



Southern Connecticut State University

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**A Report on SCSU Student Teaching Performance-
*An Analysis of Student Teaching Evaluation
Responses Submitted by Cooperating Teachers*
-Spring 2005-**

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by Cooperating Teachers
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Southern Connecticut State University (SCSU) School of Education (SOE) distributes the *Evaluation of Student Teaching Performance (ESTP)* survey to cooperating teachers who are working with student teachers from Southern Connecticut State University. These surveys are completed and signed by both the student and cooperating teacher and mailed back to the Director of Student teaching on the final day of the student teaching experience.

The purpose of the *ESTP* survey is to determine how well the SOE has prepared educators to student teach and to meet the competency requirements stipulated by the accrediting agencies for SCSU's various programs. Cooperating teachers are also encouraged to use the *ESTP* survey as a basis for discussing students' competencies throughout his/her student teaching experience. The *ESTP* survey consists of 66 items that address students' behavior and performance relative to the Interstate New Teachers Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) standards, and the requirements listed in *Connecticut's Common Core of Teaching*.

The specific goals of collecting and analyzing the spring 2005 *Evaluation of Student Teaching Performance (ESTP)* surveys are:

- to determine cooperating teachers' perceptions of SCSU student teachers and their level of competency;
- to obtain ideas and suggestions for improving the quality of the field experience that SCSU provides its student teachers; and
- to meet the needs of Connecticut schools for highly trained and well-prepared classroom teachers.

Method

Participants

One hundred and fifty-five *ESTP* surveys were collected and analyzed for this study. These surveys represent the evaluation of students who were student teaching during the spring semester from March 28, 2005 to May 20, 2005 in either a second eight-week student teaching placement or a ten-week student teaching placement. These student teaching experiences were at a variety of schools in Connecticut, including both urban and rural schools, and elementary, middle and secondary schools.

Students evaluated represented a variety of majors and programs and were seeking certification in Elementary Education, Secondary or K-12 (Art, Special Education,

Physical Education, and Library Science). The exact distribution of programs/certification areas can be viewed below (table 1).

Table 1- Programs and Certification Areas

Program of Study ↓	Level of Certification →	Elementary Certification n=64	Secondary n=30	K-12 n=49
Elementary Education		58 (37.4 %)		
Elementary Education/ Special Education		3 (1.9%)		
Art				21 (13.5%)
Special Education				17 (11.0%)
Physical Education				5 (3.2%)
Library Science				3 (1.9%)
Math			1 (0.6%)	
History/Social Studies			13 (8.4%)	
English			9 (5.8%)	
Biology			1 (0.6%)	
French			1 (0.6%)	
School Health				3 (1.9%)
Spanish			3 (1.9%)	
Italian			2 (1.3%)	
Early Childhood		3 (1.9%)		

N=155

**** 12 surveys did not indicate a program/certification area**

Apparatus

The *Evaluation of Student Teaching Performance (ESTP)* survey is an evaluation instrument developed and used by the School of Education. Part one of the survey asks students to provide identifying information including their name, address, telephone number, etc. It also asks students to indicate his/her major or area of certification, the dates of student teaching, and the name of the school where they completed their student teaching experience. Part II of the survey instrument consists of 66 items, divided into ten competency areas:

- I. Knowledge of Subject Matter**, items 1.1-1.6
- II. Knowledge of Human Development and Learning**, items 2.1-2.4

- III. **Instruction is Adapted to Meet Diverse Learners**, items 3.1-3.4
- IV. **Use of Multiple Instructional Strategies and Resources**, items 4.1-4.10
- V. **An Effective Learning Environment is Created**, items 5.1-5.11
- VI. **Effective Communication to Foster Inquiry & Collaboration**, items 6.1-6.6
- VII. **Lesson Planning**, items 7.1-7.11
- VIII. **Assessment of Student Learning to Improve Teaching**, items 8.1-8.4
- IX. **Reflection and Professional Development**, items 9.1-9.5
- X. **Partnerships with School and Community**, items 10.1-10.5

These 10 competency areas align with the Interstate New Teachers Assessment and Support Consortium: *Model Standards for the Beginning Teacher Licensing and Development* (INTASC) and the standards set by SCSU's accrediting agencies for our various programs, e.g. CSDE, NCATE, etc.

Cooperating teachers are asked to evaluate student teachers' behavioral competencies using the following scale:

- Met+ = demonstrates exemplary achievement of objective
- Met = demonstrates consistent achievement
- Met- = demonstrates minimal progress toward objective
- N/A = no opportunity or not applicable

Space is provided after each competency area for comments and then again at the end of the survey. Each candidate is also awarded a final score of 'pass' or 'fail'. A copy of the *Evaluation of Student Teaching Performance* survey is available in the Appendix section of this report.

Procedure

The School of Education, Office of Student Teaching, provided CCSAR with copies of the *Evaluation of Student Teaching Performance* surveys for students who student taught during the spring 2005.

CCSAR first reviewed each survey to ensure that it was for the appropriate time-period (spring 2005) and completed on the appropriate evaluation sheet. Surveys that did not meet both of these requirements were discarded. A coding frame was then developed and each survey assigned a unique identification number. All completed forms were then sent to Saztec International for data entry. Once the data were entered, the vendor forwarded an electronic copy to CCSAR in ASCII file format.

CCSAR then converted all data into SPSS and conducted frequency analyses. For each item, a mean score, standard deviation and frequency distribution were calculated using the following scale: met+=3, met=2, met-=1, and N/A. Responses of N/A were recoded as 'system missing' in the calculation of mean and standard deviation scores for individual survey items and in the calculation of a mean score for each INTASC standard. The mean score for each INTASC area was determined by summing together the individual items within each standard and then calculating a mean score. Bar charts

were also developed to provide a visual representation of the distribution of responses for individual survey items.

Results

The mean scores for individual survey items ranged from **2.52** *‘Engages students in selecting their own learning objectives and activities’* (item 4.4) to **2.91** *‘Demonstrates ethical behavior’* (item 5.8). The frequency distribution, mean and standard deviation score for individual survey items can be found in the Appendix section of this report. The range of mean scores for the 10 INTASC standards/competency areas was **2.61** *‘Partnerships with school and community’* to **2.82** *‘Knowledge of subject matter’*. The mean scores for each INTASC/Competency area can be viewed below (table 2).

The high range of mean scores on both the individual survey items and on the 10 INTASC standards suggests that the SCSU educator preparation programs have successfully prepared students for their student teaching experience.

Table 2 - Mean Scores for each INTASC standard/competency area
Scale Range: Met+ = 3, Met = 2, Met- = 1

INTASC STANDARDS	MEAN SCORES
1. Knowledge of subject matter, 1.1-1.6	2.82
2. Knowledge of human development and learning, 2.1-2.4	2.73
3. Instruction is adapted to meet diverse learners, 3.1-3.4	2.76
4. Use of multiple instructional strategies and resources, 4.1-4.10	2.75
5. An effective learning environment is created, 5.1-5.11	2.78
6. Effective communication to foster inquiry and collaboration, 6.1-6.6	2.78
7. Lesson planning, 7.1-7.11	2.82
8. Assessment of student learning to improve teaching, 8.1-8.4	2.76
9. Reflection and professional development, 9.1-9.5	2.71
10. Partnerships with school and community, 10.1-10.5	2.61

Qualitative Findings

Remarks provided in the comment and summary statement sections of the *Evaluation of Student Teaching Performance* surveys were also reviewed and are summarized below as programmatic strengths and areas in need of improvement.

I. Strengths

Positive comments regarding the preparation and quality of SCSU student teachers involved areas related to:

- **Knowledge of Subject Matter**
- **Lesson Planning**
- **Using Multiple Instructional Strategies and Adapting Instructional Practices for Diverse Learners**
- **Personal Attributes and Characteristics**
- **Building Student Rapport and a Positive Learning Environment**
- **Classroom Management**

Knowledge of Subject Matter

SCSU students had much knowledge and depth in the disciplines that they were teaching. One student teacher was said to “*demonstrate a clear personal philosophy of art education, and develop meaningful goals for her students. She has a rich understanding of art.*” while another student had “*excellent knowledge of the Italian language and culture... arouses the [class’s] curiosity and interest.*” SCSU students were also able to convey this knowledge. “*His work reflected his rigorous scholarships, depth of insight and he was able to apply and transfer his knowledge to his students.*”

Lesson Planning

Cooperating teachers commented on the level of preparation and quality of lesson plans. In fact, one teacher stated “*he has taken the Math and Social Studies curriculum to a higher level by incorporating additional lessons and activities.*” This initiative made a significant impact on the existing school curriculum. This same quality was observed in a Journalism class in which “*clear lesson plans [on] the book Girl Interrupted [were presented allowing the class to examine] mental illness.*” Moreover, “*exciting lesson plans [were designed] that lead students to creative inquiry and higher order thinking.*” This high quality lesson planning could not have been accomplished without much preparation on the student’s behalf, “*Her lessons reflected a lot of time, thought, and preparation.*”

Using Multiple Instructional Strategies and Adapting Instructional Practices for Diverse Learners

The ability to use multiple instructional strategies to deliver effective lessons and to adapt to the diverse learning needs of students was also noted as an area of strength. The student *“blended large groups, cooperative groups, and independent activities in a very clever and appropriate way.”* SCSU student teachers were also very creative in their use of various instructional techniques. Student teachers used *“videos, discussion, and technology to maintain student interests”* while others used *“activities [that include] problem solving and explanations of thinking... using manipulative, paired activities, bulletin boards and charts.”* Some cooperating teachers also noted that students were able to recognize when students’ abilities varied and to respond accordingly. *“He was “conscious of the individual differences of all children and celebrated their exceptionalities in positive and productive ways.”*

Personal Attributes\Characteristics\Professional Growth

Another strength noted by cooperating teachers was that students demonstrated many of the personal qualities and characteristics that are required of an effective educator. One teacher commented on the intuitive nature of her SCSU student, *“Her teaching instincts are excellent. She demonstrates teaching abilities that are far more advanced than her age.”* While another teacher saw that *“his manner in front of the classroom was that of a confident professional eager to teach and share his expertise with the students.”* Additionally, another student was described as being *“firm, patient, responsible, knowledgeable, conscientious, and understanding.”* Organizational skills and being prepared were additional remarks iterated by cooperating teachers in describing our student teachers. For example, one cooperating teacher stated that she would *“start off on the right foot [because] she was always prepared and organized.”* and another cooperating teacher stated that her student teacher was *“consistently well-prepared and because of this she rarely was caught off guard.”*

Several cooperating teachers also witnessed personal and professional growth in students between the beginning to the end of the student teaching experience. *“The timid, quiet young lady has blossomed into a friendly, outgoing teacher who enjoys teaching her students,”* and was *“a tad overwhelmed at the difference in the students from 4th grade to 2nd, [however], she quickly gained confidence in her abilities and became more familiar with the curriculum. She has come a long way.”*

Building Student Rapport and a Positive Learning Environment

SCSU students also demonstrated the ability to establish and maintain positive rapport with classroom students. *“Students respond well to her enthusiasm and enjoy being around her”* stated one cooperating teacher. *“[Relating] well to teens, maintaining a comfortable relationship that is friendly yet respectful,”* and the amount of *“respect and emotional ties [that she has] to children”* were additional observations made by cooperating teachers. Cooperating teachers also mentioned the positive learning

environments that were created in the classrooms of our student teachers. They created “*an environment where all students were treated fairly and communication was encouraged*” One where “*students felt comfortable asking questions during class.*” Additionally, students worked at “*developing an environment that promotes learning and assists the students in developing skills, strategies and work ethics that will provide for their future.*”

Classroom Management

Several cooperating teachers commented on the positive manner in which SCSU student teachers handled classroom management issues. “*She provided a comfortable and inviting learning environment while maintaining appropriate standards of behavior. She has very good classroom control and management techniques.*” These are very positive comments for such a difficult task that, according to one teacher, requires “*expectations [that] are clearly set and appropriate for the age of instruction.*” One student teacher overcame these obstacles and exhibited classroom management skills using “*structure, clear direction, and regular follow through.*”

II. Areas in Need of Improvement

The three areas below were noted as aspects of the student teaching experience that could be enhanced.

- **Classroom Management**
- **Lesson Delivery/Activities**
- **Instructional Techniques**

Classroom Management

Although an area of strength for some students, for other student teachers this area needed improvement. In short, some student teachers had difficulty establishing control. One teacher stated that her student teacher could not “*get students to like and respect her*” while a different cooperating teacher noted the inability of her student to “*establish herself as the teacher, yet facilitate in a congenial manner.*”

Lesson Delivery/Activities

There were also some mixed comments in this area. Some students had stellar lesson plans but others could improve the delivery and content by becoming “*completely familiar with the content before delivering a lesson*”, and by developing “*ways to make the delivery of lessons more engaging through oral and written ways*”. An additional comment stated that there was also a need for “*a greater variety of lesson activities*”.

Instructional Techniques

A couple of comments were made in respect to the instructional techniques that SCSU students used. For instance, a substitute teaching job was a suggestion that one cooperating teacher made for the student teacher, stating, “With more experience improvement in instructional pacing will occur.” In addition, another cooperating teacher suggested that the student teacher “develop a repertoire of strategies that address students’ development of critical thinking, problem solving and performance skills.”

Summary and Conclusion

The strong, positive range in mean scores on individual survey items (2.52 – 2.91) and in the 10 INTASC/competency areas (2.61-2.82) suggest that SCSU is preparing its students to successfully complete and pass their student teaching experience. Additionally, these high scores indicate cooperating teachers’ perceptions of SCSU students and their competency levels are quite favorable. The large number of positive comments further supports this position. It is suggested, however, that comments noted in ‘Areas in Need of Improvement’ be reviewed to augment the student teaching experience and to enhance the overall quality of the SCSU educator preparation programs.