



# **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*

**Spring 2008**

**Clinical Field Experience Study**  
**An Analysis of Teacher Candidate Responses**  
**SCSU School of Education – Spring 2008**

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 spring of 2008 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 spring 2008 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. Three hundred eighty-eight completed *Clinical Field Experience Student Self-Assessments* (CFESS) were reviewed for this study.

Student ID numbers were required to complete the self-assessment so CCSAR staff were able to track the number of candidates who submitted for multiple courses. Of the 388 completed assessments, 51 were provided by individuals enrolled in 2 courses (typically an EDU and an SED course). For those enrolled in more than one field experience class, both responses were used in the analysis. A preliminary analysis showed that the same candidate provided different responses based on the class they were enrolled in.

Teacher candidates were enrolled in a variety of courses and represented three levels of progression: Gate 1, Gate 2, and Gate 3. In this sample, 111 were enrolled in Gate 1 courses,

179 in Gate 2 courses, and 98 in Gate 3. The majority of candidates were undergraduates (approx. 80%), 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 .943 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 spring of 2008 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 822 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. Two email reminders were sent to candidates and their course instructors throughout the data collection period. Three hundred eighty-eight self-assessments were electronically submitted by the close of the data collection period in May 2008. Data were reviewed for errors and/or missing information.

## **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, EDU 201, EDU 311, and EXS 292 candidates averaged 40 hours or more at their field site while ART 370, SED 235, SED 325, SED 365, and SED 375 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	16	ART 370	19	EDU 311	25
EDU 200	49	EDU 309	15	EDU 490	8
EDU 201	18	EDU 312	13	EDU 492	8
EDU 206	11	EDU 413	9	EDU 493	8
EXS 191	2	EXS 292	24	EDU 494	7
SED 225	15	EXS 394	26	EDU 503	1
		EXS 483	21	EDU 504	1
		SED 235	16	ENG 492	3
		SED 325	12	EXS 495	5
		SED 335	4	IDS 449	3
		SED 365	16	SED 375	15
		SED 536	4	SED 435	8
				SED 445	3
				SED 449	3
<b>Total n=</b>	<b>111</b>		<b>179</b>		<b>98</b>
<b>Percent</b>	<b>28.6</b>		<b>46.1</b>		<b>25.3</b>

n = 388

**Table 2 – Candidates Pursuing the Following Certification Areas (Valid Percents are used.)**

	Total		Undergrad		Graduate	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
K – 12	132	34.4	95	30.9	37	48.7
Early Childhood Education	22	5.7	22	7.2	0	0
Elementary Education	79	20.6	77	25.1	2	2.6
Secondary Education	74	19.3	52	16.9	21	27.6
Elementary/Special Education Collaborative	77	20.1	61	19.9	16	21.1
<b>Total:</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>307</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 3 – Number of Hours Spent at Field Site** (Valid Percents are used.)

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

	Overall		Gate 1		Gate 2		Gate 3	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1 -10 hours	108	27.9	15	13.5	63	35.4	30	30.6
11 – 20 hours	67	17.3	7	6.3	43	24.2	17	17.3
21 – 30 hours	38	9.8	14	12.6	15	8.4	9	9.2
31 – 40 hours	90	23.3	47	42.3	24	13.5	19	19.4
More than 40 hours	84	21.7	28	25.2	33	18.5	23	23.5
<b>Total:</b>	<b>387</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>98</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 (90.1%). In gate 2 candidates indicated that ‘observing’ had been reduced (50.6%) and planning and the opportunity to teach at least one lesson had increased (70.8%). And in gate 3, candidates reported more observing (86.7%) than planning (42.9%) or teaching (51.1%). 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 all three gates, the most frequently selected response was ‘a small group’ of students (64.0% at gate 1, 59.0% at Gate 2, and 56.1% at gate 3).

##### **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 candidates at each gate felt they demonstrated patience, organization, respect for students’ differences, fairness, and professionalism. A lower percentage felt they had demonstrated effective classroom management strategies: gate 1 = 67.6%, gate 2 = 72.5%, gate 3 = 72.2%. More than 50% of candidates reported arriving on time, being prepared, staying longer than their scheduled time, and collaborating with students, mentor teachers, and peers (with the exception of candidates at Gate 1 where only 29.1% responded that they had collaborated with peers). A lower percentage of students felt they spent time participating in activities outside the classroom: gate 1 = 36.4%, gate 2 = 30.9%, gate 3 = 35.7%.

##### **Diversity of Students**

Gate 1 candidates had the opportunity to work with students from different ethnic backgrounds more often than candidates in Gate 2 and Gate 3. Responses of ‘always’ and ‘often’ were given

by 73.0% of Gate 1 candidates, 68.0% at Gate 2, and 64.9% 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**  
(Candidates were asked to 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	6.3	15.2	21.4
one student at a time	29.7	34.8	36.7
occasionally assisted a student, but mostly observed	34.2	20.2	31.6
small group(s) of students	52.3	52.8	39.8
the whole class	48.6	37.1	46.9
<b>B2. During my field experience, I worked with student(s):</b>			
never	3.6	10.1	15.3
rarely	7.2	6.7	8.2
sometimes	19.8	23.6	17.3
often	32.4	23.0	31.6
always	38.7	39.9	34.7
<b>B3. During my field experience, I</b>			
observed	90.1	68.5	86.7
planned	23.4	50.6	42.9
taught at least one lesson	30.6	70.8	51.0
<b>B4. During my field experience, I had the opportunity to assist:</b>			
one student	52.3	59.0	56.1
a small group of students	64.0	59.0	56.1
the whole class	55.9	42.7	50.0
I did not have the opportunity to assist students	4.5	12.9	14.3
<b>B5. During my field experience, I adapted my mentor teacher’s lesson for:</b>			
one student	20.9	18.4	20.6
a small group of students	45.5	32.8	25.8
the whole class	30.9	28.2	29.9
I did not have the opportunity to adapt a lesson for students	34.5	41.4	47.4
<b>B6. During my field experience, I demonstrated:</b>			
patience	91.9	92.1	92.8
organization	80.2	88.2	84.5
effective classroom management strategies	67.6	72.5	72.2
respect for students’ differences	89.2	86.0	87.6
fairness	84.7	83.7	77.3
professionalism	98.2	97.2	91.8
<b>B7. During my field experience, I:</b>			
arrived on time	95.5	97.2	96.9
was prepared	94.5	93.8	94.9
stayed longer than my scheduled time	58.2	51.7	52.0

participated in activities outside the classroom	36.4	30.9	35.7
collaborated with students	80.0	67.4	67.3
collaborated with my mentor teacher	84.5	65.7	72.4
collaborated with my peers	29.1	57.9	54.1
<b>B8. I worked with students who were from different ethnic backgrounds than mine:</b>			
always	51.4	38.2	43.3
often	21.6	29.8	21.6
sometimes	18.9	25.8	16.5
rarely	8.1	2.8	10.3
never	2.7	7.9	11.3

### **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 3.47 to 5.34. The overall mean score was 4.61. Item C16: *Through my field experience I have gained an understanding of teacher professional behavior*, received the highest mean score (M=5.34) and Item C27: *I had the opportunity to utilize technology in my teaching*, received the lowest mean score (M=3.47). Other items whose mean scores suggest a less positive response (3.00=disagree) were: C10: *I had the opportunity to observe the classroom teacher planning lessons* (M=3.93); C11: *I had the opportunity to try various techniques for disciplining students* (M=3.62); and C26: *I had the opportunity to incorporate technology into at least one lesson* (M=3.53). Individual candidates' overall survey mean scores ranged from 1.00 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.	5.34	0.868
<b>C19</b>	I developed a deeper understanding of students with different ability levels.	5.30	0.935
<b>C21</b>	I had the opportunity for self-reflection.	5.27	0.922
<b>C20</b>	This field experience gave me the opportunity to experience life in the classroom as I learned about it in my course.	5.12	1.004
<b>C24</b>	Self-reflection helped me make sense of what I was learning in my fieldwork.	5.07	1.025
<b>C22</b>	I had the opportunity to discuss my field experience with my SCSU professor.	5.06	1.135
<b>C1</b>	My field experience helped me understand the cognitive development of children.	5.05	0.952
<b>C6</b>	I had the opportunity to observe the classroom teacher use various techniques for giving instructions to students.	4.96	1.257
<b>C17</b>	I developed a deeper understanding of students from all cultural backgrounds.	4.96	1.112
<b>C18</b>	I developed a deeper understanding of students from all socioeconomic backgrounds.	4.93	1.091

<b>C2</b>	My field experience helped me understand the emotional development of children.	4.93	1.001
<b>C8</b>	I had the opportunity to observe the classroom teacher use various techniques for organizing classroom life.	4.85	1.242
<b>C23</b>	I had the opportunity to discuss my field experience with my mentor classroom teacher.	4.81	1.423
<b>C9</b>	I had the opportunity to observe the classroom teacher use various time management techniques.	4.81	1.267
<b>C7</b>	I had the opportunity to observe the classroom teacher use various techniques for disciplining students.	4.77	1.324
<b>C3</b>	My field experience helped me understand the physical development of children.	4.74	1.182
<b>C4</b>	I made changes in my lesson(s) to accommodate students' different learning styles.	4.58	1.507
<b>C12</b>	I had the opportunity to try various techniques for giving instructions to students.	4.44	1.547
<b>C5</b>	During at least one lesson, I modified my instruction based on an assessment of the students' learning.	4.44	1.556
<b>C13</b>	I had the opportunity to try various instructional techniques.	4.33	1.604
<b>C25</b>	I had the opportunity to observe the use of technology in the classroom.	4.31	1.493
<b>C28</b>	In my field experience, I was able to observe how technology can be utilized to assist students.	4.21	1.614
<b>C15</b>	I had the opportunity to try planning lessons.	4.15	1.843
<b>C14</b>	I had the opportunity to try various time management techniques.	4.14	1.596
<b>C10</b>	I had the opportunity to observe the classroom teacher planning lessons.	3.93	1.636
<b>C11</b>	I had the opportunity to try various techniques for disciplining students.	3.62	1.688
<b>C26</b>	I had the opportunity to incorporate technology into at least one lesson.	3.53	1.698
<b>C27</b>	I had the opportunity to utilize technology in my teaching.	3.47	1.667

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

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

The distribution of item mean scores at gate 1 ranged from 3.40 to 5.55 for 111 candidates. The calculated overall survey mean score was 4.77. 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=5.55), and Item C27: *I had the opportunity to utilize technology in my teaching*, received the lowest mean score (M=3.40). Additional items whose mean scores suggest that candidates may 'disagree' with the statement are C11: *I had the opportunity to try various techniques for disciplining students* (M=3.57); C15: *I had the opportunity to try planning lessons* (M=3.42), and C27: *I had the opportunity to incorporate technology into at least one lesson* (M=3.43). Individual candidates' overall survey mean scores ranged from 1.00 to 6.00.

#### **Gate 2 - Results**

The distribution of item mean scores at gate 2 ranged from 3.50 to 5.28 for 179 candidates. The calculated overall survey mean score was 4.55. Item C16: *Through my field experience I have gained an understanding of teacher professional behavior*, received the highest mean score (M=5.28) and Item C27: *I had the opportunity to utilize technology in my teaching*, received the lowest mean score (M=3.50). Additional items whose mean scores suggest that candidates may

have ‘disagreed’ with the statement were: C10: *I had the opportunity to observe the classroom teacher planning lessons* (M=3.66); C11: *I had the opportunity to try various techniques for disciplining students* (M=3.65); C25 *I had the opportunity to observe the use of technology in the classroom.*(M=3.98), C26: *I had the opportunity to incorporate technology into at least one lesson* (M=3.57), and C28 *In my field experience I was able to observe how technology can be utilized to assist students* (M=3.90). Individual candidates’ overall survey mean scores ranged from 1.00 to 6.00.

### Gate 3 - Results

The distribution of mean scores for each survey item ranged from 3.49 to 5.33 for 98 candidates. The calculated overall survey mean score for this sample was 4.55. Item C21: *I had the opportunity for self-reflection*, received the highest mean score (M=5.33) and Item C27: *I had the opportunity to utilize technology in my teaching*, received the lowest mean score (M=3.49). Additional items who mean score suggests that candidates may have ‘disagreed’ with the statement were: C10: *I had the opportunity to observe the classroom teacher planning lessons* (M=3.68); and C11: *I had the opportunity to try various techniques for disciplining students* (M=3.64). Individual candidates’ overall survey mean scores ranged from 1.00 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.	5.16	5.10	4.85	5.05
<b>C2</b>	My field experience helped me understand the emotional development of children.	5.09	4.93	4.74	4.93
<b>C3</b>	My field experience helped me understand the physical development of children.	4.94	4.82	4.37	4.74
<b>C4</b>	I made changes in my lesson(s) to accommodate students’ different learning styles.	4.42	4.77	4.42	4.58
<b>C5</b>	During at least one lesson, I modified my instruction based on an assessment of the student’s learning.	4.39	4.57	4.25	4.44
<b>C6</b>	I had the opportunity to observe the classroom teacher use various techniques for giving instructions to students.	5.55	4.58	4.98	4.96
<b>C7</b>	I had the opportunity to observe the classroom teacher use various techniques for disciplining students.	5.29	4.45	4.77	4.77
<b>C8</b>	I had the opportunity to observe the classroom teacher use various techniques for organizing classroom life.	5.41	4.56	4.77	4.85
<b>C9</b>	I had the opportunity to observe the classroom teacher use various time management techniques.	5.35	4.50	4.76	4.81
<b>C10</b>	I had the opportunity to observe the classroom teacher planning lessons.	4.58	3.66	3.68	3.93
<b>C11</b>	I had the opportunity to try various techniques for disciplining students.	3.57	3.65	3.64	3.62
<b>C12</b>	I had the opportunity to try various techniques for giving instructions to students.	4.55	4.47	4.25	4.44

<b>C13</b>	I had the opportunity to try various instructional techniques.	4.31	4.38	4.27	4.33
<b>C14</b>	I had the opportunity to try various time management techniques.	4.13	4.16	4.11	4.14
<b>C15</b>	I had the opportunity to try planning lessons.	3.42	4.58	4.17	4.15
<b>C16</b>	Through my field experience, I have gained an understanding of teacher professional behavior.	5.51	5.28	5.24	5.34
<b>C17</b>	I developed a deeper understanding of students from all cultural backgrounds.	5.20	4.90	4.79	4.96
<b>C18</b>	I developed a deeper understanding of students from all socioeconomic backgrounds.	5.06	4.95	4.74	4.93
<b>C19</b>	I developed a deeper understanding of students with different ability levels.	5.49	5.26	5.16	5.30
<b>C20</b>	This field experience gave me the opportunity to experience life in the classroom as I learned about it in my course.	5.27	5.03	5.11	5.12
<b>C21</b>	I had the opportunity for self-reflection.	5.35	5.20	5.33	5.27
<b>C22</b>	I had the opportunity to discuss my field experience with my SCSU professor.	5.11	5.11	4.94	5.06
<b>C23</b>	I had the opportunity to discuss my field experience with my mentor classroom teacher.	5.34	4.51	4.74	4.81
<b>C24</b>	Self-reflection helped me make sense of what I was learning in my fieldwork.	5.17	4.98	5.11	5.07
<b>C25</b>	I had the opportunity to observe the use of technology in the classroom.	4.66	3.98	4.51	4.31
<b>C26</b>	I had the opportunity to incorporate technology into at least one lesson.	3.43	3.57	3.60	3.53
<b>C27</b>	I had the opportunity to utilize technology in my teaching.	3.40	3.50	3.49	3.47
<b>C28</b>	In my field experience, I was able to observe how technology can be utilized to assist students.	4.45	3.90	4.47	4.21
	<b>Overall Survey Mean Score for Each Gate</b>	<b>4.77</b>	<b>4.55</b>	<b>4.55</b>	<b>4.61</b>

### 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 did not differ between gates:  $F(2, 385) = 2.62, p = .074$ . 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.

### Descriptives

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Gate 1	111	4.7687	.80561	.07646
Gate 2	179	4.5535	.88974	.06650
Gate 3	98	4.5501	.78956	.07976
Total	388	4.6142	.84524	.04291

**Tests of Between-Subjects Effects**

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	3.711(b)	2	1.856	2.619	.074	.013
Intercept	7759.717	1	7759.717	10952.394	.000	.966
gate	3.711	2	1.856	2.619	.074	.013
Error	272.771	385	.708			
Total	8537.242	388				
Corrected Total	276.482	387				

a Computed using alpha = .05

b R Squared = .013 (Adjusted R Squared = .008)

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 independent variable yielded significant results,  $F(4,382) = 11.57, p < .001$ . The Tukey post hoc multiple comparison test found group 1(1-10 hours), mean score of 4.20 and a standard error of .820, statistically lower than all of the other groups’ mean scores. In short, those who spent 10 hours or less at their field site responded to section III less positively than candidates from the other four time groups.

**Descriptive Statistics**

A4. I have spent about the following number of hours at ...	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
1 - 10 hours	4.1993	.81955	108
11 - 20 hours	4.6724	.73455	67
21 - 30 hours	4.7610	.59477	38
31 - 40 hours	4.8662	.69883	90
more than 40 hours	4.8078	.92414	84
Total	4.6235	.82604	387

**Tests of Between-Subjects Effects**

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	28.469(b)	4	7.117	11.573	.000	.108
Intercept	7388.807	1	7388.807	12015.005	.000	.969
a4	28.469	4	7.117	11.573	.000	.108
Error	234.917	382	.615			
Total	8536.242	387				
Corrected Total	263.386	386				

a Computed using alpha = .05

b R Squared = .108 (Adjusted R Squared = .099)

### 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
1 - 10 hours	11 - 20 hours	-.4731(*)	.12195	.001	-.8073	-.1388
	21 - 30 hours	-.5617(*)	.14791	.002	-.9671	-.1563
	31 - 40 hours	-.6669(*)	.11192	.000	-.9737	-.3602
	more than 40 hours	-.6085(*)	.11408	.000	-.9212	-.2958
11 - 20 hours	1 - 10 hours	.4731(*)	.12195	.001	.1388	.8073
	21 - 30 hours	-.0886	.15925	.981	-.5251	.3479
	31 - 40 hours	-.1939	.12654	.542	-.5407	.1530
	more than 40 hours	-.1354	.12845	.830	-.4875	.2166
21 - 30 hours	1 - 10 hours	.5617(*)	.14791	.002	.1563	.9671
	11 - 20 hours	.0886	.15925	.981	-.3479	.5251
	31 - 40 hours	-.1053	.15171	.958	-.5211	.3106
	more than 40 hours	-.0468	.15331	.998	-.4670	.3734
31 - 40 hours	1 - 10 hours	.6669(*)	.11192	.000	.3602	.9737
	11 - 20 hours	.1939	.12654	.542	-.1530	.5407
	21 - 30 hours	.1053	.15171	.958	-.3106	.5211
	more than 40 hours	.0584	.11897	.988	-.2676	.3845
more than 40 hours	1 - 10 hours	.6085(*)	.11408	.000	.2958	.9212
	11 - 20 hours	.1354	.12845	.830	-.2166	.4875
	21 - 30 hours	.0468	.15331	.998	-.3734	.4670
	31 - 40 hours	-.0584	.11897	.988	-.3845	.2676

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?**

All the respondents, with the exception of two individuals who thought that 4 hours of observation was not enough time, felt that they had grown as educators because of their fieldwork experiences. Being in an actual classroom, in the role of teacher rather than student, and having the opportunity to observe the techniques of the mentor were stated most often as the reasons for their growth. Candidates were able to apply theories that they had learned in their studies to what they saw in their mentors' classrooms. *"You cannot teach life experiences, so actually teaching children has been a great experience for me."* *"This experience put everything into place."* Their observations of classroom management and discipline techniques, time management, and seeing how to establish *"healthy and safe environments"* in the classroom were very important to the candidates. Seeing the actual diversity (including differences in academic ability, and cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds) present in a classroom was a surprise to many, *"It opened my eyes to the diverseness of students I may be dealing with."* This experience

also allowed time for self-reflection and from this the candidates gained a better understanding of their own personal strengths and weaknesses.

The most meaningful experiences often cited by the respondents were the opportunity to work directly with children, and the opportunity to develop and present their own lesson plans. Trying to deal with the unpredictability of lessons and the day, the respondents gained a new respect and admiration for the teaching profession. *“This class gave me the feeling of being a teacher because I had to plan lesson plans for every class and then go either teach my exact plan or learn how to modify my plan on the spot to successfully teach my lesson.”* *“By actually participating in the lessons and giving some individual instruction, I am more aware of how much patience, professionalism, creativity and organization go into the teaching process.”*

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

The candidates learned a lot about working with diverse learners, but the most common observation was that all children are diverse learners on some level. *“Children all develop at different levels and it becomes so important to be acutely aware of each child's individual strengths and weaknesses.”* To accommodate all children in the classroom, *“it is the teacher's responsibility to know each of his/her students and be prepared to differentiate their instruction for all forms of learning.”* Candidates were aware that effective classroom management, discipline skills, and *“a lot of patience and repetition”* were necessary to create a *“learning environment.”* *“You will need to know how to manage a classroom before anything else because some kids can sit and listen and others may not, but you still need to teach them both the same material.”* They also felt that it was the teacher's responsibility *“to educate the kids about the background of everyone in their classroom so they can give them the respect each kid deserves.”*

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

A majority of the teacher candidates felt that their field experience was, *“really beneficial. I will only benefit more through time and more fieldwork as I build my path to becoming a teacher.”* As expressed by this candidate, the only thing that could have improved the experience was more of everything. More time in the classroom (*“...more time in the fieldwork and less time in the classroom. Applying what we learned was the best way to find out how to be an effective teacher”*), more time with the students, more opportunities to observe different teachers (and to have more time with those teachers), more feedback from mentors and faculty, more exposure to different subjects (*“I think that because I was placed in a science classroom, I missed out a bit on the other subjects”*), different time periods in the daily schedule, increased use of technology (*“I would have liked to see the use of more technology in the classroom considering the abundance of technology in the world”*), and the chance to plan and teach lessons. There were a few concerns about the placement process. The desire was for a faster process and more communication with SCSU faculty about the experience.

## Conclusion

Study results support the conclusion that the majority of SCSU teacher candidates who completed a *CFESS* found their clinical field experience to be productive and meaningful. Aspects that contributed most to a positive experience were: 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 concern 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.

It is interesting to note 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. Also worth noting is the fact that more Gate 3 candidates reported observing (86.7) than planning (42.9%) or teaching (51.0%) at their field sites, and 15.3% of Gate 3 candidates reported “never” working with students at their field sites.

## Summary

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)
- enhance dialogue and communication with all partners involved in candidates' clinical field experiences, especially dialogue between the candidates and mentor teachers
- 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, especially for candidates in Gate 3.

## Appendix I – Email Message

Email message sent to students with a clinical field experience in the spring 2008 semester:

November 19, 2007

Dear Student:

As outlined in the course syllabus, a requirement of this course is the completion of a self-assessment measure. This self-assessment measure, *Clinical Field Experience Self-Assessment*, is closely linked to the course objectives and provides insight into your learning and development during field experiences. The information obtained from this assessment allows your professional educator program to evaluate your ability to put theory into practice. The program also uses this and other educational data provided by you, to track your progress through the required phases of the program. Be sure to include your student ID in the appropriate location on the survey in order to have your data recorded.

The Center for Community and School Action Research (CCSAR) will track your progress through the teacher preparation program using a database system called the Candidate Information Management Assessment System. This is an internal and confidential database system. Your individual data will be used only to ensure that all appropriate educational opportunities are offered to you in order to meet with success in the program, and to assure that you are properly advancing through the program phases. In addition, your individual self-assessment data will be sent to your current field experience instructor to meet the requirements of the course.

In the future, for program accreditation reporting, CCSAR will strip identifiers from all students' on-line self-assessment measures and present only aggregate data regarding student activity within the program.

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this self-assessment. If you are currently enrolled in **more than one** course that requires a field experience component, please complete a separate, unique self-assessment for **each** course. This link will take you to a secure web site where you will be able to fill out this self-assessment:

[www.snap-surveys.com/scsu/cf07](http://www.snap-surveys.com/scsu/cf07)

This self-assessment will be available from **November 19, 2007 – December 7, 2007**

Sincerely,

Maureen Gilbride-Redman, M.P.A.  
Center for Community and School Action Research