

Cooperating Teacher Feedback Shared with Programs – 11/11/2022

I hope that all of you are doing well. I wanted to let you know that over the last two afternoons, Betsey and I hosted Zoom sessions for our cooperating teachers to find out what they thought was going well, and what they thought could be improved, given their recent hosting of a CCU candidate. We held the sessions by place in the program – Junior 1 CTs, then Junior 2, then Senior 1 and MAT CTs. We had representation from all programs except Music Ed, and there were some common themes across all programs that we really need to address moving forward (easy, but meaningful, fixes!).

For the Junior 1 session, we had eight out of 84 individuals attend, for a 9.52% participation rate. They were happy with the flexibility that some programs allowed in scheduling, and liked when programs were able to cohort students at a school, so that they could compare experiences and bounce ideas off of one another. We shared that we expected candidates to have one observation by the CT and one by the university supervisor next semester, and they were totally on board! It was their recommendation that the CT do the first observation, and then the US do the second. They also suggested a small group observation first, and then a whole class.

In the Junior 2 session, five out of 24 cooperating teachers attended (20.8%). They had the same feedback. They appreciated the flexibility in scheduling that some programs were able to allow. They were also happy that the programs required more hours than the state required. They were also on board with a minimum of two observations, one by the CT and one by the US.

The Senior 1 and MAT cooperating teachers were, for the most part, really happy with candidates across all programs (there were a few exceptions, which they noted were already being handled by faculty). Fourteen out of 124 gave feedback (12.1%). From every program, they commented on how quick the candidates were to jump right in and assist. They commented on professional dress, being willing to teach anything, and the candidates really knowing what they needed to do.

There were a few other thoughts, that were more general: Many programs thought it would be great for candidates to videotape themselves more often, so that they could look back and reflect. An elementary CT noted that she thought this was a valuable experience in the S1 block and perhaps it could be done earlier. In PE, they agreed, but noted that the antiquated technology made this tricky.

Now the next steps: The biggest, and most pervasive issues, cross all programs, and all points in the program, was a lack of communication. The cooperating teachers want more emails from the faculty leading the courses, and more often. They want to know what candidates are working on each week, or at least every other week, so that they have some ideas to direct the candidate to in the field. They also want more details about assignments, as they struggled to help with some assignments and the candidate seemed to struggle too. I think some of these quotes wrap up their thoughts really nicely:

“Just knowing what you expect from us. I don't know what you want me to teach the candidate, and I don't know if it's different across subject areas. And when I help, how much is too much?”

“My student does a good job, but I agree - more direction on what they should be doing, how long should they observe before they jump in, how much do they need to be doing each week? How many lessons they should be teaching, etc.”

“Throughout the semester where they are with us, can we have emails... by this time, your student should have seen...I don't always know what right questions to ask. I'd love to know where they are in class so we can make those connections.”

“Would like improved communication from programs during the semester. More than just the email at the beginning that outlines what they are doing and why.”

There were some other minor suggestions, such as making sure candidates go to visit other rooms (they thought this was important in the Junior 1 and Junior 2 blocks and loved the idea of the candidates visiting special ed, etc., with students), and perhaps allowing opportunities to come in both morning and afternoon, to see the different parts of the day, but the biggest issue was communication.

I'm going to share individual program responses with you. I hope that you will share this email, and the one I send with your individual responses, with your program, to talk about how we can establish better communication with the teachers in the spring. I don't think sending a weekly email is an unreasonable request, especially given the time they are putting in to help our students, but it is clear that they are needing some more support. Betsey and I will touch base with you at the start of the spring semester, so that we can establish a consistent process across programs to make sure this happens.

Thanks so much and let me know if you have any questions!

Cathy

*Individual Program responses may be located here:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1KUA0ghuQPyUY8HBvtwmxtpWnt69Poe3hSzPPgX0D6DE/edit?usp=sharing>