

2020 Nebraska Third Year Teacher Survey
Comments to Inform Teacher Preparation Initiatives
A Statewide Analysis
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Introduction

Prior to completing the survey, respondents were given the opportunity to provide comments to inform efforts surrounding teacher preparation in Nebraska. These comments yielded rich information from principals and teachers themselves on areas that preparation institutions should focus on to improve the quality, experience, and preparedness of teachers that are produced. In order to present a structured overview of the opinions provided, a content analysis was conducted on the responses to the open-ended survey questions. The open-ended questions are worded as follows:

Question 13

“Comments to inform [name of preparation institution] with its continuing improvement efforts toward preparing classroom-ready teachers.”

Question 14

“Comments which can help the Nebraska Department of Education improve this survey process.”

Methodology

Survey comments were coded at an individual level, and each comment or response was coded on two key elements: (1) sentiment and (2) theme. The sentiment refers to the attitude reflected by the responses provided and may be coded as positive, neutral, or negative. The theme refers to the identified topics found in the comment. Note that a given comment may have more than one topic as principals and teachers may highlight a number of areas for preparation institutions to consider. In developing the coding scheme for the themes, the 12 Model Core Teaching Standards as identified by the Council of Chief State School Officers

(CCSSO) Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) was used as reference. Since these standards are nationally recognized as indicators of teacher quality and are consistent with teacher evaluations during the clinical experience of third year teachers, aligning the themes behind the comments with the InTASC standards can best inform institutions how to evaluate, adapt, and improve teacher preparation programs in their current forms.

Comments like “N/A,” and “No comment” were excluded from the content analysis. All results are presented at the statewide level and disaggregated by respondent role (teacher or principal).

Results for Question 13

“Comments to inform [name of preparation institution] with its continuing improvement efforts toward preparing classroom-ready teachers.”

Approximately 33% of principal respondents (n = 150) provided information for question 13, while 54% of teacher respondents (n = 195) answered question 13.

Out of principals who provided comments for Q13, 51% of the comments were positive while only 3% of the comments were negative. On the part of teachers, 33% of the responses were positive; and 14% of the responses were negative. (See Table 1).

Table 1. Response Sentiment for Question 13

Respondent	Sentiment			Total
	Positive	Neutral	Negative	
Principal	77	69	4	150
Teacher	64	103	28	195

The frequency of themes in the comments given by principals and teachers is displayed in Figure 1. The four most frequently mentioned themes as indicated by respondents are Field Experience, Content Knowledge, Classroom Management, and Learning Differences.

The Field Experience was the most common theme in the responses from both principals and teachers to question 13. The feedbacks indicated the critical need for providing hands on experience in order to prepare third year teachers. Responses with this theme underscored the importance of having real-life experiences in the classroom prior to beginning the third year of teaching. This would help teachers to be prepared for actual teaching, as both principals and teachers commented on the exceptional value of their practicums or, conversely, the need for more time spent in actual classrooms.

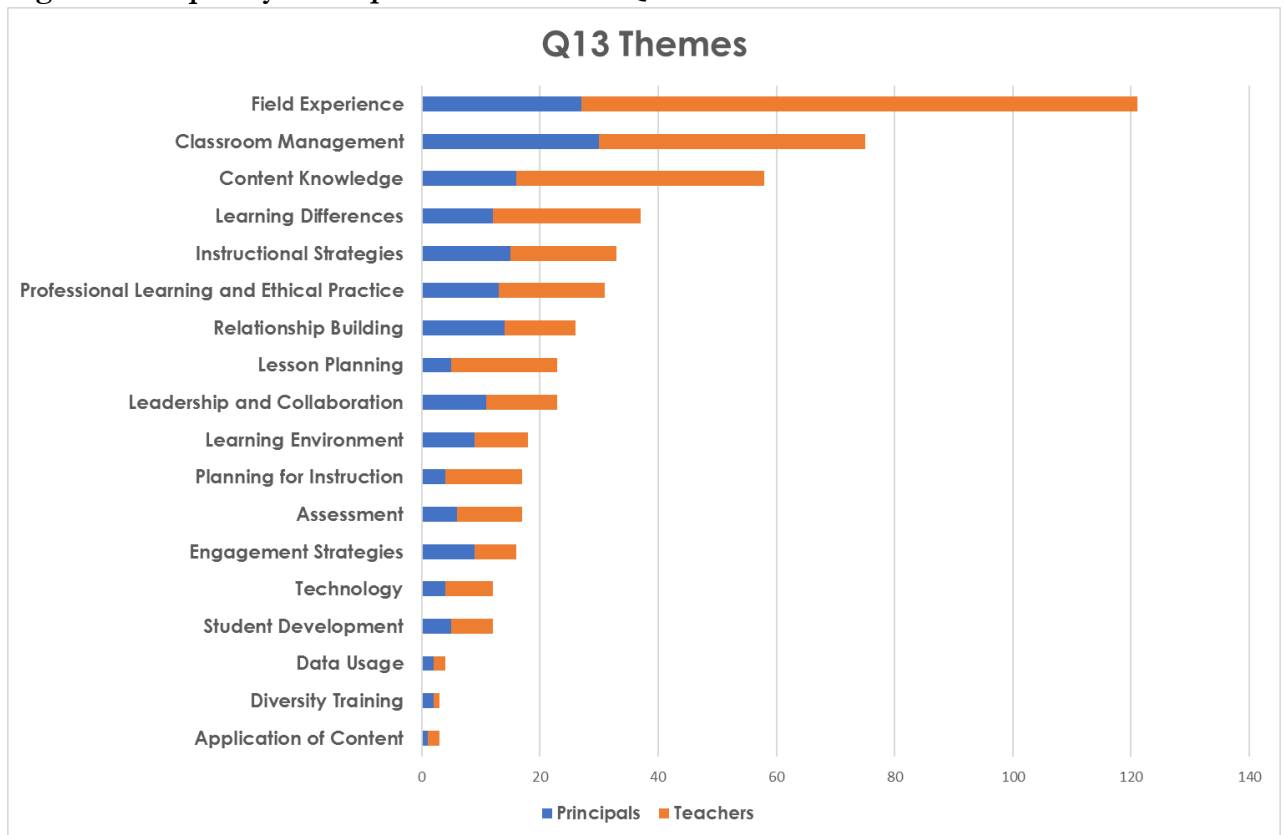
Many respondents gave huge compliments to the program on well preparations on third year teachers. On the other hand, some comments reflected doubts about the effectiveness of the

program in the area of Content Knowledge for teaching. Some teachers indicated that they struggled to implement the content-specific skills in the classroom.

Respondents alike commented on the need for more preparation in the area of Classroom Management. Particularly, most of the teachers mentioned preparation in the area of dealing with Student Behavior. Likewise, several principals commented on the need for more training in the area of Behavior Management and Special Education.

Other than the popular themes mentioned above, principals and teachers also address the importance of Learning Differences, as many of them stated that they wished to receive a more intensive training in mental learning and social-emotional learning.

Figure 1. Frequency of Response Themes for Question 13



Recommendations for the Survey Process

To assist the Nebraska Department of Education in identifying potential areas for improvement of the survey process, a question to receive comments about the survey process was included in the survey. Only a minority of the responses to Question 14: *“Comments which can help the Nebraska Department of Education improve this survey process.”* showed negative thoughts, which reflected respondents’ general approbation with the survey. Some

respondents complained about the scale design of the 12 Model Core Teaching Standards questions. Another aspect was that some principals and teachers had thoughts on the content of survey questions; they would like to see more teaching field related questions and more content knowledge covered in the questions. Some responses to Question 14, however, reflected a lack of understanding of the question; and hence, a few principals and teachers provided comments which were directed toward preparation institutions about the third year teacher rather than comments about the survey process.

For the next iteration of the Nebraska third Year Teacher Survey that is sent to teachers and principals, several modifications can be made to the survey process and design:

- 1) Modify the open-ended questions in the survey to reduce invalid responses due to misunderstanding.
- 2) Simplify terminology of the survey questions.
- 3) Update or include more questions based on content knowledge and teaching fields.

Appendix

Figure 2. Sentiment of Comments for Q13 (Principals)

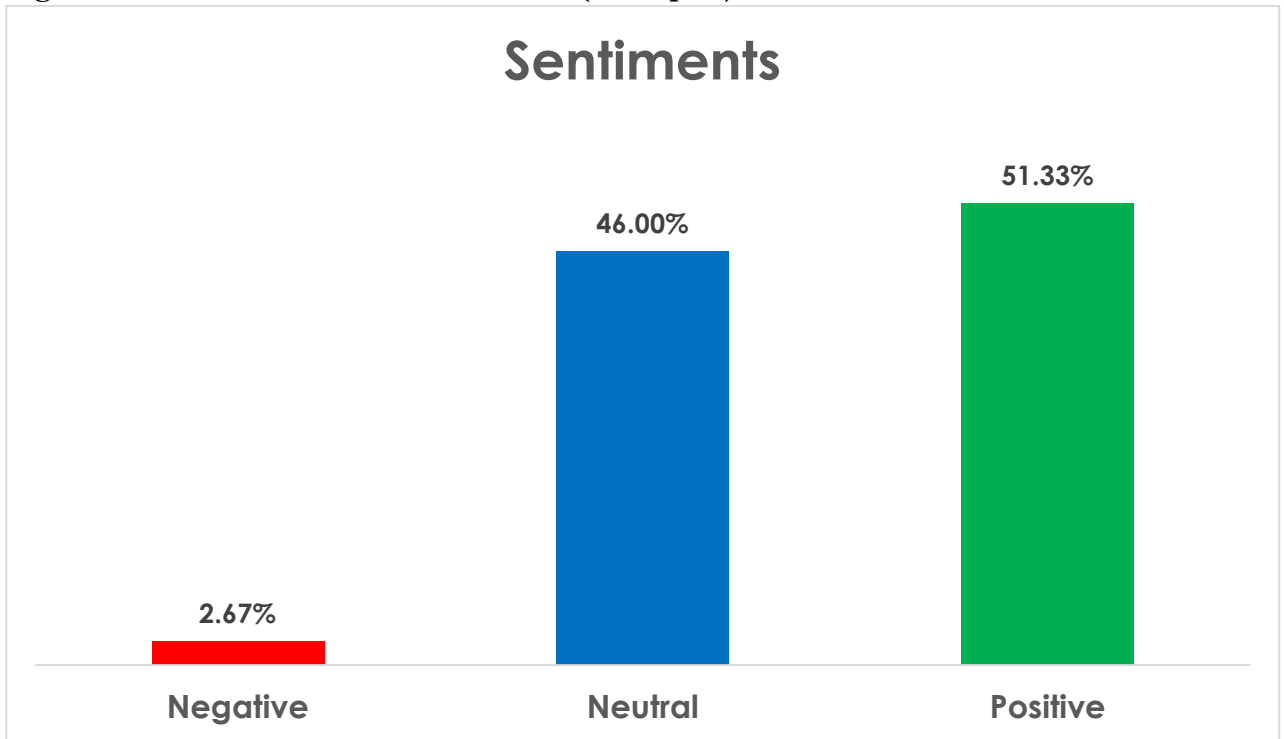


Figure 3. Sentiment of Comments for Q13 (Teachers)

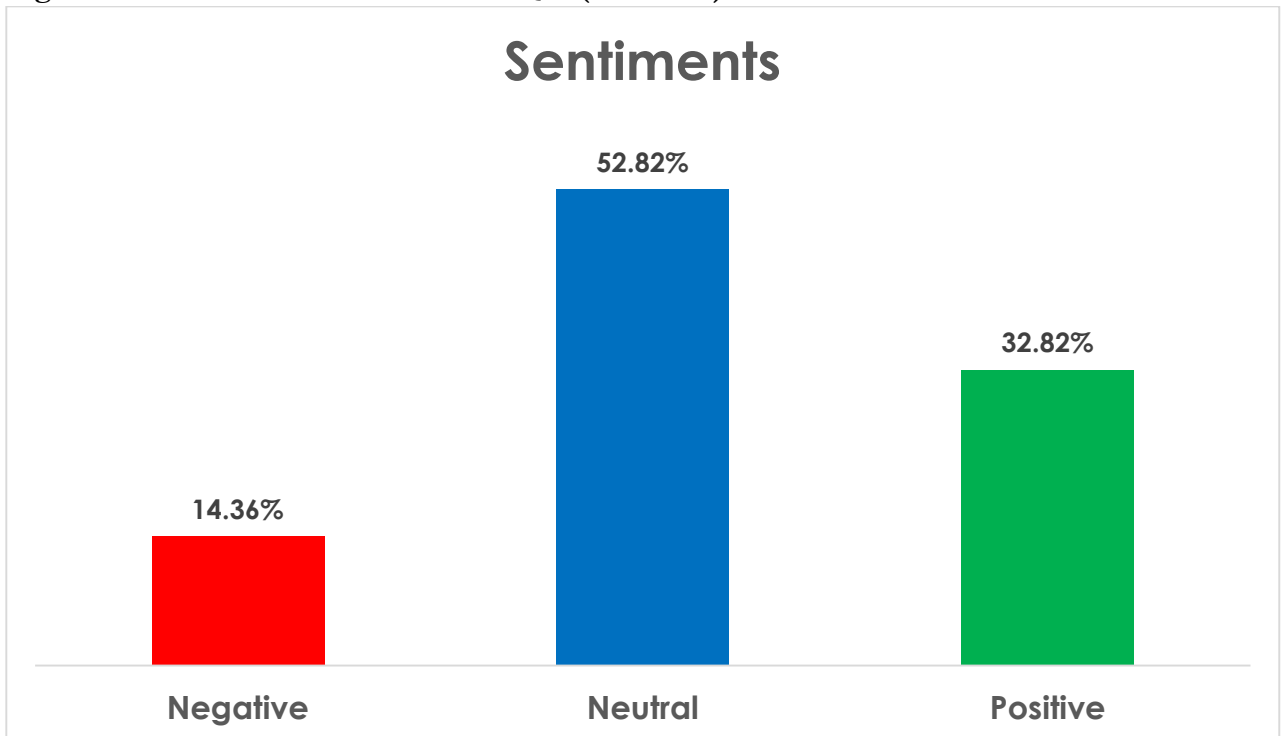


Figure 4. Word Cloud of Comments in Q13 (Principals)

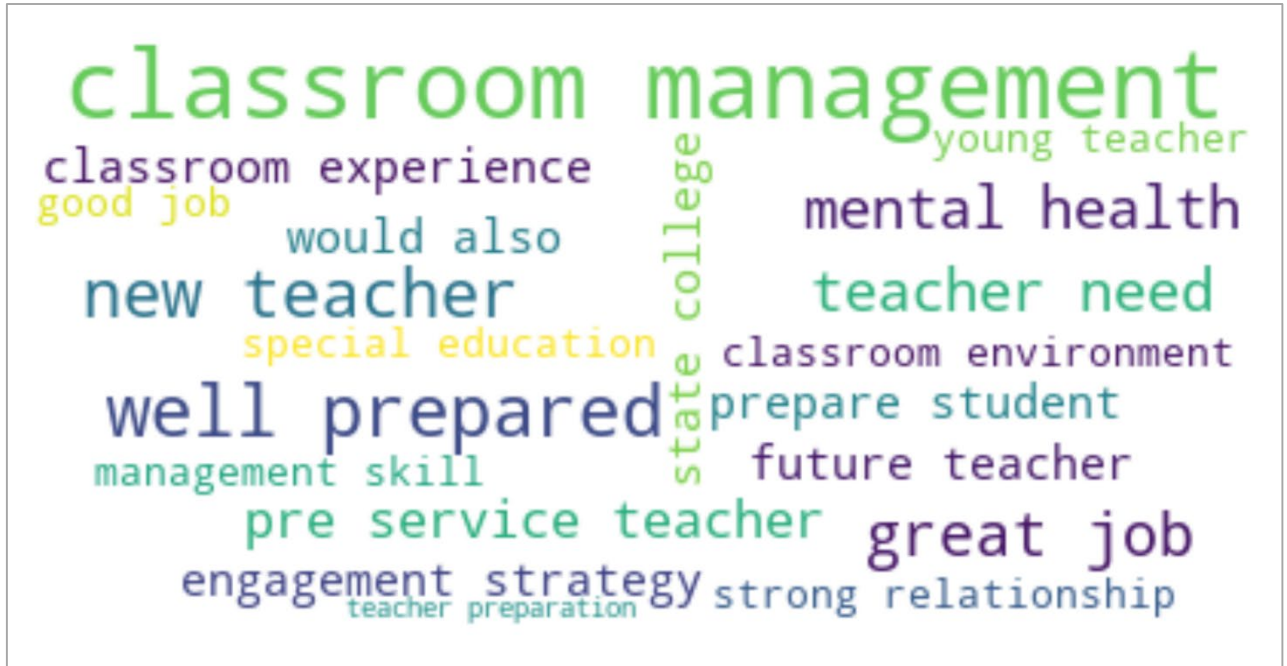


Figure 5. Word Cloud of Comments in Q13 (Teachers)

