

## Themes from Cooperating Teacher Surveys



Each semester, the cooperating teachers of our field and student teaching candidates complete a survey that asks them to provide feedback regarding the strengths of the Franciscan Education Program, the areas of improvement, and changes or recommendations for improving the field and student-teaching experience. In particular, they are asked the following two open-ended questions:

- **Q1:** *What are the strengths of the FUS teacher education program, as evidenced by your experiences with your field/student-teaching candidate?*
- **Q2:** *What changes or recommendations would you make for improving the student-teaching experience at FUS?*

To analyze the feedback provided by the cooperating teachers, the Director of Clinical Experiences (DCE) and Director of Accreditation for the Education Program engage in consensus coding as they extrapolate themes from the qualitative data provided by the cooperating teachers (Hill et al., 2005). The emergent themes are then integrated into programmatic improvements, which testify to the EPP's intentional program co-construction based on cooperating teacher feedback.

The following summarizes the themes and resultant improvement initiatives associated with areas of improvement and recommendations for program enhancement (Q1 & Q2) based on the past three cycles (Spring 2023 – Spring 2024). Sample quotations from the cooperating teachers' survey responses illustrate these themes. For each, we also describe the analysis of the data and action steps taken on behalf of the EPP.

### **Q1: What are the strengths of the FUS teacher education program, as evidenced by your experiences with your field/student-teaching candidate?**

#### ***Field Strengths***

<b>Theme(s)</b>	<b>Sample Quotation</b>
<b>Classroom Management and Content Knowledge</b> Emphasis on positive classroom environment and order	"My early experience candidate was very knowledgeable and created a positive classroom environment."
<b>Preparation and Willingness</b>	"The students in the FUS teacher educator program are very well-prepared and willing to participate actively."

Students are well-prepared and willing to engage	
<b>Foundational Skills</b> Strong foundational skills in teaching and classroom management	"The foundation provided by FUS is evident in the candidate's teaching skills and classroom management.
<b>Time Management</b> Effective use of time in the classroom	"Getting time in a classroom and being flexible with the schedule has been a strength."

*Analysis & Action Steps:* Franciscan University's teacher education program demonstrates several strengths in Field and Clinical experiences. Field candidates demonstrated positive classroom management and content knowledge, creating a positive environment. They are well-prepared and willing to engage actively, showing foundational teaching and classroom management skills. Additionally, candidates effectively manage initial classroom management and cooperating teacher schedules, demonstrating their flexibility and willingness to work together.

### **Student Teaching Strengths**

<b>Theme(s)</b>	<b>Sample Quotation</b>
<b>Preparation and Professionalism</b> Well-prepared and professional demeanor	"My student teacher was well-prepared and exhibited strong professionalism."
<b>Classroom Skills</b> Effective in classroom management and teaching	"The student was great at managing the classroom and delivering lessons."
<b>Program Effectiveness</b> Positive impact of the FUS program	"The FUS program has a positive impact on the students' teaching abilities."
<b>Professional Growth &amp; Learning Experiences</b> Continuous professional growth and diverse learning experiences provided	"Preparedness and continuous professional growth were evident."  "The program provides diverse learning experiences that benefit the candidates."

*Analysis & Action Steps:* In the context of student teaching, Franciscan University teacher education program showcases several strengths. Student Teaching candidates demonstrate preparation and professionalism, effectively managing classrooms and delivering lessons. The program positively impacts students' teaching abilities, contributing to their continuous professional growth. Additionally, the program provides diverse learning experiences, greatly benefiting the candidates and enhancing their preparedness for the teaching profession.

## Q2: What changes or recommendations would you make for improving the Field and Clinical Experience at FUS?

### *Field Recommendations*

Theme(s)	Changes and Recommendations	Implications
<b>Instructional Skills</b> Need for improvement in teaching and lesson assignments.	"I think that encouraging the students to teach more complex assignments would be beneficial."	The Director of Clinical Experiences will focus on requiring explicit connections to research outlined in lesson plans regarding theory and how it informs practice.
<b>Classroom Management Skills</b> Enhanced focus on classroom management	"Management of the classroom could be improved for a more effective teaching experience."	The Director of Clinical Experiences will invite a Behavioral Specialist to offer training. With the change to the pre-service teacher permit, all will have a substitute teaching license in Ohio.

*Analysis & Action Steps:* Enhancing instructional skills has been pursued by requiring candidates to make explicit connections between research and practice in their lesson plans. A Behavioral Specialist has also been invited to offer training sessions to improve classroom management skills. Additionally, all candidates will obtain a substitute teaching license in Ohio, enhancing their readiness and effectiveness in the classroom.

### *Student Teaching Recommendations*

Theme(s)	Changes and Recommendations	Implications
<b>Experience and Time Management</b> Focus on meeting teaching needs and improving experience	"More emphasis on meeting the specific needs of the teaching experience is required."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A checklist is required to help student teachers to plan and engage. Phone rubric is in place before making their call home.</li> <li>- All attend an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meeting.</li> <li>- Attend after-school events.</li> <li>- A weekly teaching schedule must be submitted. The schedule also addresses the need for student teachers to plan for assemblies, weather, and testing.</li> </ul>
<b>Feedback and Communication</b> Enhanced feedback and communication mechanisms	"Improving feedback and communication with mentors and peers is necessary."	The Director of Clinical Experiences will set the expectation of limiting text messaging and planning to express concerns face-to-face to practice communication skills as a professional.

*Analysis & Action Steps:* Several recommendations are proposed to enhance the Student-Teaching experience at Franciscan University. In particular, more emphasis should be placed on meeting specific teaching needs and improving time management. This includes a checklist to help student teachers plan and engage, a phone rubric for calls home, attending Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meetings and after-school events, and submitting a weekly teaching schedule that considers assemblies, weather, and testing. Finally, enhancing feedback and

communication mechanisms is essential. To develop professional communication skills, we emphasize reducing text messaging and encouraging face-to-face communication.

## **References**

Hill, C. E., Knox, S., Thompson, B. J., Williams, E. N., Hess, S. A., & Ladany, N. (2005). Consensual qualitative research: An update. *Journal of counseling psychology, 52*(2), 196.