to provide the following information: their eight digit student identification number, current field experience course and course section number, number of hours spent at the field site, name of certification area they are pursuing, and student status (undergraduate or graduate). The second section asks candidates to indicate the type and level of interaction and observations that they had with students, and the level of professionalism that they demonstrated throughout their field experience. In this section, candidates selected **all** applicable responses for each question. The third section asks candidates to respond to 28 statements about their field experience using a six point Likert-type scale: 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Slightly Disagree, 4=Slightly Agree, 5=Agree and 6=Strongly Agree. The fourth and final section includes three open-ended questions designed to elicit additional feedback about the field experience. The CFESS was created using Snap Survey Software and a copy is included in the Appendix. A coefficient alpha internal consistency estimate was computed for the scaled response items (n=28) in section 3 of the self-assessment. A Cronbach's alpha of .923 indicates strong reliability for this portion of the CFESS.

### ***Procedure***

CCSAR obtained the email addresses of all candidates who were enrolled in a course with a clinical field experience component during the fall of 2007 via the SCSU Banner system. Duplicate email addresses were removed (some candidates were enrolled in more than one clinical field experience course) and the initial emailing, containing the secure website link where the self-assessment was located, was sent to 882 email addresses. A copy of the original email letter is in the Appendix. Candidates in more than one course with a clinical field experience component were asked to submit a separate self-assessment for each course. All course faculty with a clinical field experience were also emailed copies of all correspondence with their candidates. Five email reminders were sent to candidates and their course instructors throughout the data collection period. Four hundred fifty-eight self-assessments were electronically submitted by the close of the data collection period in December 2007. Of these 458, thirteen assessments were removed because candidates incorrectly completed the self-assessment. Data were reviewed for errors and/or missing information. Duplicate self-assessments were removed.

## **Results**

### **Part I. Clinical Field Self-Assessment Results**

#### **A. Background and Course Information**

Table 1 presents the distribution of the sample by course at each gate. Table 2 represents candidates in the following certification areas: K-12, Early Childhood Education, Elementary Education, Secondary Education, and Elementary/Special Education Collaborative. Table 3 shows the distribution of hours spent at a field site by gate and the overall distribution of field site hours for this sample. The length of time candidates spent at their field site ranged from one hour to more than 40 hours, with the number of hours varying between courses and by gate. For example, in EDU 200 and EDU 201 candidates averaged 40 hours or more at their field site while EXS 291, SED 235 and SED 435 averaged 10 hours or less at their field site.

**Table 1 – Course Distribution of Candidates by Gate**

Gate 1		Gate 2		Gate 3	
Course	n	Course	n	Course	n
ART 270	12	ART 371	16	EDU 311	22
EDU 200	63	EDU 309	23	EDU 490	6
EDU 201	33	EDU 312	29	EDU 491	2
EDU 206	7	EDU 413	7	EDU 492	9
EXS 191	20	EXS 291	29	EDU 493	13
SED 225	16	EXS 350	9	EDU 494	4
		EXS 394	10	EDU 503	2
		SED 235	32	EDU 504	6
		SED 325	9	EDU 505	8
		SED 335	4	ENG 492	3
		SED 365	11	EXS 495	4
				IDS 449	3
				SED 375	10
				SED 435	16
				SED 445	3
				SED 449	4
<b>Total n=</b>	<b>151</b>		<b>179</b>		<b>115</b>
<b>Percent</b>	<b>33.9%</b>		<b>40.2%</b>		<b>25.8%</b>

**Table 2 – Candidates Pursuing the Following Certification Areas**

	n	Valid %
K – 12	125	29.0
Early Childhood Education	27	6.3
Elementary Education	116	26.9
Secondary Education	85	19.7
Elementary/Special Education Collaborative	78	18.1
No program given	14	
<b>Total:</b>	<b>445</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 3 – Number of Hours Spent at Field Site**

I have spent about the following number of hours at the field site:

	Overall		Gate 1		Gate 2		Gate 3	
	n	valid %	n	valid %	n	%	n	valid %
1 -10 hours	139	31.3	20	13.2	76	42.7	43	37.4
11 – 20 hours	73	16.4	8	5.3	42	23.6	23	20.0
21 – 30 hours	60	13.5	21	13.9	28	15.7	11	9.6
31 – 40 hours	82	18.5	48	31.8	16	9.0	18	15.6
More than 40 hours	90	20.3	54	35.8	16	9.0	20	17.4
<b>Total:</b>	<b>444</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>100%</b>

## **Part II. Clinical Field Self-Assessment Results**

### **B. Type, Frequency and Diversity of Experience Working With Students and Level of Professionalism (Table 4)**

#### ***Overall Findings***

##### **Working with Students**

A ‘small group(s) of students’ and ‘the whole class’ and ‘often’ and ‘always’ were the categories selected most frequently (at each gate) in response to questions related to the type and frequency of opportunities candidates had to work with students.

##### **Hands-on Practical Experience/Assisting Students**

Candidates frequently responded that they ‘observed’ at gate 1 (85.4%), but by gate 3 candidates indicated that ‘observing’ had been reduced (66.4%) and planning and the opportunity to teach at least one lesson had increased (57.5%). Candidates indicated that they were given opportunities to assist students at all three gates. These experiences ranged from assisting ‘one student’ to ‘a whole class’. At gates 1 and 2, the most frequently selected response was ‘a small group’ of students (62.7% at gate 1 and 53.0% at gate 2). At gate 3, the response that was selected the most frequently was assisting ‘one student’ (55.7%).

##### **Level of Professionalism**

Candidates verified through their frequency of responses that they demonstrated the behaviors and attitudes of a professional educator during their field experience. More than 75% of students at each gate felt they demonstrated patience, organization, respect for students’ differences, fairness, and professionalism. A lower percentage of students felt they had demonstrated effective classroom management strategies: gate 1 = 71.3%, gate 2 = 63.3%, gate 3 = 67.0%. More than 50% of candidates also reported arriving on time, being prepared, staying longer than their scheduled time, and collaborating with students, mentor teachers, and peers. A lower percentage of students felt they spent time participating in activities outside the classroom: gate 1 = 37.3%, gate 2 = 32.8 %, gate 3 = 33.0%. It is interesting to note that 42.7% of candidates in gate 1 felt they collaborated with their peers.

## **Diversity of Students**

The selection and frequency of the responses to items regarding working with students who were from different ethnic backgrounds from the candidate ranged from a high of 42% responding ‘always’ and 33.3% responding ‘often’ at gate 1 to 33.9% responding ‘always’ and 31.3% responding ‘often’ at gate 3. The number of responses to ‘rarely’ and ‘never’ were small but these numbers did increase from gate 1 to gate 3.

**Table 4 - Clinical Field Results by Gate**

Please check all that apply:

<b>B1. During my field experience, I worked with:</b>	<b>Gate 1</b>	<b>Gate 2</b>	<b>Gate 3</b>
no students, just observed	11.3 %	18.4 %	12.3 %
one student at a time	29.1	30.2	35.1
occasionally assisted a student, but mostly observed	39.1	21.2	28.9
small group(s) of students	51.7	44.1	48.2
the whole class	47.0	43.0	40.4
<b>B2. During my field experience, I worked with student(s):</b>			
never	7.3	16.2	4.3
rarely	9.3	10.1	3.5
sometimes	20.5	16.2	25.2
often	27.8	24.6	27.0
always	37.1	35.8	44.3
<b>B3. During my field experience, I</b>			
observed	85.4	69.9	66.4
planned	28.5	42.4	38.9
taught at least one lesson	33.8	63.3	57.5
<b>B4. During my field experience, I had the opportunity to assist:</b>			
one student	49.3	50.8	55.7
a small group of students	62.7	53.7	53.9
the whole class	53.3	42.4	49.6
I did not have the opportunity to assist students	8.0	19.8	5.2
<b>B5. During my field experience, I adapted my mentor teacher’s lesson for:</b>			
one student	20.5	21.6	18.4
a small group of students	31.1	30.7	19.3
the whole class	30.5	25.6	29.8
I did not have the opportunity to adapt a lesson for students	41.1	45.5	43.9
<b>B6. During my field experience, I demonstrated:</b>			
patience	90.0	91.0	89.6
organization	85.3	89.3	80.0
effective classroom management strategies	71.3	63.3	67.0
respect for students’ differences	90.0	89.3	87.0
fairness	82.7	80.8	79.1
professionalism	96.0	95.5	95.7

<b>B7. During my field experience, I:</b>	<b>Gate 1</b>	<b>Gate 2</b>	<b>Gate 3</b>
arrived on time	97.3	95.5	94.8
was prepared	93.3	98.3	93.0
stayed longer than my scheduled time	66.0	53.1	54.8
participated in activities outside the classroom	37.3	32.8	33.0
collaborated with students	79.3	60.5	73.9
collaborated with my mentor teacher	82.7	68.4	75.7
collaborated with my peers	42.7	52.5	55.7
<b>B8. I worked with students who were from different ethnic backgrounds than mine:</b>			
always	42.0	36.9	33.9
often	33.3	29.0	31.3
sometimes	16.7	22.2	22.6
rarely	4.7	3.4	5.2
never	4.7	11.4	9.6

### **Part III. Clinical Field Self-Assessment Results**

#### **C. Perceptions of Clinical Field Experience**

Candidates were asked to respond to 28 items scored on a 6-point scale: 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Slightly Disagree, 4=Slightly Agree, 5= Agree, 6=Strongly Agree

#### ***Overall Findings***

##### **Aggregated Gate Results (Table 5)**

The distribution of item mean scores ranged from **3.25** to **5.46** for 445 candidates. The overall survey mean score was **4.65**. Item C16: *Through my field experience I have gained an understanding of teacher professional behavior*, received the highest mean score (**M=5.46**) and Item C27: *I had the opportunity to utilize technology in my teaching*, received the lowest mean score (**M=3.25**). Other items whose mean scores suggest a less positive response (3.00=disagreed) are: C10: *I had the opportunity to observe the classroom teacher planning lessons* (**M=3.91**); C11: *I had the opportunity to try various techniques for disciplining students* (**M=3.64**); and C26: *I had the opportunity to incorporate technology into at least one lesson* (**M=3.35**). Individual candidates' overall survey mean scores ranged from **1.37** to **6.00**

**Table 5 – Clinical Field Assessment: Item Mean Score Responses in Descending Order**

<b>Please rate the following statements:</b>		<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
<b>C16</b>	Through my field experience I have gained an understanding of teacher professional behavior.	5.46	0.780
<b>C21</b>	I had the opportunity for self-reflection.	5.41	0.799
<b>C19</b>	I developed a deeper understanding of students with different ability levels.	5.38	0.835
<b>C20</b>	This field experience gave me the opportunity to experience life in the classroom as I learned about it in my course.	5.20	1.020
<b>C24</b>	Self-reflection helped me make sense of what I was learning in my fieldwork.	5.14	0.986
<b>C22</b>	I had the opportunity to discuss my field experience with my SCSU professor.	5.14	1.109
<b>C1</b>	My field experience helped me understand the cognitive development of children.	5.12	0.935
<b>C6</b>	I had the opportunity to observe the classroom teacher use various techniques for giving instructions to students.	5.07	1.325

<b>C2</b>	My field experience helped me understand the emotional development of children.	5.03	0.963
<b>C17</b>	I developed a deeper understanding of students from all cultural backgrounds.	4.99	1.092
<b>C8</b>	I had the opportunity to observe the classroom teacher use various techniques for organizing classroom life.	4.94	1.291
<b>C18</b>	I developed a deeper understanding of students from all socioeconomic backgrounds.	4.93	1.138
<b>C7</b>	I had the opportunity to observe the classroom teacher use various techniques for disciplining students.	4.87	1.368
<b>C9</b>	I had the opportunity to observe the classroom teacher use various time management techniques.	4.87	1.324
<b>C23</b>	I had the opportunity to discuss my field experience with my mentor classroom teacher.	4.78	1.520
<b>C3</b>	My field experience helped me understand the physical development of children.	4.77	1.131
<b>C4</b>	I made changes in my lesson(s) to accommodate students' different learning styles.	4.64	1.491
<b>C5</b>	During at least one lesson, I modified my instruction based on an assessment of the student's learning.	4.51	1.565
<b>C12</b>	I had the opportunity to try various techniques for giving instructions to students.	4.36	1.624
<b>C13</b>	I had the opportunity to try various instructional techniques.	4.32	1.629
<b>C25</b>	I had the opportunity to observe the use of technology in the classroom.	4.27	1.577
<b>C15</b>	I had the opportunity to try planning lessons.	4.19	1.808
<b>C14</b>	I had the opportunity to try various time management techniques.	4.18	1.602
<b>C28</b>	In my field experience I was able to observe how technology can be utilized to assist students.	4.18	1.674
<b>C10</b>	I had the opportunity to observe the classroom teacher planning lessons.	3.91	1.652
<b>C11</b>	I had the opportunity to try various techniques for disciplining students.	3.64	1.667
<b>C26</b>	I had the opportunity to incorporate technology into at least one lesson.	3.35	1.701
<b>C27</b>	I had the opportunity to utilize technology in my teaching.	3.25	1.663

### **Disaggregated Gate Results (Table 6)**

#### **Gate 1- Results**

The distribution of item mean scores at gate 1 ranged from **3.30** to **5.53** for 151 candidates. The calculated overall survey mean score was **4.79**. Item C16: *Through my field experience I have gained an understanding of teacher professional behavior* and Item C6: *Classroom teachers use various techniques for giving instruction to students*, received the highest mean score (**M=5.53**), and Item C26: *I had the opportunity to incorporate technology into at least one lesson*, received the lowest mean score (**M=3.30**) received the lowest mean score. Additional items whose mean scores suggest that candidates may have 'disagreed' with the statement are C11: *I had the opportunity to try various techniques for disciplining students* (**M=3.76**); C15: *I had the opportunity to try planning lessons* (**M=3.60**), and C27: *I had the opportunity to utilize technology in my teaching* (**M=3.31**). Individual candidates' overall survey mean scores ranged from **2.21** to **6.00**.

## Gate 2 –Results

The distribution of item mean scores at gate 2 ranged from **3.14** to **5.52** for 179 candidates. The calculated overall survey mean score was **4.66**. Item C16: *Through my field experience I have gained an understanding of teacher professional behavior*, received the highest mean score (**M=5.52**) and Item C27: *I had the opportunity to utilize technology in my teaching*, received the lowest mean score (**M=3.14**). Additional items whose mean scores suggest that candidates may have ‘disagreed’ with the statement are: C28 *In my field experience I was able to observe how technology can be utilized to assist students* (**M=3.93**); C10: *I had the opportunity to observe the classroom teacher planning lessons* (**M=3.71**); C11: *I had the opportunity to try various techniques for disciplining students* (**M=3.51**); and C26: *I had the opportunity to incorporate technology into at least one lesson* (**M=3.27**). Individual candidates’ overall survey mean scores ranged from **2.68** to **6.00**.

## Gate 3-Results

The distribution of mean scores for each survey item ranged from **3.37** to **M=5.31** for 115 candidates. The calculated overall survey mean score for this sample was **4.47**. Item C21: *I had the opportunity for self-reflection*, received the highest mean score (**M=5.31**) and Item C27: *I had the opportunity to utilize technology in my teaching*, received the lowest mean score (**M=3.37**). Additional items who mean score suggests that candidates may have ‘disagreed’ with the statement are C28: *In my field experience, I was able to observe how technology can be utilized to assist students* (**M=3.90**); C11: *I had the opportunity to try various techniques for disciplining students* (**M=3.67**); C10: *I had the opportunity to observe the classroom teacher planning lessons* (**M=3.56**); and C 26: *I had the opportunity to incorporate technology into at least one lesson* (**M=3.53**); Individual candidates’ overall survey mean scores ranged from **1.37** to **6.00**.

**Table 6 – Item Mean Score Comparisons Between Gates**

Scale: 1=Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3=Slightly Disagree, 4=Slightly Agree, 5= Agree, 6=Strongly Agree

	<b>Please rate the following statements:</b>	<b>Gate 1</b>	<b>Gate 2</b>	<b>Gate 3</b>	<b>Overall</b>
<b>C1</b>	My field experience helped me understand the cognitive development of children.	5.21	5.18	4.93	5.12
<b>C2</b>	My field experience helped me understand the emotional development of children.	5.13	5.03	4.89	5.03
<b>C3</b>	My field experience helped me understand the physical development of children.	4.79	5.02	4.37	4.77
<b>C4</b>	I made changes in my lesson(s) to accommodate students’ different learning styles.	4.39	4.75	4.77	4.64
<b>C5</b>	During at least one lesson, I modified my instruction based on an assessment of the student’s learning.	4.32	4.55	4.69	4.51
<b>C6</b>	I had the opportunity to observe the classroom teacher use various techniques for giving instructions to students.	<b>5.53**</b>	5.04	4.49	5.07
<b>C7</b>	I had the opportunity to observe the classroom teacher use various techniques for disciplining students.	5.34	4.85	4.30	4.87
<b>C8</b>	I had the opportunity to observe the classroom teacher use various techniques for organizing classroom life.	5.39	4.90	4.41	4.94

	<b>Please rate the following statements:</b>	<b>Gate 1</b>	<b>Gate 2</b>	<b>Gate 3</b>	<b>Overall</b>
<b>C9</b>	I had the opportunity to observe the classroom teacher use various time management techniques.	5.34	4.81	4.33	4.87
<b>C10</b>	I had the opportunity to observe the classroom teacher planning lessons.	4.41	<b>3.71</b>	<b>3.56</b>	<b>3.91</b>
<b>C11</b>	I had the opportunity to try various techniques for disciplining students.	<b>3.76</b>	<b>3.51</b>	<b>3.67</b>	<b>3.64</b>
<b>C12</b>	I had the opportunity to try various techniques for giving instructions to students.	4.32	4.36	4.41	4.36
<b>C13</b>	I had the opportunity to try various instructional techniques.	4.19	4.34	4.44	4.32
<b>C14</b>	I had the opportunity to try various time management techniques.	4.10	4.19	4.29	4.18
<b>C15</b>	I had the opportunity to try planning lessons.	<b>3.60</b>	4.62	4.28	4.19
<b>C16</b>	Through my field experience I have gained an understanding of teacher professional behavior.	<b>5.53**</b>	<b>5.52**</b>	5.27	<b>5.46**</b>
<b>C17</b>	I developed a deeper understanding of students from all cultural backgrounds.	5.12	5.05	4.73	4.99
<b>C18</b>	I developed a deeper understanding of students from all socioeconomic backgrounds.	5.08	5.02	4.61	4.93
<b>C19</b>	I developed a deeper understanding of students with different ability levels.	5.50	5.42	5.15	5.38
<b>C20</b>	This field experience gave me the opportunity to experience life in the classroom as I learned about it in my course.	5.44	5.29	4.77	5.20
<b>C21</b>	I had the opportunity for self-reflection.	5.45	5.46	<b>5.31**</b>	5.41
<b>C22</b>	I had the opportunity to discuss my field experience with my SCSU professor.	5.01	5.28	5.08	5.14
<b>C23</b>	I had the opportunity to discuss my field experience with my mentor classroom teacher.	5.21	4.58	4.50	4.78
<b>C24</b>	Self-reflection helped me make sense of what I was learning in my fieldwork.	5.26	5.14	4.97	5.14
<b>C25</b>	I had the opportunity to observe the use of technology in the classroom.	4.78	4.01	4.01	4.27
<b>C26</b>	I had the opportunity to incorporate technology into at least one lesson.	<b>3.30*</b>	<b>3.27</b>	<b>3.53</b>	<b>3.35</b>
<b>C27</b>	I had the opportunity to utilize technology in my teaching.	<b>3.31</b>	<b>3.14*</b>	<b>3.37*</b>	<b>3.25*</b>
<b>C28</b>	In my field experience I was able to observe how technology can be utilized to assist students.	4.68	<b>3.93</b>	<b>3.90</b>	4.18
	<b>Overall Survey Mean Score for each gate</b>	<b>4.79</b>	<b>4.66</b>	<b>4.47</b>	<b>4.65</b>

**Note:** \*\* highest mean score at gate

\* lowest mean score at gate

**Bold**=areas of possible discontentment

### Statistical Comparison Between Groups

A one-way between-subjects ANOVA was conducted to assess gate level differences between candidates' perceptions of their field experience as measured by their overall mean score response in Section III (28 scaled items). The results found that candidates' perceptions significantly differed between gates:  $F(2, 441) = 5.34, p = .005$ . A Tukey post hoc multiple comparisons test found significant differences between gates 1 and 3: ( $M = 4.79, SE = .064$  (gate 1) vs.  $M = 4.47, SE = .073$  (gate 3)). In interpreting these results, it is important to remember that candidates at each gate were enrolled in different programs, different courses, and spent varying number of hours (one to more than 40 hours) at their field site. This variability makes it difficult to draw any conclusions as to which factor(s) may have contributed to the statistically significant mean difference between gate 1 and gate 3. Was it time, was it the course, was it the placement, was it the program, or was it all of these factors working in concert?

### Estimated Marginal Means

Dependent Variable: Mean for Section III(C)

Gate	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Gate 1	4.788	.064	4.662	4.914
Gate 2	4.657	.059	4.541	4.772
Gate 3	4.471	.073	4.327	4.614

### Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Mean for Section III(C)

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	6.574 <sup>a</sup>	2	3.287	5.339	.005	.024
Intercept	9243.412	1	9243.412	15012.94	.000	.971
gate	6.574	2	3.287	5.339	.005	.024
Error	271.522	441	.616			
Total	9890.437	444				
Corrected Total	278.096	443				

a. R Squared = .024 (Adjusted R Squared = .019)

### Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable: Mean for Section III(C)

	(I) Gate	(J) Gate	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Tukey HSD	Gate 1	Gate 2	.1318	.08686	.284	-.0725	.3360
		Gate 3	.3177(*)	.09725	.003	.0890	.5464
	Gate 2	Gate 1	-.1318	.08686	.284	-.3360	.0725
		Gate 3	.1860	.09377	.118	-.0346	.4065
	Gate 3	Gate 1	-.3177(*)	.09725	.003	-.5464	-.0890
		Gate 2	-.1860	.09377	.118	-.4065	.0346

Based on observed means.

\* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Since candidates mentioned 'lack of time' as a concern in the open-ended questions, researchers conducted an additional ANOVA using 'time' (with 5 groups) as an independent variable. The

one-way between- subjects ANOVA conducted to assess differences in candidates' perceptions of their field experiences (28 items, section III) using time as the IV yielded significant results,  $F(4,438) = 19.61$ ,  $p < .001$ . The Tukey post hoc multiple comparison test found group 1(1-10 hours), mean score of 4.24 and a standard error of .062, statistically lower than all of the other groups' mean scores. In short, those who spent 10 hours or less at their field site scored section III less positively than candidates from the other four time groups. Statistically significant mean differences were also found between groups 2 and 4(group 2=11-20 hours,  $M=4.59$  and group 4=(31-40 hours,  $M=4.94$ ) and between groups 2 and 5(group 2= $M=4.59$  and group 5=more than 40 hours,  $M=5.00$ ).

### Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Mean for Section III(C)

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	42.212(a)	4	10.553	19.605	.000
Intercept	9055.039	1	9055.039	16822.405	.000
a4	42.212	4	10.553	19.605	.000
Error	235.763	438	.538		
Total	9865.437	443			
Corrected Total	277.976	442			

a R Squared = .152 (Adjusted R Squared = .144)

### Estimated Marginal Means

#### A4. I have spent about the following number of hours at ...

Dependent Variable: Mean for Section III(C)

A4. I have spent about the following number of hours at ...	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1 - 10 hours	4.243	.062	4.121	4.365
11 - 20 hours	4.592	.086	4.423	4.761
21 - 30 hours	4.748	.096	4.560	4.936
31 - 40 hours	4.944	.081	4.785	5.103
more than 40 hours	5.004	.077	4.852	5.156

## Multiple Comparisons

	(I) A4. I have spent about the following number of hours at ...	(J) A4. I have spent about the following number of hours at ...	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Tukey HSD	1 - 10 hours	11 - 20 hours	-.3489(*)	.10605	.010	-.6394	-.0584
		21 - 30 hours	-.5048(*)	.11400	.000	-.8171	-.1925
		31 - 40 hours	-.7010(*)	.10216	.000	-.9808	-.4212
		more than 40 hours	-.7612(*)	.09926	.000	-1.0331	-.4893
	11 - 20 hours	1 - 10 hours	.3489(*)	.10605	.010	.0584	.6394
		21 - 30 hours	-.1559	.12844	.743	-.5077	.1959
		31 - 40 hours	-.3521(*)	.11806	.025	-.6755	-.0287
		more than 40 hours	-.4123(*)	.11556	.004	-.7288	-.0957
	21 - 30 hours	1 - 10 hours	.5048(*)	.11400	.000	.1925	.8171
		11 - 20 hours	.1559	.12844	.743	-.1959	.5077
		31 - 40 hours	-.1962	.12525	.520	-.5393	.1469
		more than 40 hours	-.2564	.12290	.228	-.5930	.0803
	31 - 40 hours	1 - 10 hours	.7010(*)	.10216	.000	.4212	.9808
		11 - 20 hours	.3521(*)	.11806	.025	.0287	.6755
		21 - 30 hours	.1962	.12525	.520	-.1469	.5393
		more than 40 hours	-.0602	.11200	.983	-.3670	.2466
more than 40 hours	1 - 10 hours	.7612(*)	.09926	.000	.4893	1.0331	
	11 - 20 hours	.4123(*)	.11556	.004	.0957	.7288	
	21 - 30 hours	.2564	.12290	.228	-.0803	.5930	
	31 - 40 hours	.0602	.11200	.983	-.2466	.3670	

Dependent Variable: Mean for Section III(C)

Based on observed means.

\* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

## Part IV. Clinical Field Self-Assessment Results

### **D. Responses to three open-ended questions**

To gain a fuller understanding of the clinical field experience, candidates were asked to respond to the following three open-ended questions:

#### **1. How have you grown as an educator as a result of your experiences in your fieldwork placement? What specific experience(s) contributed in a meaningful way to your growth?**

Many of the candidates believed they grew as educators because of their fieldwork experience. Some students felt the field experience gave them “*confidence in [their] own teaching,*” made them “*more aware of the responsibilities that come with being a teacher,*” and showed them “*the difficulties that a teacher has to face daily.*” The fieldwork experience reinforced the candidates’ passion for teaching.

Observing the classroom mentor teacher helped candidates experience classroom management strategies and they “*saw things that [they] really liked about management, and teaching strategies that [they] will remember and use when it is [their] turn to start teaching.*” Some felt working in urban areas was “*beneficial*” because they “*learn[ed] about smaller budgets and a more diverse student body*” and “*learned great ways to adjust [their] lessons according to students’ different*

*needs.*” Also, they learned *“how important it is to set up routines so students become comfortable in their learning environment.”*

Some of the candidates were allowed to teach a class and learned how to *“deliver [their] lessons,”* and *“work with different types of students at different age levels”*. They had to *“adjust [their] lesson planning to work around a student's strengths and weaknesses.”*

## **2. What have you learned about working with diverse learners as a result of your experience in your fieldwork placement?**

The candidates realized that *“everyone does not learn in the same way,”* and that there can be diverse *“cultures and languages”* in the classroom. In addition, the candidates learned that *“something happening with the student outside of school”* might affect student learning.

A teacher must learn how *“to [accommodate] every [student’s] needs,”* by using differentiated instruction based on the needs of the classroom. Teachers need to *“modify their teaching styles”* in order to reach the whole class. Also, teaching styles may only work for certain groups such as *“upper-level students do not like ‘fun’ activities,”* but *“diverse learners are accommodated well when the curriculum is play based.”*

The candidates felt that it was *“challenging to work with a large group of diverse learners,”* and that good teachers needed to *“have an open mind,”* be patient, and use the *“resources and resource teachers to assist [them].”* One SCSU candidate was inspired by the book From Rage to Hope that influenced how the candidate taught in the classroom.

## **3. What additional experience would have made your fieldwork placement more beneficial?**

Most of the candidates felt that *“no improvement is needed”* and found the experience to be *“very beneficial.”*

Other candidates wish they had *“more opportunities to teach lessons to students.”* Some of the candidates would of liked to be *“placed in the schools closer to my home town”* to increase the number of hours in the classroom. Other candidates would prefer to go *“for full days”* or to go on *“different days of the week”* or to go on *“a field trip with [their] class”* to get a better understanding of the job. One candidate felt *“[viewing] a suburban school and an urban school ... to compare and contrast the two vastly different school environments,”* would have be beneficial.

Many candidates wanted more communication with the cooperating teacher, the candidate’s SCSU professor, and the field placement office. In order to receive feedback, candidates wanted more *“time to talk to [their] cooperating teacher about my lesson plans”*. They wanted to get more *“guidance from [their] supporting professor”* which would allow the candidates to *“adapted [their] individual lessons earlier”* to improve their in class instruction. Also, some candidates wanted the university to be more involved in the placements. One candidate said, *“Southern was never able to find me a placement ... and I found my own placement.”* Also, one candidate wanted to *“[work] with a peer”* and *“share stories that would enhance the learning [experience].”* Candidates would have like to work with *“the age group [they] want to teach”* or in the *“concentration”*, they want to teach.

## **Conclusion**

Study results support the conclusion that the majority of SCSU candidates' who completed a CFESS found their clinical field experience to be productive and meaningful. Candidates noted that these particular aspects contributed most to their positive experience: working with and/or assisting a small group or whole class of students, observing the classroom teacher using various techniques for giving instruction to students, advancing from classroom 'observer' to planning and teaching a lesson, witnessing how students learn differently, and the opportunity for self-reflection. Candidates also articulated that their clinical field experience contributed to their personal and professional growth. As future educators, candidates witnessed first hand the daily challenges and responsibilities of a teacher, and gained an understanding of teacher professional behavior. The clinical field experience also exposed students to different classroom management and teaching strategies and the cultural and linguistic challenges found in diverse classrooms. In addition, candidates recognized and appreciated the fact that students learn differently and the importance of differentiating instruction to meet the needs of all students.

Candidates also voiced concerns regarding specific areas in need of improvement relative to the clinical field experience. A consistent, constant drawback was the inability to incorporate and/or utilize technology in teaching or in at least one lesson. Other areas of concern were limited opportunities to participate in activities outside the classroom, to collaborate with fellow SCSU candidates, to work with students from different ethnic backgrounds at all gate levels, and to teach a lesson. Candidates also expressed a desire to practice a variety of techniques for disciplining students and to spend more time at the field site. Specific to the notion of 'more time' included the wish for 'a full day placement' and to 'vary the day of the week' to allow candidates to see a variety of lessons and activities, and to provide a fuller experience. Candidates also mentioned inadequate and infrequent communication between themselves and the classroom mentor teacher, the SCSU professor, and the field placement officer. Finally, candidates had specific logistical issues regarding finding a placement, obtaining a placement closer to home, and securing both an urban and suburban placement.

**Note:** It is difficult to attribute one factor as the cause of the statistically significant mean difference observed in candidates' perceptions between gates 1 and 3 ( $M=4.79$ ,  $SE=.064$  vs.  $M=4.47$ ,  $SE=.073$ ). The involvedness lies in the fact that there were many differences between candidates at each gate and this variation makes it difficult to draw any definitive conclusions as to which factor(s) may have contributed to gate 1's more favorable outcome. Was it time, was it the course, was it the placement, was it the program, or was it all of these factors working in concert? It is interesting, however, that candidates who spent 1-10 hours at their field site had a significantly less positive experience than candidates who spent more time at their field site: 11-20 hours, 21-30 hours, 31-40 hours or more than 40 hours.

## **Recommendations**

The following list of recommendations address limitations noted above and provide some general suggestions that may serve to enhance the clinical field experience for all candidates:

- provide candidates with the opportunity to utilize or incorporate technology into their clinical field experience(s)
- ensure that candidates at all three gates have the opportunity to work more with students from diverse backgrounds
- enhance dialogue and communication with all partners involved in candidates' clinical field experiences
- provide more time in the clinical field classroom
- monitor candidates' experiences during their placement to ensure a positive experience for 100% of candidates
- provide opportunities for candidates to share and discuss their experiences with one another
- provide more opportunities to teach