



Pre-Service Teacher Communication with Cooperating Teachers

The Development of a Majors Honors Project by Shae Delancy
Department of Education, Missouri Western State University

Sponsored by Professor of Education Dr. Elizabeth Thorne-Wallington and Honors Director Dr. Teddi Deka

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Junior Experience

- In order to fulfill the Missouri Western State University Honors Program Majors Honors requirements, I was tasked to create and implement a research project that pertains to my major studies.
- As an Elementary Education major, the most significant moments of my college career thus far have been my interactions with teachers at local elementary schools. One can only learn so much from lectures about teaching - to really master how to teach, one must connect with current professionals.
- I decided to focus my project on communication between **pre-service teachers** (commonly known as ‘student teachers’) and their **cooperating teachers** (the classroom teachers that pre-service teachers observe and work with) (VWU).
- As part of the required EDU303 course, all Education juniors are placed with a teacher in the St. Joseph, MO School District. This is called the “Junior Experience” because it takes place before full-time student teaching as a senior.



- The MWSU Education Department considers the Junior Experience to be a “Phase III – Investigating” experience that is necessary for Reflective Teacher-Leader development because of the chance for pre-service teachers to investigate what they have studied (in their methods courses) in a classroom setting (MWSU).

Project Development

Collecting Data

- All EDU303 participants must also take EDU304, where pre-service teachers meet twice a week to learn educator skills needed for their school placements. I plan to have every one of my peers in these courses take an online questionnaire for my research.
- The questionnaire will allow participants to report what forms of communication their cooperating classroom teachers use with them, how often each of these forms of communication occur, and what their perception of their success as a student teacher in multiple areas is (as compared to previous experiences with typically less communication).



Reasoning for Questionnaire Contents

- After verbal interviews during EDU304, I have created an extensive list of types of communication my peers have used this semester, with some unexpected forms such as ‘iMessage’ and ‘meet and talk outside of school.’
- The Missouri Educator Evaluation System (MEES) provides cooperating teachers a list of standards that they are to grade pre-service teachers on. I have simplified the wording from the rubric, including categories such as ‘content area knowledge’ and ‘lesson planning’ for pre-service teachers to rate their success levels on (MDESE).
- The beginning of an extensive literature review revealed that, generally, frequent and professional communication “facilitate[s] the professional growth of student-teachers and enhance[s] reflective action.” Therefore, I am also inquiring about ‘classroom management’ and ‘interactions and relationships with students’ (Cameron & Wilson).

Questionnaire

What is your major? Select 1:

-Early Childhood Education
-Elementary Education
-Secondary Education - Biology
-Secondary Education - Chemistry
-Secondary Education - Math
-Secondary Education - English
-Secondary Education - Speech and Theatre
-Secondary Education - Social Studies
-K-12 Education - Art
-K-12 Education - Physical Education
-K-12 Education - Music - Vocal
-K-12 Education - Music - Instrumental
-K-12 Education - French
-K-12 Education - Spanish
-Other - please describe:



Where is your Junior Experience placement? Select 1:

-Early Learning Center
-Pre-School
-Elementary School
-Middle School
-High School
-Other - please describe:

What grade level (or multiple grade levels) do you interact with during your designated Junior Experience hour? Please describe:

Think about all of the interactions you have had this semester with your Cooperating (classroom) Teacher. Select all forms of communication that you or your Cooperating Teacher have used AT LEAST ONCE.

-Print-outs of notes or instructions
-Handwritten notes or instructions
-E-mail
-Text message or iMessage
-Facebook Messenger
-Phone call
-Video call (such as Skype or FaceTime)
-Meet and talk before Junior Experience hour
-Meet and talk during Junior Experience hour
-Meet and talk after Junior Experience hour
-Meet and talk during school hours, but not directly before/during/after your Junior Experience hour
-Meet and talk before school hours, but still at the school
-Meet and talk after school hours, but still at the school
-Meet and talk outside of school
-Other - please describe:

Think about all of the interactions you have had this semester with your Cooperating Teacher. Rank the forms of communication that you selected, with 1 being the form of communication that you have used the MOST FREQUENTLY. [Options available based on previous answers]

How often do you use each form of communication that you selected PER WEEK? (1 e-mail received and 1 e-mail sent back would count as using e-mail twice.) [Options available based on previous answers]

Think back to your other MWSU Education Department field experiences, such as your Sophomore Experience. Has the communication with your current Junior Experience Cooperating Teacher been the better, about the same, or worse than with your Cooperating Teachers at previous placements? Select 1:

-Junior Experience communication has been better
-Junior Experience communication has been about the same
-Junior Experience communication has been worse

How successful did you feel during your PAST placements in each of the following categories? Rank each of the following from 1-5, with 5 being the MOST SUCCESSFUL.

-Content area knowledge
-Classroom management
-Lesson planning
-Interactions and relationships with students
-Interactions and relationships with school personnel
-Interactions and relationships with parents

How successful do you feel at your JUNIOR EXPERIENCE placement in each of the following categories? Rank each of the following from 1-5, with 5 being the MOST SUCCESSFUL.

-Content area knowledge
-Classroom management
-Lesson planning
-Interactions and relationships with students
-Interactions and relationships with school personnel
-Interactions and relationships with parents

Hypothesis

- I hypothesize that pre-service teachers who report multiple forms of frequent communication with their cooperating teachers will report a higher level of success in more than one aspect of the student teaching process, as opposed to those who report little communication with their cooperating teachers.
- This questionnaire will be sent to all Junior Experience students at the end of the semester in order to allow pre-service teachers to compare their feelings of success at the end of the semester with their feelings from other fully completed experiences.



Selected References

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