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Clinical Field Experience Study

An Analysis of Student Responses of their Field Experience - Fall 2004

Clinical Field Experience Study
SCSU School of Education

Southern Connecticut State University's (SCSU) School of Education (SOE) distributed the *Clinical Field Experience Student Survey* (CFESS) in the fall of 2004 to students enrolled in education courses with a field placement component. The CFESS is a brief survey instrument designed to gather information about a student's field experience at each stage of their academic preparation. The opportunity to conduct fieldwork is provided to all students enrolled in an Educator Preparation Program, and is but one of the requirements for successful completion of a certification program. Students are exposed to a variety of field experiences as they progress through the various levels of their program.

The purpose of this study is to identify and learn students' perceptions of their field experiences while a student at SCSU. Additionally, the SOE is interested in learning more about the 'type' of schools, e.g., urban, rural, etc. where students carry out their field experiences. The results of this study will help to identify areas of strengths and areas that need improvement relative to students' field experiences at SCSU.

The specific goals of this study are to:

- to determine students' overall perception of their field experiences at each gate;
- to determine if there is a difference in students' perceptions of their field experience at each gate according to the course they are enrolled in;
- to determine if there is a difference in students' perceptions of their field experience at each gate between PDS schools, Partner Schools, and other schools;
- to determine if SCSU students are conducting their field experience in diverse schools, e.g., priority, rural, urban, etc.

DEFINITIONS:

PDS Schools: Conte West Hills, Edgewood Magnet, Jepson, and Jerome Harrison
Partner Schools: Wintergreen, Katherine Brennan, Wilbur Cross High School, and Career High School.

Method

Participants

Three hundred and twenty-six students completed the CFESS in the fall of 2004. Students were enrolled in a variety of courses and represented three different levels of progression: Gate 1, Gate 2 and Gate 3. Students at Gate 1 were enrolled in Exercise Science 191 and 291, and in Education 200, 201, and 206; students at Gate 2 were enrolled in Special Education 365 and Education 309; and students at Gate 3 were enrolled in Education 311 and 312, and Exercise Science 495. Table 1 shows the exact distribution of students at each gate, and the number of students enrolled in each course.

Table 1 - Distribution of students at each gate and the size of each sample

Gate 1	Students	**Gate 2**	Students	**Gate 3**	Students
EDU 200	77	*SED 365*	16	*EDU 311*	21
EDU 201	48	*EDU 309*	34	*EDU 312*	21
EDU 206	34	**Total**	50	*EXS495*	25
**EXS 191*	48			**Total**	67
EXS 291	26				
Total	209				

***EXS 191 results not included in any analyses per S. Misasi**

Apparatus

The *Clinical Field Experience Student Survey* was developed by faculty members in the School of Education. This survey asks students to respond to fifteen statements regarding their field experience using a five point Likert scale: **1= Never 2=Seldom 3= Sometimes 4=Often 5= Always.** A copy of the survey is available in the appendix section.

Procedure

The CFESS was distributed to students during class time by professors teaching the above listed courses. The courses were identified for inclusion because each contained a field placement experience. Completed surveys were returned in early December 2004 to interim Associate Dean (SOE), Sharon Misasi, who entered all data into an excel spreadsheet. CCSAR staff then converted the data into SPSS and conducted all statistical analyses.

A frequency distribution was then computed for each survey item at every gate. A mean score and standard deviation were also calculated for every survey item. A frequency distribution was also calculated to determine the diversity of schools where students were completing their field experience (e.g., urban, suburban) at each gate. Next, an *Analysis of Variance* (ANOVA) and *Post Hoc* test (Scheffe) were run at each gate to determine if there were any statistically significant differences between student responses by course or by type of school. All analyses were conducted utilizing a .01 level of significance. This rigorous level of significance was selected to address the issue of uneven sample size between the various courses reviewed and the comparison between the 3 types of schools: PDS, Partner and all other schools.

Results

GATE 1 -FINDINGS

I. – *Students' overall perception of their field experience at Gate 1*

A total of 185 student surveys were reviewed to determine students' overall perceptions of their field experience at Gate 1. The calculated 'overall' survey mean score for this sample was 4.12, and the range of calculated 'overall' survey mean scores for these 185 respondents was 2.71 – 5.00.

The distribution of mean scores for individual survey items ranged from 1.94 – 4.98 with item # 7 receiving the highest mean score: *Field site faculty members model (by doing) expected behavior for me* (M=4.98), and item # 2 receiving the lowest mean score *I participate in programs (teacher in-service, back to school nights, parent teacher conferences, etc.) at my field placement site* (M=1.94). Table 2 shows the distribution of mean scores for all fifteen-survey items.

These results suggest that students' overall perceptions of their field experience at Gate 1 were fairly positive, although three items earned a mean score of less than 3.5: items 1, 2, and 11: *-#1-SCSU faculty and the school faculty at my field placement share open lines of communication (M=3.37); #2- I participate in programs (teacher in-service: back to school nights, parent teacher conferences, etc.) at my field placement site (M=1.94); and #11-I use information technology in my field experience (M=3.17).* These three areas may need to undergo further investigation by the School of Education to determine if any changes need to be implemented.

Table 2 – A comparison of mean scores for the fifteen survey items and the calculated 'overall' mean survey score at Gate 1.

Question	**#1**	**#2**	**#3**	**#4**	**#5**	**#6**	**#7**	**#8**
Mean Score	3.37	**1.94**	4.62	3.88	4.50	4.48	**4.98**	4.33
Question	**#9**	**#10**	**#11**	**#12**	**#13**	**#14**	**#15**	
Mean Score	3.76	3.87	3.17	4.64	4.50	4.74	4.72	
Overall mean score for entire survey at gate1 **4.12**								

II. – *Differences in students' perceptions of field experience based on course enrollment at Gate 1*

An overall survey mean score was determined for each course EDU 200 (M= 4.18), EDU 201 (M= 4.18), EDU 206 (M= 4.23), and EXS 291 (M=3.72) at Gate 1. Table 3 lists

these mean scores by course, and provides information on the highest and lowest scoring survey items within each course.

An *Analysis of Variance* (ANOVA) and *Post hoc test* (Sheffe) showed differences in students' overall perceptions of their field experience based on course enrollment. Students in EXS 291 perceptions of their field experience were statistically different than the perceptions of students' field experience enrolled in EDU 200 (M=4.18 versus M=3.72) EDU 201 (M=4.18 versus M=3.72); and EDU 206 (M=4.23 versus M=3.72). In each case, the mean difference was statistically significantly lower for students enrolled in EXS 291 than for students enrolled in all other courses at the p<.01 level. Table 3 below provides a comparison of mean scores by course.

Table 3 - A comparison of overall survey mean scores and the range of individual survey mean scores by course at Gate 1

Course	Number of surveys	Overall survey mean score	High Mean Score	Low Mean Score
EDU 200	n = 77	4.18	4.95(#7)	2.16(#2)
EDU 201	n = 48	4.18	5.00(#7)	1.71(#2)
EDU 206	n = 34	4.23	5.00(#7)	2.09(#2)
EXS 291	n = 26	3.72	5.00(#7)	1.58(#2)

EDU= Education
EXS= Exercise Science
SED= Special Education

A secondary analysis was conducted to further explore the perceptions of students enrolled in different courses by individual survey items. An ANOVA indicated that there were statistically significant differences found between courses on the following 5 survey items:

#1- *SCSU faculty and the school faculty at my field placement share open lines of communication;*

#4-I engage in informal reflection of my field placement through class discussion; meeting with SCSU professors; or meeting with my field placement site faculty;

#5- I have had opportunities to discuss teaching and learning in the classroom with my cooperating teacher;

#8- Knowledge learned in university courses can be applied to my field experience and

#9- I regularly interact with classroom teachers, university professors, and other teacher candidates about their practice in school.

A *Post Hoc* (Scheffe) test was then conducted to discern which courses were different from each other on these five items. The analysis on item #1 revealed a statistical difference between EDU 201and EXS 291(M=3.86 vs. M=2.00) and EDU 206 and EXS 291(M=3.86 vs. M=2.00). In both instances, the mean difference on this item was significantly lower for EXS 291 at p<.01.

The analysis for item #4 revealed a statistical difference between EDU 200 and EXS 291 (M=3.93 vs. M=2.80,); EDU 201 and EXS 291 (M=4.24 vs. M=2.80) and EDU 206 and EXS 291 (M=4.09 vs. M=2.80). In all cases, the mean difference for this item was significantly lower for EXS 291 at the p<.01 level.

The analysis for item #5 revealed a statistical difference between EDU 200 and EXS (M=4.62 vs. M= 3.96,) and EDU 201 and EXS 291 (M=4.63 vs. 3.96). In both instances, the mean difference for this item was significantly lower for EXS 291 at the p<.01 level.

The analysis for item #8 revealed a statistical difference between EDU 206 and EXS 291 (M=4.67 vs. M=3.83). In this instance, the mean difference for this item was significantly lower for EXS 291 at the p<.01 level.

The analysis for item # 9 revealed a statistical difference between EDU 200 and EXS 291 (M=3.95 vs. M=2.96); EDU 201 and EXS 291 (M=3.79 vs. M=2.96), and EDU 206 and EXS 291 (M=3.91 vs. M=2.96). In all cases the mean difference for this item was significantly lower for EXS 291 at the p <.01 level.

This data suggests that students in EXS 291 overall perceptions of their field experiences were different than the overall perceptions of students enrolled in EDU 200, 201 and 206, and specifically for items 1,4,5,8, and 9. Again, the difference was lower, suggesting that the perceptions of students in EXS 291 were not as positive.

III. – ***Differences between Professional Development, Partner, and all other schools at Gate 1***

The three types of schools in our sample were Professional Development Schools (PDS), Partner Schools and all other schools. Analysis to determine a statistically significant difference between the groups was not calculated because the sample size did not meet statisticians' requirement for minimum sample size (n=25) .The observed data in Table 4 below suggests that the differences between the 3 types of schools was negligible.

Table 4 - A comparison of overall survey mean score by type of school at Gate 1

Type of School	Number of surveys	Overall Mean Score	High Mean Score	Low Mean Score
Professional Development School	n= 14	4.05	4.86(#3,#7)	2.29(#2)
Partner School	n= 5	4.21	5.00(#7)	2.20(#2)
All Other School	n=163	4.13	4.99(#7)	1.92(#2)

IV – *Distribution of students based on Economic Reference Group at Gate 1*

Schools where students were conducting their field placement experiences were grouped together to determine the diversity of students' field placement experiences as measured by the school's ERG. The following table lists the number of students who were placed in a particular reference group at Gate 1 by virtue of their field placement site.

Table 5- Diversity of field placement experiences at Gate 1 as measured by ERG

Economic Reference Group	Number of surveys completed by students
A	8
B	13
C	5
D	35
E	* 1
F	35
G	8
H	24
I	*52

*** Highest and lowest distributions at Gate 1**

V – *Summary Findings for Gate 1*

Findings suggest that students' overall perceptions of their field experience at Gate 1 were positive, although, one course and some particular items suggest that there may be areas that need further exploration. At Gate 1, students enrolled in EXS 291 (M=3.72) had a different perception of their field experience than students in EDU 200 (M=4.18), EDU 201 (M=4.18), and EDU 206 (M=4.23). Although an overall mean of 3.72 is a moderate score, it was still statistically lower than the mean scores in the other courses. Additionally, the mean differences in scores for students in EXS 291 were statistically lower for each of these survey items: 1,4,5,8, and 9.

Other survey items with moderate/low mean scores at Gate 1 included items #2, and #11. Item #2 - *I participate in programs (teacher in-service, back to school nights, parent teacher conferences, etc.) at my field placement site* received the lowest mean score for all survey items, all respondents, and all courses at Gate 1. Item #11- *I use information technology in my field experience* earned a mean score of less than 3.5.

GATE 2-FINDINGS

I. – *Students overall perception of their field experience at Gate 2*

A total of 50 student surveys were reviewed to determine students' overall perceptions of their field experience at Gate *2.* The calculated overall mean survey score was 4.14 for this sample of 50 students, and the range of calculated 'overall' mean survey scores for these 50 respondents were 3.13 – 4.73**.**

The distribution of mean scores for individual survey items ranged from 1.34 – 4.82 with item # 6 receiving the highest mean score: *The SCSU faculty member who teaches the university course connected to my field experience models expected behavior for me* (M=4.82) and item # 2 receiving the lowest mean score: *I participate in programs (teacher in-service, back to school nights, parent teacher conferences, etc.) at my field placement site* (M=1.34). Table 7 shows the distribution of mean scores earned for each survey item.

These results suggest that students' overall perceptions of their field experience at Gate 2 were fairly positive, although two items earned a score of less than 3.5, items #2 - *I participate in programs (teacher in-service, back to school nights, parent teacher conferences, etc.)* and *#11-I use information technology in my field experience* (M=3.08). These two areas may need closer review by the School of Education depending upon the expectations and standards required at Gate 2.

Table 7 – A comparison of mean scores for the fifteen survey items and the calculated 'overall' survey mean score

CFESS Question	**#1**	**#2**	**#3**	**#4**	**#5**	**#6**	**#7**	**#8**
Mean Score	4.31	**1.34**	4.27	4.32	4.37	**4.82**	4.40	4.59
CFESS Question	**#9**	**#10**	**#11**	**#12**	**#13**	**#14**	**#15**	
Mean Score	3.86	3.98	3.08	4.76	4.70	4.71	4.68	
Overall mean score for entire survey at gate 2 **4.14**								

II. – *Differences in students' perceptions of their field experience based on course enrollment at Gate 2*

An overall survey mean score was determined for each course represented at Gate 2: EDU 309(M=4.21) and SED 365(M=4.0) Table 8 below lists the overall mean survey score for each course, and the highest and lowest scoring survey items for each course. Additional analyses to determine differences between groups could not be calculated because the number of completed surveys in SED 365 (n=16) did not meet statistician's

requirement for minimum sample size, n=25. However, these strong overall survey mean scores suggest that students in both EDU 309 and SED 365 have positive perceptions of their field experiences at Gate 2.

Table 8 - A comparison of overall survey mean scores and the range of individual survey mean scores by course

Class	Number of Surveys	Overall Survey Mean Score	High Mean Score	Low Mean Score
EDU 309	n=34	4.21	4.82(#12)	1.50(#2)
SED 365	n=16	4.00	4.88(#6)	1.00(#2)

EDU= Education
SED= Special Education

III. – ***Differences between Professional Development, Partner, and all other schools at Gate 2***

The three types of schools in our sample were Professional Development Schools (PDS), Partner Schools and all other schools. Analysis to determine statistically significant differences between school types was not calculated because the number of completed surveys for PDS schools (n=7) and Partner Schools (n=0) did not meet statisticians' requirement for minimum sample size (n=25). Table 9 below lists and compares the overall survey mean scores between PDS, Partner and all other schools.

The overall high survey mean scores earned by PDS and 'all other schools' suggests that students have positive perceptions regarding their field placement experiences at Gate 2. Any conclusions about similarities/differences between the types of schools should not be inferred because of the small sample size for PDS schools (n=7), and (n=43) for all other schools.

Table 9 - A comparison of overall survey mean score by type of school

Type of School	Number of surveys	Overall Survey Mean Score	High Mean Score	Low Mean Score
Professional Development School	n = 7	4.14	5.00(#15)	1.29(#2)
Partner School	n = 0			
Other Schools	n = 43	4.14	4.81(#6)	1.36(#2)

IV. – ***Distribution of students based on Economic Reference Group at Gate 2***

Schools where students were conducting their field placement experiences were grouped together to determine the diversity of students' field placement experiences as measured by the school's ERG. The following table lists the number of students who were placed in a particular reference group at Gate 2 by virtue of their field placement school.

Table 10- Diversity of field placement experiences at Gate 2 as measured by ERG

Economic Reference Group	Number of surveys completed by students
B	2
C	* 1
D	8
H	2
I	* 11

*** Highest and lowest distributions at Gate 2**

V – ***Summary Findings for Gate 2***

These findings suggest that students' overall perceptions of their field experience at Gate 2 were positive for students enrolled in both EDU 309 and SED 365. In particular, students in SED 365 felt most positive about item #6 - *The SCSU faculty member who teaches the university course connected to my field experience models expected behavior for me*, (M=4.88) and students in EDU 309 felt most positive about item #12- *Interactions with students in my field experience classrooms provide opportunities for me to develop knowledge, skills, and dispositions related to becoming a good teacher (M=4.82).*

Item #2- *I participate in programs (teacher in-service, back to school nights, parent-teacher conferences, etc.) at my field placement site* had the lowest item mean score for all respondents at Gate 2, and for students enrolled in EDU 309 (M=1.50) and SED 365 (M=1.0).

GATE 3-FINDINGS

I. – *Students overall perception of their field experience at Gate 3*

A total of 67 student surveys were reviewed to determine students' overall perceptions of their field experience at Gate 3. The calculated 'overall' survey mean score was 3.90 and the range of calculated 'overall' survey mean scores for these 67 respondents was 2.27 – 5.00.

The distribution of mean scores for individual survey items ranged from 1.71 – 4.53(see table 12) with item # 12 receiving the highest mean score: *Interactions with students in my field experience classrooms provided opportunities for me to develop knowledge, skills and dispositions related to becoming a good teacher (M=4.53)* and item # 2 receiving the lowest survey mean score: *I participate in programs (teacher in-service, back to school nights, parent teacher conferences, etc.) at my field placement site* (M=1.71) .

These results suggest that students overall perceptions of field experience are moderately positive at Gate 3. Two items received mean scores less than 3.5: items # 2 and #11: *#2- I participate in programs (teacher in-service, back to school nights, parent teacher conferences, etc.) at my field placement site (M=1.71); #11- I use information technology in my field experience (M=3.17).* These two areas may need a closer review by the School of Education depending upon the expectations and standards required at Gate 3.

Table 12- A comparison of mean score for the fifteen survey items and the calculated 'overall' survey mean score

CFESS Question	**#1**	**#2**	**#3**	**#4**	**#5**	**#6**	**#7**	**#8**
Mean Score	3.77	**1.71**	4.26	3.83	4.14	4.09	4.03	4.18
CFESS Question	**#9**	**#10**	**#11**	**#12**	**#13**	**#14**	**#15**	
Mean Score	3.87	3.87	3.17	**4.53**	4.18	4.41	4.33	
Overall mean score for entire survey at gate 3 **3.90**								

II. – *Differences in students' perceptions based on course enrollment at Gate 3*

An 'overall' survey mean score was determined for each course represented at Gate 3: EDU 311 (M= 3.92), EDU 312 (M=4.21), and EXS 495 (M=3.63). Table 13 lists the 'overall' mean survey score for each course, and the highest and lowest scoring survey item in each course. Additional analyses to determine a statistically significant difference

between groups was not executed because the number of completed surveys in EDU 311, EDU 312, and EXS 495 did not meet statisticians' minimum sample size requirement, n=25. Table 13 lists the overall survey mean score for each course, and the highest and lowest scoring item in each course.

A mean score of 4.21(EDU 312) 'appears' to be higher than a mean of 3.63(EXS 495) but this is not statistically conclusive.

Table 13 - A comparison of overall survey mean scores and the range of individual survey mean scores by Course

Class	Number of surveys	Overall Survey Mean Score	High Mean Score	Low Mean Score
EDU 311	N=21	3.92	4.71(#14)	1.62 (#2)
EDU 312	N=21	4.21	4.67(#6,#12,#14)	2.10(#2)
EXS 495	N=25	3.63	4.32(#12)	1.46(#2)

EDU= Education
EXS= Exercise Science

III. – ***Differences between Professional Development, Partner, and all other schools at Gate 3***

The three types of schools in our sample were Professional Development Schools (PDS), Partner Schools and all other schools. Analysis to determine a statistically significant difference between school 'types' was not calculated because the number of completed surveys in PDS (n=23) and Partner (n=0) schools did not meet statistician's minimum requirement for a sample size (n=25). The observed difference, however, appears to be negligible.

Table 14- A comparison of overall survey mean score by types of schools

Type of School	Number of Surveys	Overall Survey Mean Score	High Mean Score	Low Mean Score
Professional Development School	n = 23	3.74	4.43(#12)	1.33(#2)
Partner School	n = 0			
Other Schools	n = 43	3.99	4.63(#14)	1.88(#2)

IV – *Distribution of students based on Economic Reference Group at Gate 3*

Schools where students conducted their field experiences were grouped together to determine the diversity of field experiences as measured by a school's ERG. The following table lists the number of students placed at each ERG for Gate 3.

Table 15-Diversity of field placement experiences at Gate 3 as measured by ERG

Economic Reference Group	Number of Surveys Completed by Students
B	*1
D	8
F	3
H	3
I	*44

* Highest and lowest distributions at Gate 3

V – Summary Findings for Gate 3

These findings suggest that students' perceptions of their field experience were moderately positive with a mean score of 3.90. Students felt most positive about item #12 - *Interactions with students in my field experience classrooms provide opportunities for me to develop knowledge, skills, and dispositions related to becoming a good teacher* (M=4.53). Item #14 - *The faculty at my field placement site demonstrate and model respect for all students* also had high mean scores when comparing data by course and by type of school (M=4.41).

Students in EXS 495 appeared to have a different perception of their field experience at than students in EDU 311 and EDU 312. In particular, the observed difference in mean scores is largest when comparing the overall survey mean scores between EDU 312(M=4.21) and EXS 495 (M=3.63).

Item #2-*I participate in programs (teacher in service, back to school nights, parent-teacher conferences, etc) at my field placement site* had the lowest item mean score for all respondents at Gate 3, and for students enrolled in EDU 311, EDU 312, and EXS 495.

Summary and Conclusion

A review of the calculated 'overall' survey mean scores earned at Gates #1 (M=4.12), Gate # 2 (M=4.14), and Gate #3 (M=3.90) suggests that students in the various SCSU educator preparation programs had positive perceptions of their field experience. In particular, students found the following areas most favorable: item #7-*Field site faculty members model (by doing) expected behavior for me* (M=4.98 at gate 1); item #6-*The SCSU faculty member who teaches the university course connected to my field experience models expected behavior for me* (M=4.82 at gate 2); and item #12-*Interactions with students in my field experience classrooms provide opportunities for me to develop knowledge, skills, and dispositions related to becoming a good teacher* (M=4.53 at gate 3). Other items that scored well for a specific course or for a particular type of school were items #3-*I engage in structured reflection of my filed placement in a fieldwork journal* (M=4.86, PDS, Gate 1); #14*The faculty at my field placement site demonstrate and model respect for all students* (EDU 311, M=4.71, EDU 312, M=4.67, at GATE 3); and *#15-At the conclusion of my field experience, I feel more confident in my ability to become a successful teacher* (Gate 2, PDS, M=5.0)

An area where student perceptions were not as favorable involved responses related to activities 'outside' the typical classroom, e.g., back-to school nights, teacher in-services, parent-teacher conferences, etc. This perception was found to be true at each of the gates, and for all courses reviewed for this study. In fact, item # 2-*I participated in programs (back to school nights, parent-teacher conferences, etc.) at my field placement site* received the lowest 'overall' survey mean score at each gate, for each course reviewed, and for every type of school. Other areas where student perceptions were not as favorable included areas related to communication and technology. Specifically, items #1- *SCSU faculty and the school faculty at my field placement share open lines of communications*- (gate 1) & #11 -*I use information technology in my field experience* (gates 1, 2, & 3) both earned mean scores lower than 3.5.

An analysis of student perceptions at each gate according to course enrollment also provided additional information. At Gate 1, the field experience of students enrolled in EXS 291 was statistically different from the field experience of students enrolled in EDU 200, EDU 201 and EDU 206. The 'overall' mean score for EXS 291 was statistically lower than the 'overall' survey mean scores for EDU 200, 201, and EDU 206 at ($p<.01$). In addition, the perception of students in EXS 291were statistically different from at least one other EDU course on the following survey items:

#1-*SCSU faculty and the school faculty at my field placement share open lines of communication; #4-I engage in informal reflection of my field placement through class discussion; meeting with SCSU professors; or meeting with my field placement site faculty; #5- I have had opportunities to discuss teaching and learning in the classroom with my cooperating teacher; #8- Knowledge learned in university courses can be applied to my field experience and #9-I regularly interact with classroom teachers, university professors, and other teacher candidates about their practice in school.*

At Gate 3, students enrolled in EXS 495 also appeared to have different perceptions of their field experience than students enrolled in EDU 312. Although a statistical analysis could not be calculated because of sample size, the observed difference in mean scores was EXS 495(M=3.63) and EDU 312 (M=4.21).

The calculation of statistical differences between types of schools, e.g., PDS, Partner, etc. at each gate was not plausible because of inadequate sample sizes. Observed differences between these 3 types of schools (PDS, Partner, Others) appeared neglible. A frequency distribution to calculate diversity of field placement sites indicated that the majority of students (at each gate) conducted their field placement in schools located in ERG I. The ERG's that represented only one student at each gate were ERG's E, C and B.

Lessons Learned

It is not easy to deduce or make recommendations based on these results because of the uncertainty of course and/or gate level 'desired outcomes'. Thus, it is difficult to confidently state that a finding is a 'strength' or a 'weakness' if the intended outcome is unknown. For example, students consistently responded unfavorably in the area related to program participation, e.g., teacher in-services, back to school nights, etc. at their field placement site. If this was an objective, then it was not met and is considered a limitation of the program. However, if this was <u>not</u> an objective for the course and/or for each gate, then the interpretation is quite different. The only conclusive statements that can be made are that students in EXS 291 and EXS 495 have different perceptions of their field experiences than students in the other courses, and students are not participating in activities such as parent-teacher conferences, back to school nights, etc. during their field placement experiences. In a positive venue, the high mean scores earned on items #6, #7 and #12 suggest that SCSU students perceive their professors and field site teachers as positive role models who are exhibiting proper behavior, and students are learning skills that will make them better teachers.

The suggested next steps for the SOE include reflecting on three questions:(1) are the differences between EDU and EXS courses meaningful, (2) how important is student participation in activities such as parent-teacher conferences, back to school nights, and teacher in- services during their field placement experience, and (3) based on these preliminary results, what changes (if any) are to be made to enhance students' field experiences at SCSU. Additionally, construct a review of individual items that earned low mean scores to determine if change is warranted.

Any future research on SCSU student perceptions of their field placement experiences should begin with a clearly defined purpose and an assessment instrument that aligns with the goals and objectives of the program and the gate. In this way, the SOE can readily determine the strengths and weaknesses of students' field experiences and address any challenges or make modifications as students' progress through their individual programs.