March 2009

Study of Student Teaching

Student Teacher Feedback Survey 2007-2008

OFFICE OF ACCREDITATION AND ASSESSMENT
OFFICE OF TEACHER EDUCATION AND SCHOOL-BASED SUPPORT SERVICES

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SURVEY INSTRUMENT, ADMINISTRATION, AND DATA ANALYSIS

The Student Teacher Feedback Survey questionnaire is organized around four themes: Program Setup for Student Teaching/ Internship, Key Players, Program Curriculum, and School Environment. There are total 54 multiple-choice or Likert-scale items and five open-ended questions.

The Survey was administered four times: during 2006-07 and during 2007-08 academic years (fall and spring administrations). In spring 2007 and spring 2008, programs were given an option of in-class administration (during the student teaching seminar) to increase the response rate. Student teachers from the programs, which opted out of in-class administration, received an e-mail with a link to the web survey which was followed up with three reminders approximately two weeks apart. The response rates for the 2007-08 and 2008-09 results (fall and spring combined) are presented in Table 1. One hundred sixty-one respondents (54.2%) evaluated their first placement, 120 respondents (40.4%)—their second placement; eight (2.7%)—the third and another seven (2.4%)—the fourth placements.

Table 1: 2006-2007 and 2007-08 Complete Results

PROGRAM	Combined 2006-07			Combined 2007-08		
	RESPONSE	DATASET	PERCENT	RESPONSE	DATASET	PERCENT
Applied Behavior Analysis	17	74	23%	6	51	12%
Art and Art Education	28*	43	65%	6	32	19%
Bilingual/Bicultural Education	13*	20	65%	12*	14	86%
Blindness and Visual Impairment	1	1	100%	0	3	0
Deaf and Hard of Hearing	23*	38	61%	14*	27	52%
Early Childhood/Special Education[1]	19	53	36%	37*	42	88%
Elementary Inclusive Education[2]	61*	111	55%	35	106	33%
Learning Disabilities[3]	9	14	64%	0	0	0
Mathematics Education	15	36	42%	32*	32	100%
Mental Retardation/Autism	4	14	29%	5	58	9%
Music and Music Education	17	24	71%	18	47	38%
Physical Education	1	2	50%	1	2	50%
Science Education	6	13	46%	18*	19	95%
Teaching of ASL	6	10	60%	3	25	12%
Teaching of English	39	101	39%	44	105	42%
Teaching of Social Studies	25	67	37%	37	95	39%
Technology Specialist	3	7	43%	4	4	100%
TESOL	17*	29	59%	16*	26	62%
Unspecified	11			8		
	325	680	48%	296	688	43%

* in-class administration during spring semester

[1] Includes all student teachers from Early Childhood Education, Early Childhood Special Education and Early Childhood/Special Education Dual programs

[2] Includes all student teachers in Elementary Inclusive Education and Elementary Inclusive Education Dual programs

[3] 2007-08 student teachers are included in Elementary Inclusive Education program count

The descriptive statistics (mean, sample size, and frequency of item category response) for each Likert-type item were calculated using SPSS version 15.0. Item means for responses about first and second student teaching placements were compared using Mann-Whitney non-parametric test for independent samples. No significant differences were found between the means on all but one (#20) items. NVivo 8 software was used to code and analyze student teachers' responses to the four open-ended questions. A coding scheme developed in the course of the student teacher focus group study and fall 2006 administration of the survey, was used to code respondents' comments. Reports were generated for each code detailing the individual open-ended item comments and were analyzed for major trends and sub-themes which emerged in the qualitative data.

This report is organized around the four themes: Program Setup for Student Teaching/ Internship, Key Players, Program Curriculum, and School Environment. Each section starts with the descriptive statistics for the relevant Likert-scale items for the 2007-08 spring/fall combined data. The means for the 2006-07 are provided for comparison. Qualitative results are used to confirm, explain, or expand on the quantitative data. Actual quotes from the open-ended responses are used to illustrate the findings.

THEME 1: STUDENT TEACHING SET-UP

Requirements Information—Availability and Accuracy

In 2007-08, 84% of respondents reported to have received accurate information about student teaching requirements, and 73% reported to have received accurate information about certification requirements. In 2006-07, these numbers were 89% and 79% respectively.

Figure 1: Information about Student Teaching and Certification Requirements
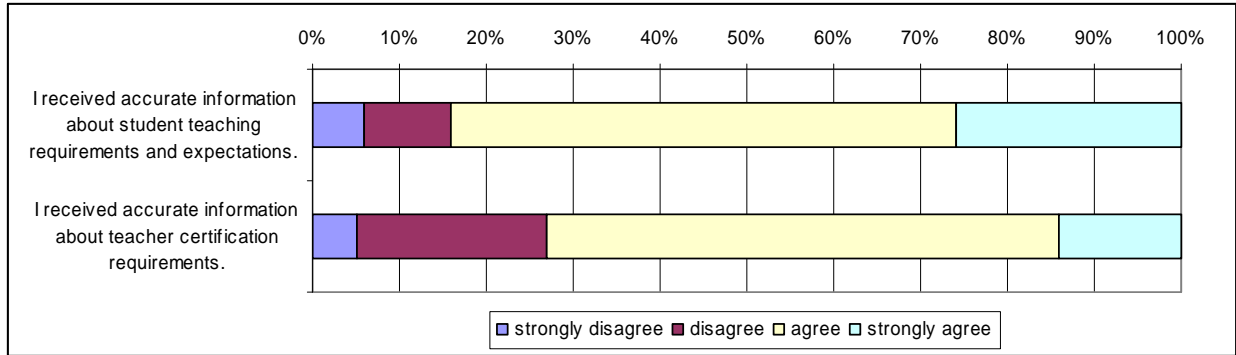
Table 2: Information about Student Teaching and Certification Requirements

Item	Statement	2006-07 mean	2007-08 Mean	strongly disagree	disagree	agree	strongly agree	N
Q1.	I received accurate information about student teaching requirements and expectations.	3.1	3.1	16	30	166	76	288
		%		6%	10%	58%	26%	100%
Q4.	I received accurate information about teacher certification requirements.	2.9	2.8	15	61	160	39	275
		%		5%	22%	59%	14%	100%

Respondents relied primarily on program faculty/student teaching coordinators to provide them with the information about student teaching requirements. The OTE student teaching handbooks, college supervisors, and fellow student teachers were the three other frequently used sources of information.

Table 3: Sources of Information about Student Teaching Requirements

	OTE student teaching handbook	OTE office staff	OTE website	Program handbook	Program orientation / meeting	Program faculty / ST coordinator	College supervisor	Fellow student teachers	Other
Spring 2008	86	36	36	49	48	137	84	95	3
	48%	20%	20%	27%	27%	77%	47%	53%	2%
Fall 2007	55	18	11	54	60	78	51	64	5
	48%	16%	10%	47%	53%	68%	45%	56%	4%
Spring 2007	86	54	36	55	75	134	92	113	9
	45%	28%	19%	29%	39%	70%	48%	59%	5%
Fall 2006	50	19	14	51	83	82	65	78	5
	38%	14%	11%	38%	62%	62%	49%	59%	4%

Information about Student Teaching Requirements and Expectations

Of the 34 comments about requirements and expectations for student teaching, only two were from the respondents completing their second placement. That is, by the second placement, student teachers were familiar with the requirements and expectations and/or with where to get such information if needed.

It was well organized. Clear with all the instruction and homework.

There was good explanation about what will take place going into student teaching but as the semester progressed I felt a bit confused about what was expected of me. After speaking with my supervisor though, I was able to find my place.

Information about our requirements is also not clearly communicated to the student teachers, the CT or the supervisor.

A wonderfully organized packet was given to each of students to deliver to our CTs, but no such packet or organizational effort was made FOR US!!! The introduction to the student teaching program by our department was very confusing and EXTREMELY stressful, and I'm not alone in these sentiments. I felt like they didn't really care about us and were just saying that they did.

Several student teachers commented on the lack of information about the roles and responsibilities of student teachers, supervisors, or cooperating teachers.

The role of the supervisor was unclear to me. Though we had a positive relationship, I did not find her particularly helpful or necessary as part of the experience.

There is not enough communication between my CTs and my program. There should have been a conversation about expectations, especially because it was the first time my CTs had a student teacher in their room. They did not know what to expect and handing them a folder the day before public school starts, expecting them to read the contents is not feasible.

I have heard too often that many of the cooperating teachers are in it to get the vouchers. My cooperating teacher had no idea what was expected of her and I certainly was not the appropriate party to fill her in. She should have had a clear understanding.

Several comments referred to the number of hours required to complete student teaching: some student teachers felt that they received conflicting information; others thought that the number of hours/days in the field was either too high or too low.

I received different information about the number of hours required for student teaching.

Generally speaking, it would have been nice to have had more program-based support for my leading of the classroom. As it was, I taught exactly 8 days out of the semester, two of which were unplanned. Although I feel that my experience was very useful and that I got good things out of it, it would have been nice to have some institutional backup or expectations about the number of hours I would be in front of the class as the main teacher.

My only wish is that I had more time in this placement as I feel that one semester (3-4 months) was not enough for me though still beneficial.

Our program only has student teaching for 5 weeks for each placement which I think is too short and a disservice to student teachers.

For information about certification requirements, respondents were likely to turn to program faculty/ST coordinator, NY State website, or fellow student teachers. More than a third turned to the OTE staff for such information.

Table 4: Sources of Information about Certification Requirements

	OTE student teaching handbook	OTE staff	OTE website	Program handbook	Program orientation / meeting[4]	Program faculty / ST coordinator	College supervisor	NY State website	Fellow student teachers	Other
Spring 2008	49	69	43	28	41	91	40	79	78	9
	27%	38%	24%	15%	23%	50%	22%	43%	43%	5%
Fall 2007	37	38	25	29	29	40	24	51	47	12
	33%	33%	22%	25%	25%	35%	21%	45%	41%	11%
Spring 2007	75	99	57	38	48	82	50	84	92	12
	39%	52%	30%	20%	25%	43%	26%	44%	48%	6%
Fall 2006	38	41	28	42		52	29	56	55	10
	29%	31%	21%	32%		39%	22%	42%	41%	8%

Information about Certification Requirements

Despite the OTE's efforts to inform teacher candidates about certification requirements, there were a few respondents who felt confused. Four comments were from the student teachers completing first placements and one from the student teacher completing his/her second placement.

I would have preferred to have had a well-developed roadmap for me prior to student teaching of all certification requirements.

This office (OTE) needs to do a much better job of educating student teachers about their options when it comes to certification. This is also a problem that I have with my specific program, but it's definitely in your court as well. I tried a few times to make appointments to talk to someone about certification and was told to go to the website. On top of that, the certification workshop that your office offered was the day after the registration deadline for the December tests. I found that extremely unhelpful and even disrespectful considering the amount of debt I'm collecting to pay for high quality education and support at this institution.

I'm not sure where to put this feedback but throughout this program, I really thought the OTE was not only not helpful but actively confused us. There really needs to be more communication and information trading between the OTE and the program department, rather than forcing us to be gophers between the two. We were told at one point that it didn't matter when we took our certification tests, and found out only during a panel of principals and schools that they prefer not to hire uncertified teachers, so IT DOES MATTER WHEN WE TAKE OUR EXAMS. We should have been encouraged to take our exams immediately or as soon as applicable, and we should have been given much clearer information or seminars as to all the steps in the certification process (which shouldn't be so many—here is another area where direct communication and paperwork exchange should be conducted between the program and the OTE office). Why weren't we given clearer information in a CERTIFICATION PROGRAM???!!! at an IVY LEAGUE institution????

Program Set-Up for Student Teaching/Internship

In 2007-08, over 85% of respondents agreed that the placement process allowed them to start student teaching on time, that cooperating teacher or host school were informed about them prior to the starting date, and that they knew who to go to with questions. Over three quarters of respondents agreed that student teaching paperwork was straightforward and that they felt supported during student teaching. More than 30% of respondents felt that course workload during student teaching was too heavy.

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[4] Not included in the fall 2006 survey

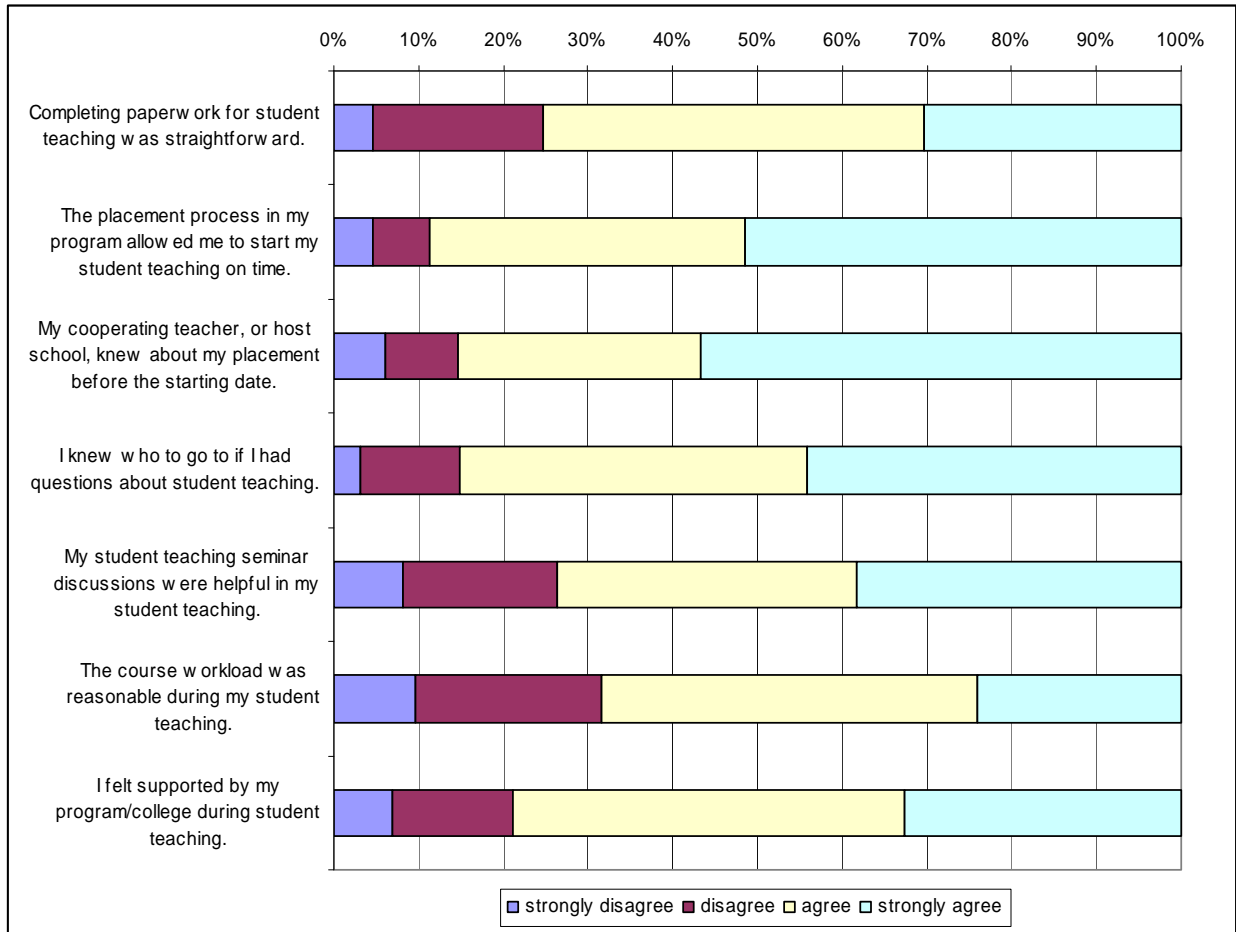Figure 2: Program Set-up for Student Teaching/Internship (percentages)

Table 5: Program Set-up for Student Teaching/Internship (frequencies)

Item	Statement	2006-07 mean*	2007-08 mean	strongly disagree	disagree	agree	strongly agree	N
Q7.	Completing paperwork for student teaching was straightforward.	3.0	3.0	13	58	129	87	287
Q8.	The placement process in my program allowed me to start my student teaching on time.		3.4	13	19	105	145	282
Q9.	My cooperating teacher, or host school, knew about my placement before the starting date.	3.4	3.4	17	24	80	158	279
Q10.	I knew who to go to if I had questions about student teaching.	3.3	3.3	9	33	116	125	283
Q11.	My student teaching seminar discussions were helpful in my student teaching.		3.0	23	51	99	107	280
Q12.	The course workload was reasonable during my student teaching.		2.8	27	62	126	68	283
Q13.	I felt supported by my program/college during student teaching.		3.1	20	40	131	93	284

*missing means indicate that these items were not included in the fall 2006 (pilot) survey

Organization of Student Teaching Experience

The overwhelming majority of the comments about overall organization of student teaching experience were positive.

Things were well organized. We all had separate folders for dealing with different aspects of the placement.

Most information was presented in ways that were clear and easy to follow. Information was always available and the student teaching coordinator was very accessible.

Since the … program is quite small, the organization of student teaching was a very individualized experience, one which I felt was ideal. At every point, school choice, cooperating teacher and classes observed, the program was flexible, and my input was important.

I thought that they handled the volume of students that were accepted as gracefully as they could. I still think that they are overworked.

Student teachers from dual certification programs seemed to be at a disadvantage because they had to work with two different programs (and often departments) and with two unique sets of requirements.

My program (…) had nothing to do with my first placement; they gave our names to C&T and told us to send in our applications to C&T. They provided no further support, not even to tell us that our placements would begin BEFORE TC classes started or to give us information about the … program.

Well, this was my (subject area) placement for my … EdM degree, and I was the first student teacher to do this in a long time, so I pretty much had to play the go-between the two departments to set up everything.

Paperwork did not seem to be of great concern for the student teachers—only seven comments referred to paperwork.

Organization can be improved. It would be easier to deal with the administrative student teaching office though our supervisor. It makes it easier with paperwork and requirements because you only have to deal with one person. This would avoid conflicting information.

I felt a little lost when we had to turn in all our paperwork because no one kept me accountable or reminded me to turn in all the things. I almost forgot to!

Placement Process

Most of the comments about the placement process indicate that the programs made a good faith effort to find appropriate placements for student teachers based on program requirements and student teachers' preferences.

Overall, I felt that the student teaching experience was well-organized; I was placed in a school that basically matched what I said I was looking for, and the school was prepared for me to teach there.

Having already done many hours of student teaching for my first certification in … Education, I felt that doing it again would be somewhat repetitive. However, my student teaching advisor worked with me to find a placement that was unique, and where I would learn new strategies not seen in previous placements.

N. does a great job at matching student teacher and cooperating teacher and a great job at varying the experiences for those who do 2 … placements.

However, student teachers who had to find their own placements were not as positive about the placement process as their peers who were placed by their programs. Although some appreciated the opportunity to choose their own placements, they cautioned that the process could be very difficult or even disastrous.

It was nice to be able to pick my own student teaching placement, however, this did make it much more difficult.

For my program, students are responsible for finding their own placements, which can be disastrous. It should be the responsibility of the program to place student teachers.

We found our own placements which worked well for some but caused difficulties for others. I think this may be a good option for those who want a specific placement, but shouldn't be required for students to do themselves.

The most frequent suggestion to improve the placement process is for the programs to inform both student teachers and host schools/cooperating teachers in advance about the proposed placements.

TC contacted my school and gave me my placement assignment once everything had been confirmed. I then contacted my cooperating teachers and met with them. It was pretty straightforward and organized.

On the first day of student teaching in my program advisor/supervisor had a meeting at our placement school with administrators and teachers. It was a great way to start the semester to get acclimated to the new school and to get formal introductions to whom we would be working with.

I think it would have been more beneficial to at least know what grade level we were going to be placed in at an earlier time. I could have used the summer to become familiar with content area and developmental issues specific to my age group.

My school seemed to be rather unprepared for my arrival, and my cooperating teacher was not told that she would be having a student teacher until the second I walked into her door, with the administrator. But, I think my school was to blame for this, and not TC. They are rather disorganized.

The placement process seemed chaotic, and it felt like many of us weren't placed until the last minute. I got mixed signals as to whether or not I should make my own arrangements about my placement.

Student Teaching Seminar

Student Teaching Seminar is one of the support mechanisms available to student teachers. Our respondents liked when their seminars were a structured and safe place to share their experiences, to discuss emerging issues, to solve problems, to learn new teaching strategies and techniques from instructors and peers, and, possibly, listen to invited experienced teachers and supervisors.

My TC teacher was very supportive, always ready to listen. I always felt like she was on my side and had a very constructive feedback. Gave us plenty of time to talk about our sites, which helped a lot!

My seminar instructor is amazing and goes above and beyond in EVERY way to help each student in the class. She provides us with an unbelievable amount of practical resources and the conversation and activities in that class have been extremely beneficial. She is truly one of the best professors I have had at TC.

My seminar instructor was immensely helpful and wise. She created a "safe harbor" where my fellow student teachers and I could share anything we needed to talk about, without fear of ridicule or shame. Seminar was always positive, supportive, and practical. Also, we shared many a laugh and a teaching tip!

I think that Professor … has created an excellent model for seminar in both phases I and II for the … program. I loved how we looked at particular classroom issues that doesn't often come up in the program and tackle them one at a time, week by week. We also left room to discuss how our particular experiences were going by connecting our problems/successes with greater issues in the field.

When one or several of these components were missing, the seminar was likely to be described as a complaint session or a waste of time.

There was no discussion in seminar about placements after the first week. This meant that the program had no idea how the placements were going nor did they know that several of us had taken over classes.

I do wish the student teaching seminar had been differently organized—I felt that I spent two hours a week listening to other people complain, whereas it would have been more helpful to use that same time period for short, individual conferences with my seminar leader. It was occasionally interesting to hear what others were experiencing, but more often than not, it didn't feel like a great use of our time.

Also, the seminar instructor was ineffective. Our reading assignments and papers did nothing to further my growth as a teacher—they were basically academic busywork to fill up a syllabus. Our classroom discussions jumped randomly from topic to topic, and ended up being a forum for people to air their grievances and/or deal with personal issues. I did like when he invited the other supervising teachers in the department to come and present for an evening—it gave us a variety of viewpoints on how to approach educating in the … classroom.

Finally seminar always felt like a waste of time. Discussions were poorly orchestrated, and readings were assigned that did not seem relevant (more theory and philosophy when we needed nitty gritty lesson plan ideas and classroom management discussions).

Workload

As to confirm the ratings for question 12, several respondents commented on heavy workload during student teaching:

I believe this was a very intense experience. Teaching 5 times a week and having 2 full course load is a lot. Maybe they can figure out a way to change that.

I think student teaching is a 60-hour/week job and I would have preferred to have my planning materials for class as the sole homework.

The workload alongside the student teaching is way too much. As a result, both coursework and teaching suffer. It seems like the goal becomes just get it done instead of how can I do this effectively and with the best results.

I feel like we are required to do too much coursework on top of student teaching. Human beings are not meant to work themselves so ragged. It made me miserable and depressed.

The only problem I had with my student teaching experience was the heavy workload—it was exhausting and made it difficult for me to fully focus on student teaching at times.

According to some respondents, the workload would have felt less burdensome if assignments were more relevant for student teaching, if student teaching and coursework deadlines were more synchronized, and if student teachers were informed in advance of the workload and the necessity of appropriate time management.

I knew I had a lot of work to do for student teaching because we had meetings and discussions about it before it began. This prepared me to some extent.

There remain some glitches in timing of actual assignments/requirements due to a particularly heavy load on us at already particularly stressful time (i.e., the end of semester).

The workload was extremely overwhelming at times but the core assignments did further my learning.

Some student teachers wish they were advised to start the program earlier (in summer) or to postpone their first student teaching until spring.

I only started student teaching during my second semester and I must say I feel that the … program (as advertised) is rushed. I had a full semester of experience going into Phase I which

made it seem like a cakewalk compared to some of my classmates' experiences. Phase II seems like it will be difficult for anyone but I felt comfortable and confident planning every lesson and managing a classroom because of all I had learned at TC. I suggest that the … department stop recommending a one-year program, as student teaching is a tremendous commitment. Even taking just the required seminars in Phase II, I have been exhausted coming home late every night. I can't imagine how tough it must be for my friends taking multiple classes on top of it.

I would have liked to know in my acceptance letter from TC that it was recommended to being coursework in summer. I only discovered that after I had secured a summer job, and it was too late to change plans.

Overall Support and Quality Control

The open-ended comments suggest that for the most part, student teachers either felt supported during their experiences and were able to resolve all issues as they arose, or had positive experiences and did not need much support. However, in a few cases, respondents felt that they were left on their own and had no help or did not know how to get help from their programs or TC.

I think A. and B. have done a good job with a very difficult task. I felt very supported. They made sure that all of my questions were answered, and helped make sure the commute met my needs.

Our program works so hard to make sure the needs of student teachers are met. It doesn't always work out the way we want it but the faculty and staff are aware and always working to make things work out well for us as much as possible.

Aside from weekly seminar, I didn't feel that TC was strongly monitoring my progress as a student teacher. I did not particularly mind this, though, as I was having a mostly positive experience.

I felt there was no true support for student teachers. If I had issues in the classroom who would I talk to? What kind of protocol is there to voice my complaints or concerns? I got the feeling that I was supposed to just "get through" it (my student teaching experience) instead of opting for an experience that was encouraging and conducive to learning for me as a student and a teacher.

THEME 2: KEY PLAYERS

Learning Opportunities

In 2007-08, over 80% of respondents agreed that they had adequate opportunities to observe experienced teachers and to take over the class during student teaching. About 75% agreed that they had adequate opportunities to apply theory to practice and to try things out.

Table 6: Learning Opportunities (frequencies)

Item	Statement	2006-07 mean	2007-08 mean	strongly disagree	disagree	agree	strongly agree	N
Q14.	I had adequate opportunities to take over the class during student teaching.	3.3	3.2	22	34	92	133	281
Q15.	I had adequate opportunities to apply theory to practice.	3.1	3.0	24	44	112	102	282
Q16.	I had adequate opportunities to try things out during student teaching.	3.1	3.0	28	44	103	108	283
Q17.	I had adequate opportunities to observe experienced teacher(s).	3.3	3.3	9	35	99	142	285

Figure 3: Learning Opportunities (percentages)
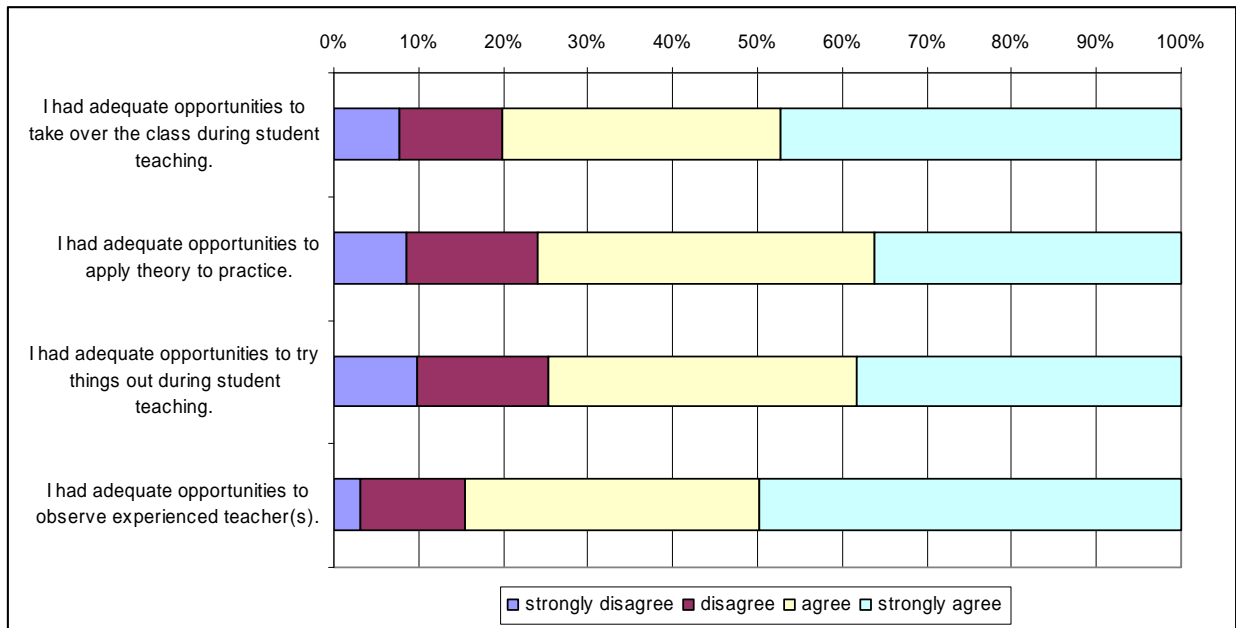
Respondents differed widely in their evaluations of the learning opportunities they were provided during their placements. As is expected, the adequacy of such opportunities depended to the great extent on cooperating teachers' openness and willingness to delegate authority and control of the classroom to student teachers. In cases where cooperating teachers were open and supportive, student teachers had adequate opportunities to apply what they learned, to try things out, and take over the class. On the contrary, when cooperating teachers were "controlling" and did not trust student teachers' ability to take charge, respondents felt that they did not learn much.

> *I had a good student teaching experience. My cooperating teacher was supportive and understanding. He let me take charge and participate early on which I appreciated. I was able to observe a variety of different teachers at my school.*

> *My cooperating teacher was excellent. She was supportive and willing to let me take over her classroom and try things out. She would teach my lesson plans on the days of the week that I wasn't there, and offer suggestions about how to improve them, of different ways of approaching the same material. She also gave me an opportunity to teach her plans, so we had an ongoing dialogue about how to teach effectively.*

> *I loved my cooperating teacher. She was extremely nurturing and inspires both on a personal and professional level. All of my needs were met and I had the ability/opportunities to do everything I wanted in teams and teachings. Lots of freedom and encouragement.*

> *I had a fabulous cooperating teacher and field supervisor. They were both willing to hear me out with new ideas, let me try out new project and curriculum concepts and were there to support me when classroom management and student management issues were more difficult than expected.*

> *Although I enjoyed working with my cooperating teacher, she was reluctant to provide adequate amounts of time for me to teach the class on my own. I discussed this with my supervisors and TC coordinators, but they did not provide much in the way of useful solutions to the problem.*

> *I did not learn much from my experience this semester. My cooperating teacher, although a very nice person, did not feel comfortable with me leading much of anything, nor was she open to*

much change. I was not able to learn better and more creative ways to make lesson plans or curricula.

I felt I was given control of the classroom a great deal but that there was not much wiggle room in terms of what I could teach or the manner in which I could teach. All TC model for everything.

Occasionally learning opportunities were limited due to cooperating teachers' workload, due to presence of other student teachers or cooperative teaching environment, or due to the nature of the placement itself.

Although my learning experience was positive overall, I did not get enough teaching time. Since I was in a CTT class, there were 4 other adults in the classroom and it prevented me from being able to get teaching time.

I had some great opportunities during my placement, but felt I often had to really fight for them myself rather than them being provided. I think this is largely due to the high staff to child ratio in the school and therefore a student teacher isn't exactly necessary.

My only issue is that my cooperating teacher is the ONLY… teacher for the 7th and 8th grade. She teaches four separate classes and there wasn't enough time in the schedule to fit me in. … I have missed out on many opportunities because of the size of the school.

Observing experienced teachers is an important part of the student teaching experience and several respondents commented on the value of observations whether the opportunities they were provided were adequate or not.

I was especially fortunate to compare my CT to another teacher who was in charge of the science, math and social studies instruction. It helped me examine the differences, benefits and drawbacks of two opposing instructional styles and environments. The time I spent in that school and in those two classrooms was the absolute best learning experience I could have asked for.

I also feel that we should have more time to just sit and observe as much as possible before being expected to interact and teach. We need to be used to the classroom and understand the dynamics before jumping in.

My cooperating teacher gave me plenty of opportunities to teach since I began teaching during my second week of student teaching, however, I do not feel like I've had enough opportunity to observe her teaching since I've taught every lesson during the time I've been with her. I have had the opportunity to observe other less experienced teachers but not my CT.

College (Field) Supervisor

In 2007-08, over 80% of respondents agreed that supervisors were easy to reach, provided them with information and tools for teaching, gave constructive feedback on performance, and conducted observations that were optimally spaced out. They reported having good working relationships with supervisors and agreed to recommend their supervisors to future student teachers. A slightly lower proportions of respondents (over 75%) agreed that they had regular meetings with supervisors and that supervisors communicated effectively with cooperating teachers.

Table 7: College (Field) Supervisors (frequencies)

Item	Statement	2006-07 mean	2007-08 mean	strongly disagree	disagree	agree	strongly agree	N
Q18.	My supervisor provided me with information or tools I could use in my teaching.	3.2	3.2	18	37	113	115	283
Q19.	I met regularly with my supervisor to discuss my progress.	3.1	3.1	21	45	113	105	284
Q20.	My supervisor was easy to reach by phone, email, or in person.	3.4	3.4	15	17	86	165	283
Q21.	My supervisor provided constructive feedback on my performance.	3.3	3.3	11	26	102	144	283

Q22.	I had a good working relationship with my supervisor.	3.4	3.4	16	23	86	157	282
Q23.	Observations from my supervisor were optimally spaced out.	3.2	3.3	10	38	107	129	284
Q24.	My supervisor communicated effectively with my cooperating teacher.	3.0	3.0	22	43	94	97	256
Q25.	I would recommend my supervisor to future student teachers.	3.3	3.2	27	29	83	141	280

Figure 4: College (Field) Supervisors (percentages)
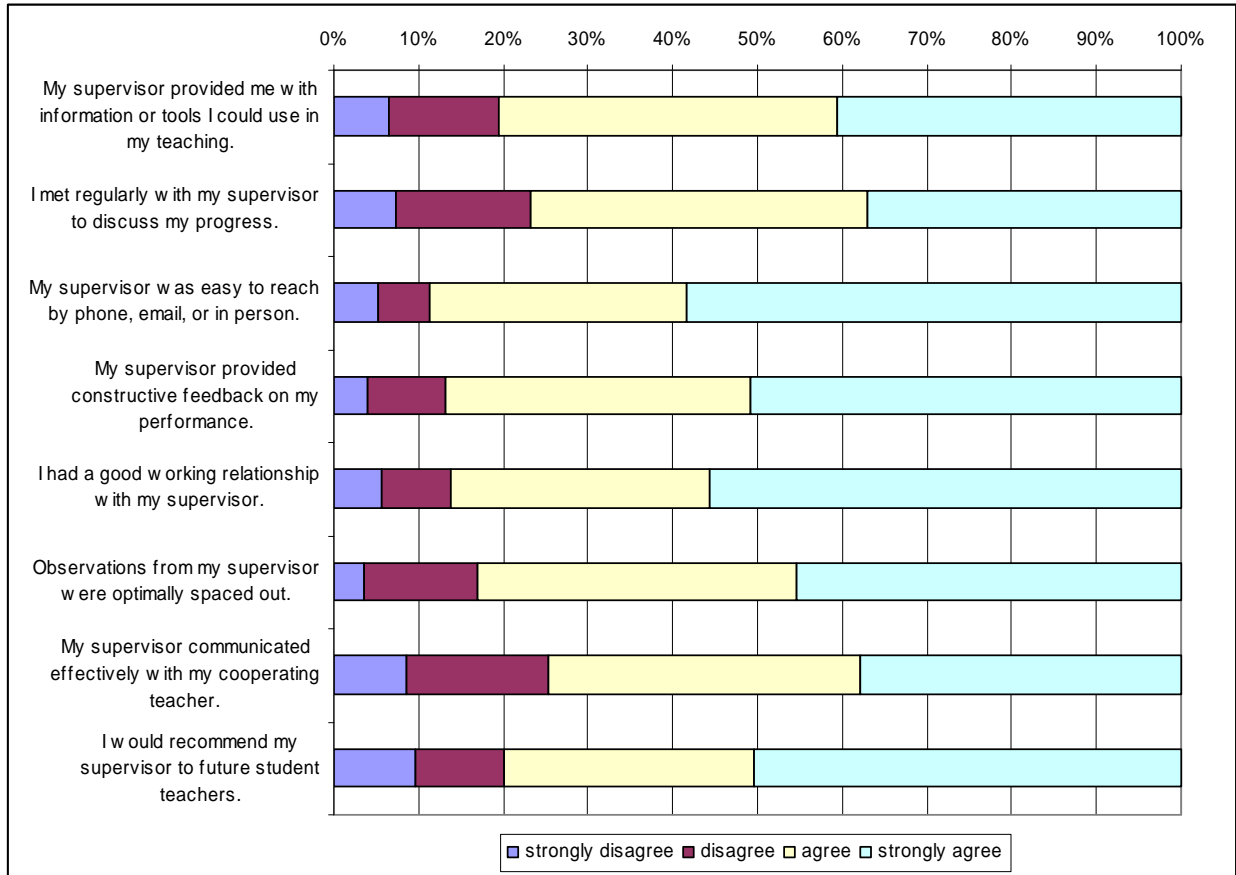
According to the respondents' comments good supervisors are knowledgeable about the discipline and public school environment, experienced teachers/supervisors, helpful and supportive of student teachers, organized and easy to reach when needed. Most of the complaints referred to supervisors' lack of organization and busy schedules that made it difficult to schedule observations and discuss student teachers' progress.

> *My college supervisor was fine, he came to my observations and offered constructive criticism and suggestions for growth—encouraging me not to get frustrated at the beginning and applauding my growth at the end.*

> *My college supervisor was equally terrific. She was extremely organized and responsible and kept in constant contact with her student teachers. She provided constructive feedback following observations and was enthusiastic and supportive towards our efforts.*

My supervisor is an excellent educator. She is always there when I need to get in touch with her, always provides feedback when necessary and has so much educational information to offer to all students. I truly have enjoyed being her student and am privileged to have her as my supervisor.

My supervisor first made me feel inadequate. I don't think she quite understood how clueless I really was, that I've never made a lesson plan before. Through effective communication, she has helped me to grow as a student teacher.

My supervisor seemed to be busy and didn't seem to have a very flexible schedule, and so never saw me teach for a whole class, and I never really got to talk or meet with him other than on the phone for like 5 minutes to go over what he observed.

I felt that supervisor that came to observe me was very unprofessional. She never came on time and even got kicked out of the school by the principal. She provided some comments that were just not appropriate.

Feedback

Consistent with the last year findings, student teachers value and expect constructive feedback from their supervisors. According to respondents, constructive feedback is timely (the same day as observation), specific, realistic, and cheerful. In fact, student teachers seemed to rely more on their supervisors than on cooperating teachers to evaluate their teaching performance and to guide further development.

My TC supervisor was also great. She provided great constructive feedback the same day I was observed. She was also very helpful at teaching me how to break down and organize lesson plans. I learned a lot from her.

My college supervisor was also good—she had insightful comments and suggestions when she came to observe. She was very organized, responded to emails quickly and kept her scheduled appointments for observations.

My supervisor was a great help when he came in to observe. He was especially helpful in suggesting tweaks to my lessons beforehand that let things go more smoothly. He was always optimistic, even when I screwed something up. His advice was keen and specific, yet he was still generally cheery about teaching and happy to see me enjoying my class.

My supervisor (the person who observed me) gave some helpful comments and was very positive, though I felt that some of her remarks were generic, and weren't specific to my lessons. I did feel that I occasionally could have used more direct supervision or advice—for example, it would have been helpful to consult with someone about my lessons prior to teaching them, or to get suggestions on ways to make the lessons more engaging for students. I felt entirely on my own in that regard.

My supervisor style was not aligned with my needs. She asked me how I thought it went and really offered feedback only when I prompted her with a particular questions. She had not completed written assessments nearly five weeks after my placement was over.

In regards to my supervisor, I felt that she was overly critical instead of constructively critical and she wasn't easy to talk to. This made it hard when I was having difficulty in my placement because I was nervous to talk to her about it.

Cooperating Teacher

In 2007-08, over 80% of respondents agreed that they felt welcomed by their cooperating teachers, had good working relationships with cooperating teachers, and that cooperating teachers treated them with respect. They agreed that cooperating teachers modeled effective teaching strategies, provided them with information or tools for teaching, and were willing to let student teachers take charge of the class. A slightly lower proportion of respondents (over 75%) agreed that they met regularly with cooperating teachers and were provided constructive feedback on their teaching. About 75% of respondents would recommend their cooperating teachers to future student teachers.

Figure 5: Cooperating Teacher (percentages)

Figure 5: Cooperating Teacher (percentages)
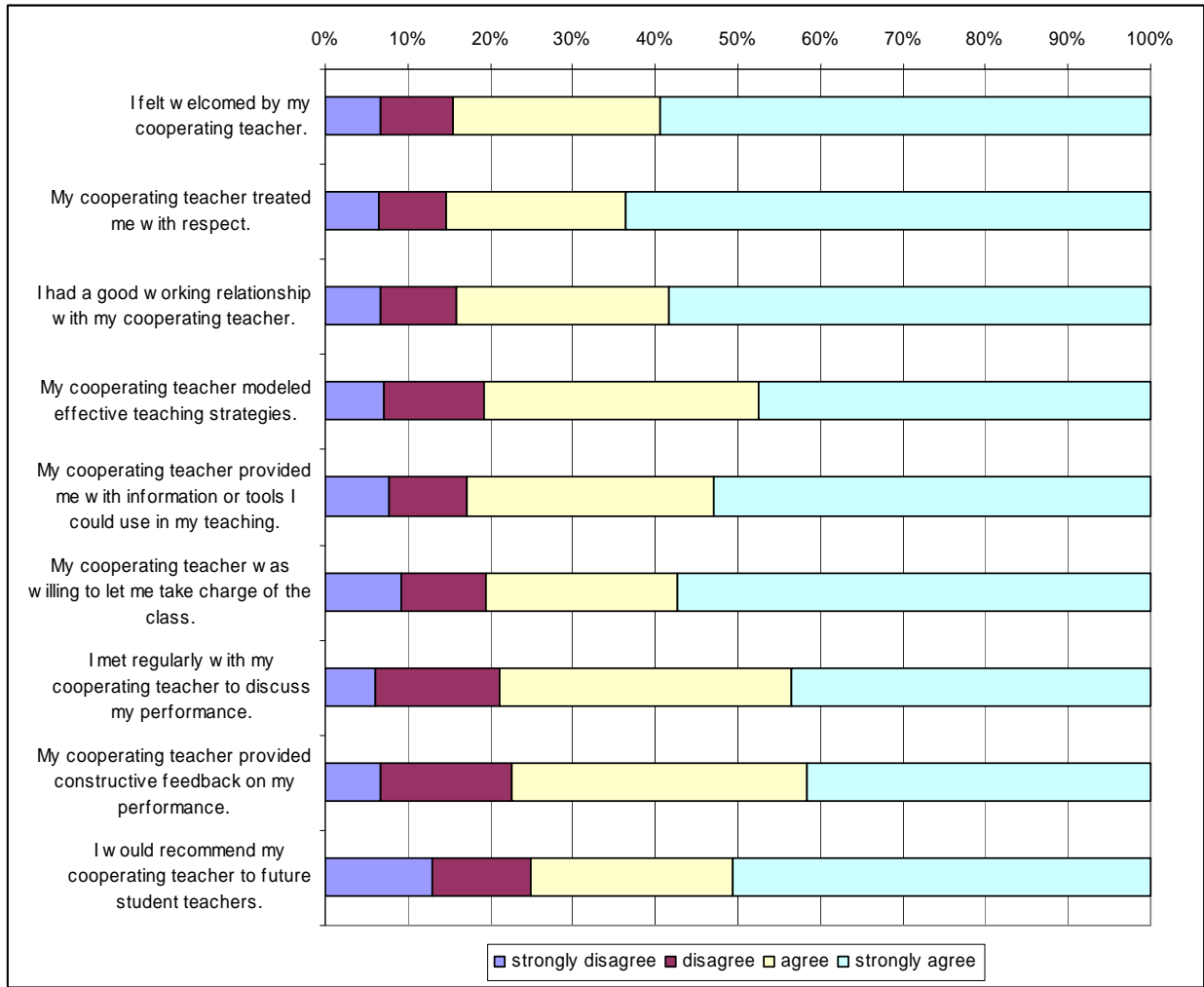
Table 8: Cooperating Teacher (frequencies)

Item	Statement	2006-07 mean	2007-08 mean	strongly disagree	disagree	agree	strongly agree	N
Q26.	I felt welcomed by my cooperating teacher.	3.4	3.4	19	25	71	168	283
Q27.	My cooperating teacher treated me with respect.		3.4	18	23	61	178	280
Q28.	I had a good working relationship with my cooperating teacher.	3.4	3.4	19	26	73	165	283
Q29.	My cooperating teacher modeled effective teaching strategies.	3.3	3.2	20	34	93	133	280
Q30.	My cooperating teacher provided me with information or tools I could use in my teaching.	3.3	3.3	22	27	85	150	284
Q31.	My cooperating teacher was willing to let me take charge of the class.	3.4	3.3	26	29	66	163	284
Q32.	I met regularly with my cooperating teacher to discuss my performance.	3.2	3.2	17	43	101	124	285
Q33.	My cooperating teacher provided	3.3	3.1	19	45	101	118	283

	constructive feedback on my performance.						
Q34.	I would recommend my cooperating teacher to future student teachers.	3.3	3.1	36	33	68	140	277

According to respondents, good cooperating teachers were warm, welcoming, and treated student teachers with respect. They modeled effective teaching and classroom management and were helpful and supportive of student teachers. It seems that age and experience of cooperating teachers were beneficial or detrimental to student teaching depending on cooperating teachers' personality and supervisory style.

> *My cooperating teacher was fantastic. She was always completely open to my questions and thoughts and was truly supportive of my learning and various teaching experiences at the school. She gave me much material with which to work.*

> *I felt extremely privileged to have a talented cooperating teacher … who really took her job as CT seriously. She made time to meet with me and discuss my teaching and planning almost every day. She took my questions seriously and respected my ideas. Best of all, she modeled excellent teaching strategies and beautifully bridged theory and practice. I know that not all student teachers can provide such glowing reviews of their cooperating teachers. I certainly wouldn't say such wonderful things about my CT last semester. But this spring, I was blessed!*

> *My cooperating teacher … was equally terrific. She was very helpful and encouraging. She provided many opportunities for me to get to know the students in addition to teaching the class. She always included me in any activities from day one and encouraged me to do my best always. She was/is an amazing mentor.*

> *My cooperating teacher was (luckily) perfect for me. She was very no-nonsense, almost intimidating but I respected her and was able to gain her respect as well. She many not be as openly warm as other teachers but I liked this because it means that we focused strictly on instruction and improving our students' academic progress. I think most student teachers would find my CT authoritative, cold and mean but I learned a lot from her and was able to see how a teaching style different from what I may be used to still works for students and why it does.*

> *My cooperating teacher was tough and made sure I was doing my work in a very organized and effective manner—she was very serious about her job and my role as a student teacher—it was tough—but I got my work done!*

> *Cooperating teacher technically a good teacher but poor interpersonal skills with me. I felt much more like one of his high school students (talked down to) than a colleague of his. His personality is not conducive to being a mentor (sarcastic, impersonal, seemed to dislike his job).*

> *My cooperating teacher is a wonderful teacher, but I suffered emotional abuse from him every day. He told me that I would not make it as a teacher, which lowered my confidence in teaching. He would also get very impatient with me since it took me a while to learn how to make lesson plans.*

> *The expectations that I had of student teaching experience in a secondary school setting is different from what I saw in my CT's classroom. We did not see eye to eye on many classroom management objectives. I felt like I was stepping on broken glass at times. If I did not initiate, the CT thought I was disinterested. If I made observations and commit, the CT, I felt, was too critical. It was difficult to keep a balance.*

Several respondents felt that their cooperating teachers used them as an extra pair of hands to work on projects cooperating teachers did not have time or desire to work on.

> *My student teaching placement at … was not ideal. The CT placed me in classes that she could not cover herself to "spread" the resources around. She didn't give me any sort of idea or theme to plan my lesson for—she just told me to do whatever I wanted. When I talk to her, she seemed to be bothered by it. The students love her, but she can't control them. I haven't learned a single thing during this semester's placement. I am glad I had a great CT 1st semester.*

Most of the work that I completed for my cooperating teacher was either grading or work she did not want to do. I feel one of the reasons my cooperating teacher takes on student teacher is to have them do the paper work for her. I had next to no time to deserve her teaching and always a pile of work to complete.

I believe my cooperating teacher took me on so he could avoid doing half of his workload. He gave me his two largest and most difficult classes and told me that he would not do anything for them until I left.

One of the greatest concerns for student teachers was cooperating teachers' ability to model effective teaching or classroom management strategies. Several respondents felt cooperating teachers' classrooms either limited their growth as teachers or were not conducive to their learning.

It was hard to be in this classroom. There was barely any planning. I could not incorporate my ideas. The teachers were not reflective in their curriculum and it was difficult to talk to them about it. It was a CTI classroom, however, I did not see enough differentiation of instruction.

My cooperating teacher did not have a very successful relationship with her students, and often struggled with classroom management. She also planned day by day. While it was useful to see these realities of teaching, and some of the many challenges teachers face, I did not think she was necessarily a model of a successful teacher.

My cooperating teacher really wasn't teaching. In fact on more than one day he showed the classes Ace Venture Pet Detective because he had nothing planned. The kids were fantastic, I loved every one of them. The teacher had good classroom management skills, but the kids were not learning a lot.

My cooperating teacher treated me with respect, and we got along well. However, she was very unorganized. She rarely graded any assignments or returned homework. I didn't feel like she planned out what she was going to teach, and we spent much more time in the classroom talking about students' individual problems rather than teaching them content. I wish I had been placed with a teacher who valued academic teaching more. I also felt like the room was so chaotic, it was hard to learn about classroom organization. My CT rarely gave me feedback.

Relationships with K-12 Students

In 2007-08, over 90% of respondents felt that they had positive relationships with K-12 students, that students were responsive to their teaching styles, and that they demonstrated academic progress as a result of respondents' teaching. They were somewhat less confident (about 84%) about their ability to manage student behavior effectively.

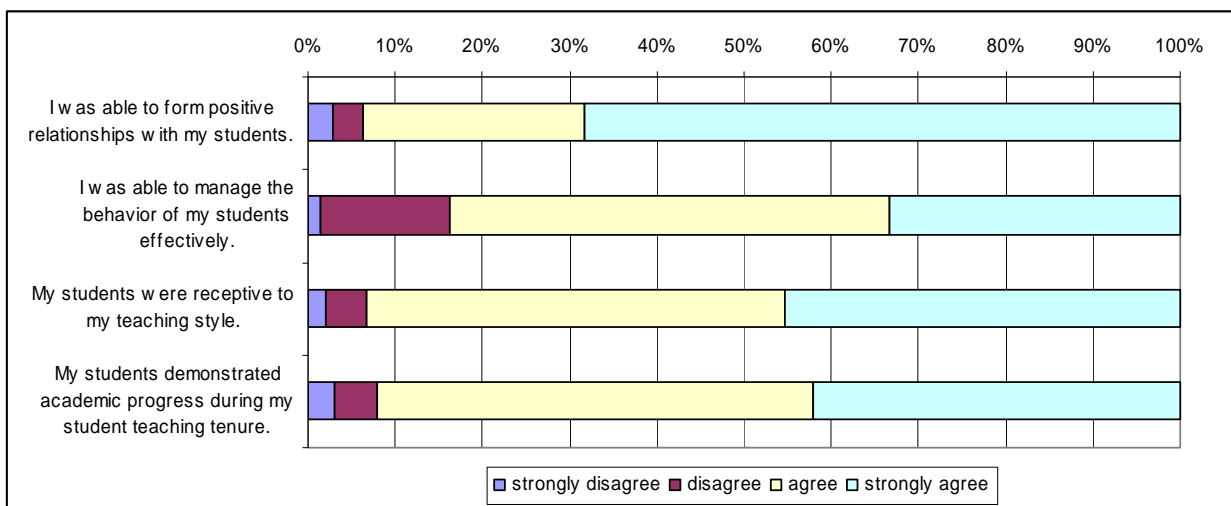Figure 6: Relationships with K-12 Students (percentages)

Table 9: Relationships with K-12 Students (frequencies)

Item	Statement	2006-07 mean	2007-08 mean	strongly disagree	disagree	agree	strongly agree	N
Q35.	I was able to form positive relationships with my students.	3.7	3.6	8	10	73	196	287
Q36.	I was able to manage the behavior of my students effectively.	3.2	3.2	4	42	143	94	283
Q37.	My students were receptive to my teaching style.	3.4	3.4	6	13	136	129	284
Q38.	My students demonstrated academic progress during my student teaching tenure.	3.4	3.3	8	13	133	112	266

Most of the comments about K-12 students indicated student teachers' passion and commitment to students' learning and to teaching profession. Respondents described their students as fantastic, fun, engaged, motivated, diverse, and respectful. On a less positive note, students were occasionally described as wild, challenging, and difficult to handle.

My students were the best part of my experience. They were incredibly receptive to my teaching style.

Still, I had a wonderful relationship with the students in the class, and felt as though I had a positive presence for them.

The students were wonderful to work with and I really felt like I served them well and they definitely taught me a lot.

The students were not a diverse group as I had hoped to work with but I enjoyed working with them. They were a wild group of children, so I learned a lot about classroom management which was good.

My students by no means made things easy for me but they did learn a lot and for the most part respected me as a teacher.

My students were awesome and I got to see them in two different teaching/learning environments which helped me to understand that students truly respond and react to different situations, routines, teaching styles, etc. They're not just children with behavior problems; they might simply be reacting to their environment.
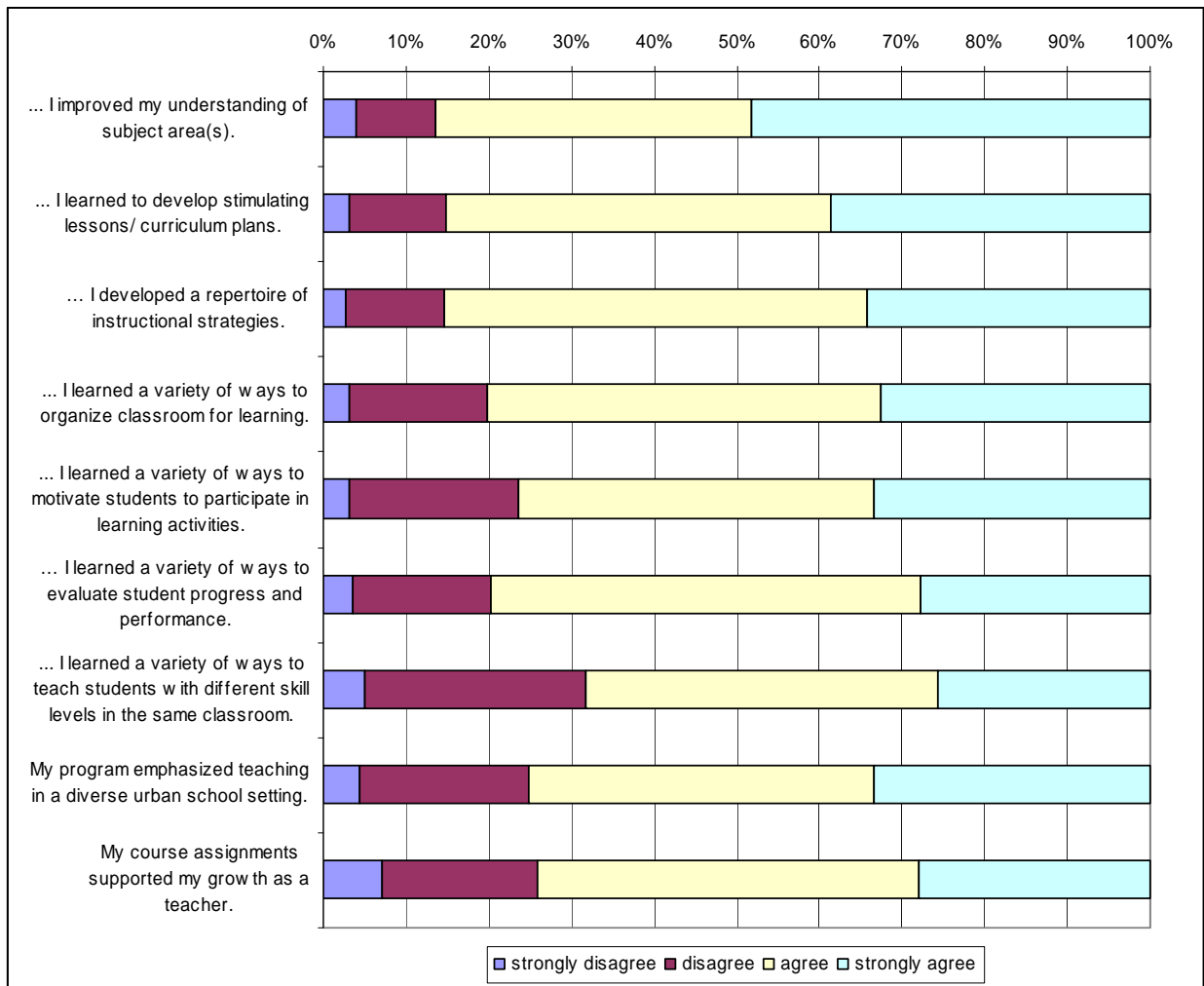
THEME 3: PROGRAM CURRICULUM

In 2007-08, the majority (80% or higher) of respondents agreed that while in the program, they improved their understanding of subject area(s), learned to develop stimulating lesson/curriculum plans, developed a repertoire of instructional strategies, and learned a variety of ways to evaluate student progress and performance. Respondents were slightly less confident about their ability to motivate students to learn. Differentiated instruction was a challenge for over 30% of respondents. In addition, over a quarter of respondents disagreed that their program emphasized teaching in a diverse urban school environment and that course assignments supported their growth as teachers.

Table 10: Program Curriculum (frequencies)

Item	While in the program, …	2007-08 mean	strongly disagree	disagree	agree	strongly agree	N
Q39.	... I improved my understanding of subject area(s).	3.3	11	27	108	136	282
Q40.	... I learned to develop stimulating lessons/ curriculum plans.	3.2	9	33	133	110	285

Q41.	… I developed a repertoire of instructional strategies.	3.2	8	33	144	96	281
Q42.	... I learned a variety of ways to organize classroom for learning.	3.1	9	47	135	92	283
Q43.	... I learned a variety of ways to motivate students to participate in learning activities.	3.1	9	58	122	95	284
Q44.	… I learned a variety of ways to evaluate student progress and performance.	3.0	10	47	147	78	282
Q45.	... I learned a variety of ways to teach students with different skill levels in the same classroom.	2.9	14	75	120	72	281
Q46.	My program emphasized teaching in a diverse urban school setting.	3.0	12	57	116	93	278
Q47.	My course assignments supported my growth as a teacher.	3.0	20	53	130	79	282

Figure 7: Program Curriculum (percentages)

Overall Preparation

Respondents differed in their evaluations of the program curriculum and its effectiveness in preparing them to be teachers. Some felt well-prepared; others saw the curriculum as useless and did not feel ready to start teaching.

... the preparation I received for many of my classes last semester was superb (cooperative learning activities, for example).

I feel very well-prepared to address literacy and diversity in the classroom.

I think that my program curriculum did a good job preparing me for student teaching and for my career. I was able to understand and apply many of the theories I had learned. Although some of the information from certain classes was difficult to understand at times, they were helpful theories to learn about b/c they made me more knowledgeable in my field.

My program curriculum was adequate but not wonderful. A few of my classes … really affected me for the better in student teaching. But many of my classes had little to do with the hands-on task of actually teaching.

The curriculum is not geared towards preparing teachers for the real world. Much of the curriculum is useless.

I really feel let down and alone after completing this program. I feel totally unprepared to enter a classroom next year. If my diploma didn't say Columbia I would have left the program!

Theory and Practice

A lot of critical comments about program curricula had to do with a heavy emphasis on theory and deficit of practical applications necessary for everyday teaching.

Program curriculum overall was definitely applicable, especially in asking us to think about our images of teachers; what sorts of teachers we want to be; and what forms our teaching. I got practical as well as theoretical help—however, I really had only one professor who consistently demonstrated tricks and ideas for engaging students in discussion that I can use in daily classes.

I did not feel like my classes that supported the student teaching experience helped me at all. The classes were so theoretical that I felt lost when it came to practical concerns in the classroom.

I don't think our curriculum is practical enough. I know that it is important to study theory, but not at the expense of practical knowledge. I would feel completely lost if I were to have my own classroom today, and I would have to teach myself everything. … My supervisor gave some great advice, but I feel like I was never taught anything specific about how to actually teach.

My program curriculum heavily emphasizes theory with very little—if any—practice to back it up. Every … student I've spoken to felt unprepared on the first day of student teaching. Theory means nothing without practice. The theory is important, but need to be taught with context to be meaningful to us.

I think that the program does not do a good job preparing student teachers for the classroom. There is too much theory and not enough practical tools to bring into classroom with you. There is no reason for every teacher to reinvent the wheel. Rather we should get good ideas from the program and then make them our own or tailor them to meet our students' needs.

Classroom Management, Lesson Planning, Differentiated Instruction, and Assessment

Lesson planning, classroom management, differentiated instruction and assessments are the areas where many of the respondents would have liked more instruction and practice.

… Methods class was presented to assist in the student teaching experience; all instruction was very relevant. There was a little too much emphasis on reflective processes as opposed to real life situations, especially regarding classroom management. Supervised Teaching seminar was an exception to this; there was good emphasis on management, but overall not enough in the program curriculum.

I learned a lot while in the program and feel my teaching improved as I began to understand the specific pedagogy of TC but I feel we could have had more discussion on working with students with behavior problems, integrating special teaching/learning strategies for special education students, working in urban environments and differentiating teaching for different populations.

Finally, as an extremely pre-service student with no experience in the classroom, I would have also loved workshops that offered ideas or instruction about basic practical skills that can be used in the classroom, in addition to what we might learn from our CTs. Theory is all well and great, but practicality would be really useful for people like me—for example, classroom management ideas, tips on how to create rubrics and assessments, things like that. I feel theoretically prepared, almost, but am still worried about the practical stuff.

I wish we had more instruction before being put in the classroom. I want to learn how to create effective lesson plans, units and curriculum. I think it would help me to be more organized and make sure students leave every class with something tangible they have learned.

I was also disappointed that I did not learn effective practices for differentiating. Instead of learning about how to accept and be sensitive to students of different backgrounds, we should have been learning how to effectively educate them. More practical applications.

Although I appreciated the emphasis on literacy and differentiated instruction in my program, I felt that differentiated instruction was neither defined nor modeled adequately enough for me to implement it successfully in my classroom, and the literacy strategies I learned were never implemented by my cooperating teacher, meaning I have not had much experience with them. The rest of the program curriculum I found applicable and valuable.

I believe that there needs to be more space in the program for careful evaluation of how lesson plans and curriculum units are constructed. Reading about different approaches helps, but actually creating entire units helps much more.

I know this isn't a "technical training program" but some practical stuff outside the classroom would have been helpful. I would have been nice to have some workshops or at least some space to share different practical knowledge, i.e., classroom strategies or assessment strategies, because sometimes we don't see everything or have an opportunity to discuss different options about certain areas of teaching. And why on earth do we not have an assessment course??????? That would have been so very helpful, and it's pretty disgusting what the "#1" school left out of the program.

My program was pretty good, especially the second year, but a little weak on differentiating instruction for students with different skill levels who weren't ELLs, or were ELLs but needed differentiation apart from language support.

Not enough methodology courses. Never required to write a unit plan which I though was strange. Don't necessarily feel my program is worth the cost it takes to come here, especially which many teachers are grad students.

The program curriculum in the … department lacks instruction on teaching students with diverse learning needs, behavior management techniques and teaching in an urban setting. I realize we're exposed to much of this during student teaching. However, it would be great to have a workshop or panel discussion … something that gives us practical tools to start with.

Course Assignments

Echoing comments about heavy workload during student teaching, several respondents commented on the value of course assignments. While some believed that course assignments were relevant and constructive, many more felt that course assignments were often too numerous, repetitive, meaningless, busywork, a waste of time, and tacked on to fulfill the requirements rather than help respondents become better teachers. As a result, such assignments often took away from student teaching experience and actual teaching.

I felt that a lot of the work I was asked to do for homework resembled busywork. I understand that the professors want student teachers to model the activities that they will someday want to teach but it got a little odd being a model 8th grader or 11th grader.

I thought the child profile was also a waste. I don't think it was beneficial for our teaching careers because as a teacher in charge of 30 students, you will never have time to dedicate that much effort toward observing one child. Instead, you will be asked to critically and accurately collect and analyze data on ALL students in your classroom. This would have been the perfect time to practice different ways of doing this—keeping data on a large number of students in a timely and efficient manner. The child profile also took away form our teaching in the classroom. You became fixated on one student instead of gauging the overall learning of the entire class.

I feel that many of the assignments that were part of the student teaching class detracted from the student teaching seminar and experience. Much of our time was spent on these assignments and there was no time given to discussions about what was happening in our classrooms.

I know that the program is rigorous, but there are too many assignments, forcing me to place priorities on each task. Student teaching was left out many times, in place of meaningless assignments that are often not graded or even given feedback on.

Some of the assignments felt tacked on, that they were only added to fulfill requirements without being well executed. Additional assignments were sometimes a distraction from more important work.
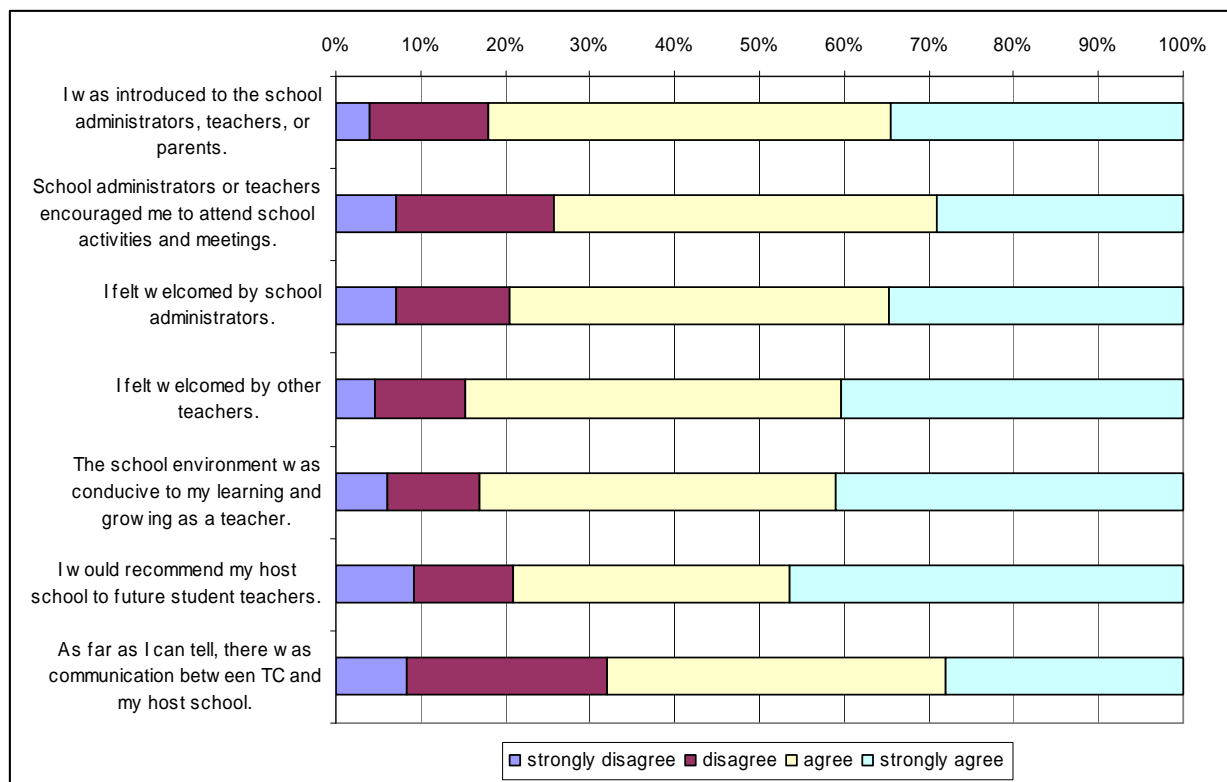
THEME 4: SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

In 2007-08, over 80% of respondents agreed that they were introduced to the school administrators, teachers, and parents, that they felt welcomed by other teachers, and that their school environment was conducive to their learning. A little fewer than 80% agreed that they felt welcomed by school administrators and were willing to recommend their school to future student teachers. About three out of every four student teachers were encouraged to attend school activities and meetings. However, only 68% of respondents felt that there was good communication between their host school and their TC program.

Table 11: School Environment (frequencies)

Item	Statement	2006-07 mean	2007-08 mean	strongly disagree	disagree	agree	strongly agree	N
Q48.	I was introduced to the school administrators, teachers, or parents.	3.4	3.1	11	40	135	98	284
Q49.	School administrators or teachers encouraged me to attend school activities and meetings.	2.9	3.0	20	52	126	81	279
Q50.	I felt welcomed by school administrators.	3.1	3.1	20	37	125	97	279
Q51.	I felt welcomed by other teachers.	3.3	3.2	13	30	125	114	282
Q52.	The school environment was conducive to my learning and growing as a teacher.	3.3	3.2	17	31	120	117	285
Q53.	I would recommend my host school to future student teachers.	3.4	3.2	26	33	92	131	282
Q54.	As far as I can tell, there was communication between TC and my host school.	3.0	2.9	21	60	101	71	253

Figure 8: School Environment (percentages)

Legend: strongly disagree · disagree · agree · strongly agree

Chart rows (top to bottom):
- I was introduced to the school administrators, teachers, or parents.
- School administrators or teachers encouraged me to attend school activities and meetings.
- I felt welcomed by school administrators.
- I felt welcomed by other teachers.
- The school environment was conducive to my learning and growing as a teacher.
- I would recommend my host school to future student teachers.
- As far as I can tell, there was communication between TC and my host school.

Host School Environment

The overwhelming majority of respondents who commented on their host school environment were satisfied with their placements describing them as welcoming and inviting, and teachers, staff, and (less often) administrators as friendly, supportive, and helpful. Student teachers appreciated being invited and encouraged to participate in school activities beyond the classroom: professional development, planning, or parent meetings or extra-curricular activities.

I am not sure the administration knew I was there, but everyone encouraged me to sit in on department, house, literacy, and parent meetings, which was great. The two other 6th grade social studies teachers were very helpful and encouraging, as were a group of teachers I ate lunch with—I really could not have asked for a better school and faculty for my student teaching experience.

My classroom was across the hall from the office so I was fortunate to develop great working relationships with the school administration and faculty. The school is small and it's easy for all teachers to get to know one another as well as student teachers. I was taken in by all of the second grade teachers and incorporated into curriculum discussion and planning. I definitely felt part of the school team.

My placement school site was wonderful—small, like a family. The faculty and staff took their jobs very seriously and were dedicated to helping the students to the best of their ability. The principal was the best I've ever encountered. He was involved in every aspect of school life and took an active interest in my experience. The faculty were all extremely welcoming and supportive. The students were receptive and friendly. The only negative experiences came when left with substitutes. Overall, I cannot say enough good things about the environment and dedication of the school.

The … School is an amazing school where you really see all the theories we learn at TC in practice. It really feels like a community. Every teacher knows every student's name. The advisory groups are like families. I think the students are very well behaved and have something

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to say. I don't think I was that smart and thoughtful at that age! Learning is very student centered which let's children develop their personal ideas and empowers them as individuals.

A few not-so-positive comments had to do either with tense teacher/administrator relationships or with the lack of structure and discipline and, as a consequence, problematic student behaviors.

Sadly, my opinion of my placement site is very low. I greatly enjoyed the students and learned a tremendous amount from one teacher, but on the whole, I was shocked at the lack of true education going on. The school claimed to be college prep, yet no homework was assigned, nor was any reading of any kind assigned. Most damning, students continually used sidekicks and cell phones, and no disciplinary procedures were enforced so the behavior was epidemic, and it was difficult to teach. On the whole I would have preferred a different placement with more structure.

My placement school was generally a bit chaotic. The staff was not friendly to the student teachers and the kids were allowed to run pretty wild. When I brought one student to the principal's office because he was saying racist things and punching another classmate, he said, "I'm excited to go to the principal's office. I'll get the lollipop and talk about my problems." Since the children realize that there are no consequences, they are not afraid to be on their worst behavior.

The principal at my school had a poor reputation with teachers. Most of the faculty kept to themselves or spent a lot of time talking about what other people were doing with the classes and how what they were doing was better for the students. The students were great, hard-working and enthusiastic. The outside of the school seemed to be plagued with construction that was started and never finished. The inside was clean and well-kept.

Diverse Urban Public School Setting

To illustrate somewhat lower ratings of their program emphasis on teaching in a diverse public school setting, four respondents commented on the lack of opportunities to observe and teach in such settings.

My placement school did not meet my expectations in terms of student demographics (students were largely white and wealthy) and it did not prepare me as well for work in diverse urban school settings.

TC should sent more teachers into high need schools and put support structures in place so that both the school and the student teacher can benefit from the experience. I think that TC guides many student teachers who are initially interested in teaching in high need schools to gifted programs or selective schools because of the emphasis the program places on sending student teachers to these schools.

The principal had a tense relationship with teachers, as both were under pressure from the DOE to raise the school's performance on standardized tests. The school was also a tense environment as students had to walk through metal detectors and were often herded around by security guards. However, there were also positive things I saw happening within the school such as relationships between particular students and teachers, after school programs, and the student government. I think working in the school gave me a balanced perspective of the challenged that low-performing high school in the city face.

TC/Host School Communication

Only six comments related to TC/host school communication. Respondents seemed to be not aware of how TC and schools communicated with each other and not much concerned about it.

I am not sure TC was aware of much about my placement, or had any interaction at all with my school.

There is a general lack of communication between the CTs and TC.

I couldn't tell how much my program communicated with my host school, though; I believe it was minimal at best.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In fall 2007 and spring 2008, 688 student teachers received the Student Teaching Feedback Survey questionnaire; 296 from 16 initial teacher education programs returned the completed survey (43% response rate). Respondents were asked to agree or disagree with statements about (1) the way their programs set up and support student teaching, (2) cooperating teacher, college supervisor, K-12 students, and learning opportunities they had during student teaching, (3) program curriculum, and (4) host school and its communication with Teachers College. They were also provided opportunities to clarify or expand on each of the themes.

1. Student Teaching Set-Up

The majority of respondents (84%) reported to have received accurate information about student teaching requirements. This information was likely to be provided by program faculty/student teaching coordinators, by fellow student teachers, by supervisors, and by the OTE through the Student Teacher Handbook. Respondents' comments, although generally positive, suggest that more work needs be done to further clarify roles and expectations for supervisors, cooperating teachers and student teachers, and that clearer guidelines about required observation and actual teaching hours need to be given to student teachers and cooperating teachers. The OTE and teacher education programs need to work together to create an accurate and consistent message for student teachers.

About two thirds of respondents (73%) reported to have received accurate information about teacher certification. This information was likely to be provided by program faculty/student teaching coordinators, by the NYS website, or by fellow student teachers. About one-third of student teachers cited the OTE staff as a source of information, which is lower than comparable numbers from the last year. The OTE office could provide up-to-date information to program faculty and supervisors to help student teachers navigate the certification process.

Overall, respondents positively evaluated their programs' efforts to make placement process and student teaching experience efficient and productive for student teachers. The majority of student teachers (over 75%) found paperwork, placement process, program-host school communication, and support for student teachers adequate. Students from dual certification programs and from programs, which do not place student teachers but rather require them to look for the placements on their own, were at a disadvantage. Echoing last year findings, one of the main suggestions to improve the placement process is to inform student teachers and cooperating teachers about their placements in advance—the earlier the better.

The questions about student teaching seminar and course workload during student teaching were rated lower than other items in this section. Programs need to do more work to tie course assignments and field experiences, to coordinate course and student teaching deadlines, and to prepare student teachers to manage their time and handle course load effectively. Other suggestions to lessen the burden include counseling students to start the program earlier (in summer) or to postpone student teaching until the second semester.

Student teaching seminar was seen as unhelpful or a waste of time by about a quarter of respondents. On the other hand, about 40% of respondents strongly agreed that seminar discussions helped them during student teaching. It is likely that the value of the seminar is dependent on individual programs or individual instructors. In general, student teachers would like their seminars to be well-organized (structured) and to provide opportunities to share experiences and concerns, to learn new teaching strategies, and to meet experienced teachers/ supervisors.

2. Key Players

The majority of student teachers see student teaching as one of the most valuable parts of their teacher education program. Many commented on how much they learned during their placements. Over three quarters agreed that they had adequate opportunities to take over the class, to apply theory to practice, to try things out, and to observe experienced teachers during student teaching. In most cases, the adequacy of learning opportunities depended on cooperating teachers' ability and willingness to create such opportunities. Cooperating teachers need to know what student teachers need to accomplish

during different phases of their placements and be able to create adequate learning opportunities for student teachers.

The majority of student teachers (over 80%) agreed that they felt welcomed, were treated with respect, and had good working relationships with cooperating teachers. They agreed that cooperating teachers modeled effective teaching strategies, provided them with information or tools for teaching, and were willing to let student teachers take charge of the class. Three fourths of respondents agreed that they had regular meetings and were provided constructive feedback on their teaching. The two frequent concerns that came up in the open-ended comments referred to cooperating teachers not modeling effective teaching or classroom management strategies, and cooperating teachers treating student teachers as extra pairs of hands to take care of grading or other responsibilities that teachers have no time or desire to do.

The majority of respondents (over 80%) agreed that they had good working relationships with their supervisors, that supervisors were easy to reach, provided them with information and tools for teaching, and gave constructive feedback on student teachers' performance. Three fourths agreed that they had regular meetings with supervisors and that supervisors communicated effectively with cooperating teachers. Both quantitative and qualitative data indicate that student teachers valued and expected constructive feedback from their supervisors. Such feedback is timely, specific, realistic, and cheerful. Among the often cited concerns is supervisors' lack of organization and busy schedules which made it difficult for student teachers to be observed and evaluated appropriately.

Consistent with the last year findings, the relationships with K-12 students was the highest rated item of the survey. Over 90% of respondents felt they had positive relationships with K-12 students, that students were responsive to their teaching styles, and, consequently, demonstrated academic progress. K-12 students were often described as fantastic, fun, engaged, motivated, diverse, and respectful. Some student teachers described their students as wild, challenging, and difficult to handle. About 84% of respondents reported that they were able to manage student behavior effectively.

3. Program Curriculum

The majority of respondents (over 80%) agreed that while in the program, they improved their understanding of subject area(s), learned to develop stimulating lesson/curriculum plans, developed a repertoire of instructional strategies, and learned a variety of ways to evaluate student progress and performance. Respondents were slightly less confident about their ability to motivate students to learn. Differentiated instruction was a challenge for over 30% of respondents.

A heavy emphasis on theory and deficit of practical application were the main concerns expressed in the open-ended responses. A number of comments indicate that student teachers would like to get more training, either through regular classes or extra curricular workshops, in lesson planning, classroom management, differentiated instruction, and assessment. Over a quarter of respondents disagreed that their program emphasized teaching in a diverse urban school environment and that course assignments supported their growth as teachers. Course assignments were sometimes described as meaningless, busywork, or tacked on.

4. School Environment

The majority of respondents (over 80%) agreed that they were introduced to the school administrators, teachers, staff, and parents, that they felt welcomed by other teachers and that their school environment was conducive to their learning. About 80% agreed that they felt welcomed by the administrators and would recommend their schools to future student teachers. About three quarters were encouraged to attend school activities and meetings. The open-ended comments confirm these results and suggest that respondents were generally satisfied with their host school environment. A few not-so-positive comments had to do with inner school politics or with the lack of structure and student behavior problems.

About 68% of respondents felt that the communication between their host school and Teachers College was good. The small number of comments related to TC/school communication may indicate that student teachers were not much concerned about it.