

Student Teachers' Experiences and Perceptions: Teacher Preparation Fieldwork Re-Examined

Liping Wei, Ed.D.

Associate Professor, Curriculum and Instruction

University of Houston, Victoria, TX, USA

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Abstract

Believing that student teachers' voices are important data sources in educational research, this study focuses on the experiences and perceptions of student teachers during their student teaching. The purpose is to inform possible changes in teacher education programs about field experience to better prepare teacher candidates for classroom challenges and improve the quality of teacher education. Using qualitative methods, this research studied 25 participants enrolled in a student teaching seminar course in a teacher education program at a Southwestern public university in the USA. The data included discussions, presentations, and QQRs (Questions, Quotes, and Reflections) during the seminar, and semi-structured interviews outside the seminar. Through unpacking what these student teachers think and how they feel, this study helps teacher educators understand better what student teachers experienced and how to make their fieldwork more beneficial. The findings from this study contribute to the literature on student teaching by illuminating the problems and issues with this fast-track pathway in preparing future teachers and shedding light on the necessity of reconfiguring the teacher preparation pathway.

Keywords: student teachers, experiences, perceptions, changes, field experience

1. Introduction

Student teaching is a capstone experience for pre-service teachers that allows them to apply what they have learned from an educator preparation program to actual classrooms. This experience is critical as it can give pre-service teachers a strong head start for a successful and long-lasting teaching career. Or it can turn out to be a waste of opportunity that discourages pre-service teachers from entering a teaching career or causes them to leave this profession quickly. For pre-service teachers to be fully prepared for their future classrooms, it is essential that teacher educators investigate the effectiveness of the student teaching

experience offered to their pre-service teachers and, therefore, examine how they can design and deliver a more beneficial field experience so their teacher candidates can get the most out of the fieldwork.

This research will explore how and what teacher candidates learn in student teaching at a public university in a southwestern state of the U.S., what challenges they have encountered in student teaching, how this experience influences teacher knowledge and teaching practices, and what implications it has for teacher education programs, with the purpose of rendering field experience more beneficial. It is anticipated that this study will provide important insights into how to construct a positive field experience that benefits teacher candidates to the largest possible degree.

2. Literature Review

Professional organizations of teacher education and research studies have identified student teaching as a central experience in teacher education programs (Ellis & Loughland, 2017; Goldhaber, Krieg, & Theobald, 2017). Combining content knowledge and pedagogy in practice, student teaching is an integral component of the teacher preparation program and a crucial experience in teacher development.

Using data from six teacher education programs to investigate the relationship between student teaching experience and later teaching effectiveness, Goldhaber et al. (2017) concluded that “student teaching experience... has a powerful influence on a teacher’s later success” (p. 326). This study also suggested that the school context in which student teaching occurs has important implications for later teaching effectiveness. Therefore, teacher education programs and school districts should consider placing student teachers in schools like the schools where they are likely to teach once they enter the workforce.

Many research studies have been conducted to better understand student teaching. Bhukhanwala et al. (2017) inquired how transformative learning experiences can be facilitated in student teaching seminars so student teachers can be better supported during their learning trajectory. La Paro et al. (2014) explored the content, methods, and tools used to supervise and evaluate student teachers by surveying student teachers and their supervisors in 128 early childhood programs across seven states. Ellis and Loughland (2017) focused on the feedback student teachers received from their supervisors and cooperating teachers and suggested that the feedback provided to student teachers should be more explicit and supervisors should be trained on how to give constructive feedback.

Not only the feedback and evaluations student teachers received are studied, but researchers also look into the role and quality of cooperating teachers in student teaching. Stewart et al. (2017) identified the characteristics that define effective cooperating teachers and recommended teacher educators work to create an assessment of cooperating teachers using these characteristics. Goldhaber et al. (2020) highlighted the importance of the mentor teacher who supervises this placement, as teachers tend to be more effective when they student teach with a mentor who is a more effective teacher. This study also called for viable coordination between the university teacher education programs and K-12 school systems so

student teachers can be placed with the most successful teachers.

There are also many studies that probed the problems with traditional student teaching. Fraser and Watson (2014) analyzed six problems inherent in student teaching and called for new approaches to clinical preparation for teachers, including co-teaching. Heck and Bacharach (2016) resonated with a lot of these problems and advocated moving from a traditional student-teaching model to a co-teaching model that will provide a more robust learning and growing experience for everyone involved. Besides presenting a list of the problems in student teaching, Soslau and Raths (2017) pointed out that these problems “can be found in the literature dating back 70 years” (p. 26).

Though research studies on student teaching abound and researchers have investigated it from various angles, the number of studies that delved into student teachers’ perceptions is relatively small. Bayar (2015) explored the experiences of teachers who participated in an overseas student teaching project. Kulkarni and Hanley-Maxwell (2015) presented the perspectives of four participants from a U.S. university who student-taught in East Africa as part of their student-teaching requirement. Maynard, La Paro, and Johnson (2014) surveyed how undergraduate students in early childhood teacher preparation programs described their classroom-based experience before student teaching. Smalley, Retallick, and Paulsen (2015) used quantitative methods to study what student teaching activities student teachers deemed to be the most relevant and helpful. Schramm-Possinger (2016) assessed pre-service teachers’ beliefs with respect to students, classroom management, and best pedagogical practices before and after their student teaching experience.

It is my belief that student teachers’ voices should be further heard as they are important sources in educational research. Teacher educators should integrate more active engagement of prospective teachers in designing field experiences for them. Therefore, this study intends to focus on the experiences and perceptions of student teachers. The purpose is to inform future changes in teacher education programs about field experience to improve the quality of teacher education and contribute to the development of effective teachers.

3. Methodology

This study employs a qualitative method as it aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the participants’ experiences and perspectives about student teaching. The participants were 25 student teachers enrolled in a teacher education program at a Southwestern public university in the US. They attended a student teaching seminar course that met seven times throughout the semester, with each meeting running from 9 am to 3:30 pm. As part of student teaching requirements, all students had finished their foundation courses in educational theory and methods and passed core subjects/content certification exams prior to enrolling in the student teaching seminar.

Data sources included discussions, presentations, and QQRs during the seminar, and semi-structured interviews outside the seminar on a voluntary basis. Presentations were what student teachers developed in groups to give to the beginning pre-service teachers who were in their first semester in the teacher education program. QQR stands for Questions, Quotes,

and Reflections. For each unit of the seminar, student teachers were required to develop at least two questions they wanted to ask themselves and their peers to encourage thoughts, reflection, and discussion. The questions should be the ones that spoke to them most and that prompted their reflection, so they wanted to raise them as a stimulus for further thoughts. Student teachers were also required to give at least two quotes from the seminar readings and explain why they selected them. The quotes could be the ones that either made sense to them the most or contradicted their experience and perspectives, so they wanted to share them for further discussion. In Reflection, student teachers freely reflected on what they learned and experienced in student teaching and student teaching seminars and how the learning had informed their future teaching.

The seminar discussions, presentations, and QQRs formed a primary record, which served as the basis for making “preliminary reconstructive analyses” (Carspecken, 1996, p. 42). The results of these analyses helped generate the interview questions. The interviewee’s ideas and thoughts were explored in more depth through the face-to-face individual interviews that lasted approximately 1 hour each, recorded and transcribed.

Following Carspecken’s “preliminary reconstructive analysis” (1996), the author constructed meaning fields, made horizon analysis and validity claims, distinguished backgrounding from foregrounding, made power and role analyses, and developed a coding scheme. Besides, member checking and peer debriefing were employed to minimize researcher bias and increase the study’s credibility. Finally, emerging themes were identified through coding and will be discussed in the following section.

4. Findings

4.1 Challenges Greater Than Anticipated

A common theme prevalent in the primary record and interview transcripts is that most of the student teachers felt they had encountered challenges in student teaching greater than they initially thought. Lauren, a student on the Dean’s list, wrote the following in her QQR, “I scored well in the academic part of the program, but the realistic part of teaching is truly a new experience to me. My student teaching was harder than I thought it would be.” Many student teachers expressed that going through the teacher education program for the last two years, they had learned a lot through the courses, but when it came to applying what they learned to an actual classroom, they were not as prepared as they thought they would.

Student teachers can face various challenges. As Kronowitz informed, “You may experience impediments such as lack of parental support; overcrowded classrooms; outdated equipment; lack of adequate texts and materials; poorly maintained campuses; and some students who are disrespectful, angry, disengaged, or even violent” (p. 5, 2012).

Emily, in her QQR, wrote:

Even though we have learned a lot of academic experience we have yet to learn about the reality of it. It dawns on me every day how far I still have to go. I always thought that if I just studied that I would be okay and go in without a question. How wrong I

was. There are so many things I now feel unprepared for as a student teacher.

Part of the challenges came from the many responsibilities a teacher must take on besides teaching. It was overwhelming for some student teachers to realize how many roles came into play for a teacher. Sara shared with the beginning pre-service teachers in her group's presentation:

I didn't think that I would have to go through so much more other than just teaching. There are way too many meetings and evaluations that teachers have to be involved in. I got to see how much load teachers actually have besides teaching.

Emma made similar comments in her QQR,

Quite frequently I find myself juggling numerous roles at one time. It can be something as basic as a game referee to a group of students fighting over a Time Bump math game in stations. I had no clue until I started student teaching what kind of responsibilities teachers have.

Kronowitz (2012) adeptly summarized teachers' roles in *The Teachers' Guide to Success*: "All teachers have to be cheerleaders, interior decorators, artists, systems analysts, efficiency experts, performers, nurturers, assessors, judges, mediators, diagnosticians, psychologists, communicators, bookkeepers, managers, and friends—to name just a few" (p. 6).

Differentiation is also a big challenge for student teachers. These student teachers were aware of the importance of providing differentiation to meet the needs of individual students, but the skills are hard to come by without abundant teaching experience. Lauren shared the following in her interview, which points to her difficulties with differentiated instruction,

As I stood up there trying to remember what to say, I quickly realized that I had to also keep 16 six-year-olds on task and I had to juggle between the children that quickly grasped the new information and the ones that were not even keeping up with me on the Elmo. This experience made me admire my mentor teacher at how easily she multitasked.

Another challenge stemmed from classroom management, which many student teachers listed as their No. 1 challenge. Emily remarked in her QQR, "I have never felt so ill-prepared for anything in my life. I don't know how to handle my class. They were throwing poker chips and the next day it was paper airplanes." When asked to share their experience in a seminar meeting, Lauren made the following remarks,

I should think of ways to make the beginning year a good memorable one rather than a horrible nightmare. Discipline is one thing teachers need to get into control from the beginning of the school year. I did notice that getting the students to stay on task takes up a great amount of time. Without getting discipline under control, staying organized, and creating student-centered lessons, the school year will definitely be chaotic.

Classroom management is probably one of the greatest difficulties for first-year teachers. No matter how passionate or dedicated a new teacher is, without sufficient classroom

management skills, the rest of the teaching must be given away. A new teacher's reputation is heavily influenced by her ability to perform the managerial functions of teaching. The impact of her instruction on student learning outcomes may take some time to test, but her competence to manage students' discipline issues and create an orderly and engaging learning environment is tested on a daily basis.

4.2 Don't Hesitate to Ask for Help

The second theme that was brought to the surface is the importance of asking for help, which was frequently recognized by student teachers. The data reveal that one of the hardest things for student teachers to do is reach out for help. Sara wrote in her QQR, "I sometimes feel embarrassed not to know things. My mindset used to be that I should know almost everything, if not everything, of what I am supposed to teach." However, in the meantime, she also recognized that "the reality was different," which allowed her to "swiftly learn that asking lots of questions is the best process for learning how to be a teacher and becoming less afraid to make mistakes."

Emily made the same comments when sharing her experience with beginning pre-service teachers in her group's presentation. "I feel slightly intimidated at times asking my mentor teacher questions that maybe she thinks I should know." She went on to add, "I watch her do a lot in class, and she seems to do everything with ease." Meanwhile, she acknowledged that "I have to remember that she also has 10 years under her belt."

In a seminar meeting, we discussed Kronowitz's statement that "Every teacher you know was once a novice" (2012, p. 7), and this statement was found to have a lot of resonance with student teachers. Just as Lauren said when sharing her experience,

We are our own worst critics. My mentor told me that after I explained to her how I thought I did that week. I realized that this was one of my faults. I have this impatient desire to want to be good at this already as I see my mentor teacher do such a great job. She told me that this was my first time and she shared the good qualities she saw in me. She said that of course there are things that need work but that I needed to recognize I am new and learning every day. I shouldn't be afraid to disclose my unknown and ask questions because this is the first step to knowing more.

Previously, a lot of student teachers felt alone in their panic about appearing not knowledgeable or competent. Realizing that all the veteran teachers around them had gone through what they experienced and likely already made the same mistakes they dreaded, they felt encouraged to regain their confidence as this is not a sign of weakness, and they should not suffer in silence. Easing their mind and feeling more comfortable with asking for help lead student teachers to a smoother transition to a successful teaching career. Charlotte expressed similar views in her QQR,

This (asking for help) is something that I know I have to work on in order to be a successful first-year teacher. I have to remember that I can't do it all alone, and I can't just keep my questions and thoughts hidden. I need support from many different people.

Kronowitz (2012) asserted, “I would say that if you don’t ask for help in your first year of teaching, the teacher will think you are incompetent, unaware of the challenges that you are facing, and possibly arrogant (p. 22)!” It is a positive finding that though many student teachers may have initially struggled with asking for help when feeling overwhelmed, it didn’t take them long to accept their novice status and start taking the initiative of asking questions, learning, and doing the best they can each day.

4.3 The Importance of Having a Strong Support System

Student teaching is a phase where a strong support system is needed for student teachers to be successful, and the support system should be multifaceted. Camilla, in her interview, described how she felt about having to cope alone with multiple children needing to be tested for special education in her first week of student teaching.

Unfortunately, my mentor teacher does not have any SPED background or frankly interest and defers the six children to me solely. This in turn, makes this experience very overwhelming and honestly difficult. Of course, SPED is where my heart is just the little to no additional help is somewhat alarming and disheartening.

While there is nothing wrong with expecting student teachers to be actively engaged from the first day, one thing to keep in mind is that it is key that both mentor teachers and student teachers are involved in every aspect of planning, lesson delivery, and assessment. Mentor teachers provide modeling and coaching, share rationales for their instructional, curricular, and management decisions, and give student teachers time to develop and practice all aspects of teaching with support. As far as working with special student populations such as students with special needs or English Learners, it requires an additional set of knowledge and skills, making guidance and support from mentor teachers especially important.

Besides the support of the mentor teachers, student teachers also benefit from the support of other grade-level teachers. Collaborative school culture is another contributing factor to the success of student teachers. For example, in a seminar meeting, Jasmine shared how helpful the daily grade teachers' meetings are for her:

Grade teachers sit every day and plan and collaborate on lesson plans and what will be done that week or that day. This is my first real sit-in on witnessing how teachers plan, and I can see that these teachers support each other on everything, including instruction and assessment. I learn so much from the meeting.

On the other hand, for some student teachers, such learning and support from the planning meetings with the grade-level teachers are not present. Chloe voiced her dismay when she realized “Some teachers are less willing to collaborate and prefer to do their own planning.” She hoped that “my school or the future teachers I will work with will be supportive, so I don’t have to prepare to learn almost everything myself.”

Besides mentor teachers and other grade-level teachers, family members are also a key part of the support system, especially for the non-traditional student teachers who account for most of our teacher-candidate population. Several student teachers raised the issue of mental

health they were struggling with inside and outside of the classroom. Being a student teacher, a mother, and a wife at the same time is particularly challenging. Helen, a previously stay-at-home mom to two young children, made the following remarks in a seminar meeting.

I worry about not being able to balance my work life with my family life. Forming partnerships with parents and relationships with colleagues does not give me anxiety, but more so the thought of not being there for my children. My husband says that it's possible to be a teacher and a mother, that people are doing it every day even as we speak. I think I will need to find a book to help me transition into this next part of my life.

It clearly shows that we cannot leave out family assistance when examining how to better support student teachers. Teachers are humans; managing time and balance in one's life is essential to being an effective educator. So is true for student teachers. When they know there is support at home, it helps take a lot of pressure off. In case family support is not available, forming a bond with mentor teachers, other teachers at the school, supervisors, peer student teachers, university professors, etc., will also help.

Student teaching seminar serves as another source of support for student teachers. It gives student teachers tips on how to prepare for student teaching and what to prepare for. Student teachers find it especially beneficial during the first weeks of their student teaching. As Emily put it in the interview, "I was stressed, exhausted, and already feeling like I was failing somehow. The seminar meetings helped me see how normal my feelings were and how my student teaching would get better."

During the interviews, several student teachers expressed how much they looked forward to attending the seminar meetings throughout their student teaching. Jane said,

I received all the information that I needed from the seminar as it discussed all the things to anticipate and how to cope with them, and in addition to that, several lasting friendships that will be extremely helpful to me as I continue on in this journey.

At the end of the day, we should let all student teachers know that we all work together in our profession, and isolating ourselves only makes our jobs harder. It is important to build strong relationships, establish rapport, expand the network, and benefit from whatever venues in whatever way they can. Daniella wrote about it adeptly in a QQR, "I have to remember that I can't do it all alone, and I can't just keep my challenges hidden. I need support from many different people."

4.4 The Importance of Self-Reflection

Many student teachers identified self-reflection as the key to overcoming the challenges they encountered during student teaching. The student teaching seminar has a unit devoted to self-reflection, which is an essential part of professional development for teachers. This unit teaches student teachers to become reflective practitioners, such as by keeping a reflective journal of what they observed, experienced, and learned in the classroom and recording their own lessons for self-analyses. It was found that this unit resonates the most with the student

teachers.

When discussing the importance of keeping a reflective journal for educators, Sara shared how “a long sheet of information and updates” she initially wrote for her mentor teacher on the day she was absent had turned into “a genuine reflection of” her own teaching, and she ended up deciding to keep it for her own sake. She found herself talking a lot about the students who were disrespectful to her, what methods worked, and what did not. In the end, she realized that instead of giving it to her mentor teacher as a report, she was actually the one who had benefited the most from it as it had “changed her form of thinking.” She said,

Before, I would think of that day as a terrible and stressful experience as I knew many students did not take me seriously. However, writing that reflective journal made me see that it was a learning experience, and although it brought my hopes down, I understand that I need those experiences so that I can do better next time.

In the seminar meeting following the unit on self-reflection, Emma said, “Since I started keeping a reflective journal, I know I can track my own personal beliefs, evaluate not-so-great moments, make adjustments, and celebrate successes, and this makes me feel I’ve learned so much!” Charlotte shared the same sentiments, “Every day this past week since I got introduced to how to do self-reflection, I have reflected on my previous weeks of student teaching, and how each day I can improve at becoming a better teacher.”

When student teachers have mentor teachers who can model what reflective teaching looks like in the classroom, student teachers will want to become reflective practitioners even more. Camila wrote the following in one of her QQRs,

Since beginning my student teaching placement, I have learned a few reflective practices from my mentor teacher. For instance, when she is trying something new, she always asks for her students’ feedback. She takes notes on what she feels is bothering her about a lesson or other responsibilities, writes them down, and reviews them at the end of the day. If it’s still important, she moves forward and addresses the issue. This is the type of teacher that I want to be.

Reflection is an integral part of teacher preparation. What makes the biggest difference in students’ learning is the teacher being minded professional, constantly reflecting upon his own practice, and making informed decisions that are driven by himself (Darling-Hammond, 1999). Nothing is more powerful in making a better teacher than the teacher himself being a reflective practitioner.

5. Discussion

Teachers must assume many roles and responsibilities. Being an educator requires the simultaneous use of a spectrum of skills. Examining student teachers’ perceptions illuminates that many of them are not ready for the many responsibilities that rest on their shoulders. Instead, they encountered considerable challenges that were greater than they had anticipated. Teacher education programs may need more clinical time before placing student teachers in classrooms. Observations prior to student teaching do not seem to provide a clear sense of the

challenges that effective teachers face and overcome daily. A deeper engagement in the classroom before the placement seems to be needed for a successful field experience.

Moreover, traditionally, preservice teachers take courses to learn the theory first and then do clinical practice. This model seems to make it hard to create an internal dialogue between the challenges they experienced in the practice and what they previously learned from the courses, and in this case, an easy solution may be whatever “tricks of the trade” work for the immediate situation during student teaching. Therefore, it will benefit preservice teachers if their student teaching experience can be fully integrated with content and methods courses, as that allows them to take courses and engage in actual classroom experience simultaneously.

Additionally, a semester-long student teaching seems too short to fully prepare preservice teachers for all the roles and responsibilities an effective teacher assumes. First, it takes time for preservice teachers to learn about the specific needs and challenges facing the specific student population and the resources available to support their learning, especially in high-need schools. Without spending time thoroughly understanding students’ lives, communities, and cultures is like lacking a solid foundation for effective teaching. Secondly, depending on when the student teaching semester is, a student teacher may miss different important lessons. For example, fall student teachers may miss test preparation lessons towards the end of the school year resulting in a lack of understanding of how to prepare students for high-stakes tests; spring student teachers may miss classroom management lessons at the beginning of the school year when classroom rules and routines are set up and a positive learning environment is established. Missing any of these important experiences dilutes the richness of the field experience, making student teachers less ready for a long-lasting teaching career.

Furthermore, the study indicates that not every mentor has demonstrated excellence in mentoring, which raises questions about the selection and development of mentor teachers. Many mentor teachers may not have received formal training in mentorship or may lack the support to mentor new teachers effectively. When mentoring, it seems that they either take a sink-or-swim approach leaving student teachers on their own or allow little room for student teachers to practice planning, executing lessons, managing classrooms, or juggling the complex decision-making that takes place every minute in the classroom. Mentor teachers play a crucial role in developing new teachers through modeling effective instructional strategies, providing guidance and constructive feedback when student teachers navigate their beginning and most difficult experiences in the classroom. When mentor teachers lack the skills necessary for mentoring, it takes its toll on student teachers.

Therefore, it is important that mentor teachers are deliberately selected and trained, which requires the coordinated efforts of both school districts and universities. Nevertheless, Soslau and Raths (2017) pointed out that the efforts to improve the coordination between TEPs, the K-12 school system, and states face considerable challenges. For mentor teachers, the strenuousness of accomplishing two critical tasks simultaneously—teaching students and mentoring student teachers—is not fully acknowledged. Amid planning, delivering, and assessing instruction for their students and carrying out other non-teaching duties, the

occasions left to discuss what is needed with student teachers seem few. Like teaching students, mentoring student teachers should be planned and purposeful. For mentor teachers to be carefully prepared, high-quality professional development is crucial. The support for mentor teachers should also include appropriate financial compensation, so they can feel motivated to not only go through sufficient training but also find ample time besides school priorities to gain quality interactions with their student teachers, rethink their work, plan their mentoring activities, and hone their mentoring skills. All these challenges rely heavily on the coordinated efforts of school districts, universities, and states.

6. Concluding Remarks

Situated at the heart of teacher preparation, field experience is an indispensable component of a teacher education program. At the time the research was conducted at the author's university, student teaching was required of every teacher candidate in their final semester. This study explored the experiences and perceptions of student teachers enrolled in a student teaching seminar course, a required course during student teaching.

Through unpacking what these student teachers think and how they feel, this study reveals that the challenges they faced during their teaching placements were greater than they had initially anticipated. The challenges could arise from the various responsibilities that teachers must handle besides teaching. Differentiated instruction and classroom management are also commonly named areas where student teachers have the greatest difficulties. They quickly realize the importance of taking the initiative of seeking help from mentor teachers and other experienced teachers. Plus, a strong and multifaced support system must be in place for the success of a student teacher, which includes support from the mentor teacher, school district, university, and even family. Last but not least, self-reflection is key to student teaching and a long-lasting effective teaching career.

This study helps teacher educators better understand what student teachers experienced, how their experience has influenced their teacher knowledge and practice, and how to make fieldwork more beneficial for teacher candidates. It uncovers the problems and issues in this fast-track pathway and brings important implications for teacher education programs that are planning to evaluate the structure of their field experience.

Many education scholars have called for a residency model to replace student teaching (Dennis & DeMoss, 2021; Saunders et al., 2024). The residency model can form a coalition of universities and school districts, which makes them unified for a common mission of better preparing teachers for classroom challenges (US PREP, 2023). Because of the closer partnership between educator preparation programs and school districts, mentor teachers are deliberately selected and effectively trained, and site coordinators provide more impactful observations and coaching. Residents, hence, receive stronger supervision and support via co-teaching. The residency model also allows teacher candidates to take practice-oriented courses along the yearlong clinical fieldwork, thus enabling them to fully develop, practice, and demonstrate content and pedagogical knowledge and skills during the residencies. All these elements lead to a more robust, rigorous, and quality field experience for novice teachers. US PREP's (2023) data show that the residency model has exerted the biggest

impact in the following three areas: enhancing student achievement and outcomes, increasing teacher employment and retention, and improving the perception of teacher candidates (p. 4).

The findings from this study contribute to the literature on student teaching by illuminating the problems and issues with this fast-track pathway in preparing future teachers and shedding light on the necessity of reconfiguring the teacher preparation pathway. A growing number of teacher education programs have started implementing yearlong, paid residencies in place of semester-long, unpaid student teaching. Residency has emerged as a transformed model of field experience that can develop teachers who are fully prepared from day one and who are more likely to stay in the classroom longer and have a greater impact on student learning. It is salient that the student teachers' experiences and perceptions unveiled in this study call for a fundamental rethinking of the field experience model for teachers.

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