Feedback and Performance: Investigating the Link Between Lesson Evaluations and Final Teaching Assessments

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Introduction/Need for Research

Given the ongoing shortage of qualified agricultural science teachers (Smith et al., 2016), teacher preparation programs need to identify and engage effective cooperating teachers. These programs rely on cooperating teachers to provide student teachers with feedback through a variety of contextual lenses (Jones et al., 2014). Roberts (2006) identified constructive feedback and evaluation as a necessary characteristic to fill this role. Eck and Ramsey (2019) revealed that cooperating teachers offer valuable feedback highlighting strengths and areas for improvement observed both in and out of the classroom. Cooperating teachers tended to rate their student teachers highly across the board, demonstrating little variation in scores (Edgar et al., 2011). Phelps et al. (1986) found that the Likert-type summative evaluations of cooperating teachers contained halo and leniency effects. Teacher preparation programs depend on formative evaluations to assess student teachers' progress and readiness for the profession. Lesson evaluations act as ongoing assessments of instructional competence, while final evaluations provide a summative measure of overall teaching effectiveness. However, it remains unclear to what extent formative lesson evaluations reflect cooperating teachers' perceptions of overall performance. The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between student teachers' mean lesson evaluation scores and their mean final evaluation scores. Understanding how formative lesson evaluations reflect overall teaching performance is crucial for improving teacher preparation and enhancing the effectiveness of feedback. This study was guided by the following hypotheses: H_0: There is no significant correlation between the mean lesson evaluation scores and the mean score of the final evaluations; H_1: There is a significant correlation between the mean lesson evaluation scores and the mean score of the final evaluations.

Theoretical Framework

Roberts's (2006) Model of Cooperating Teacher Effectiveness provides the theoretical framework for this study. This model outlines the key characteristics of an effective cooperating teacher within four categories: teaching and instruction, professionalism, the student teacher-cooperating teacher relationship, and personal attributes. Grounded in situated learning theory and apprenticeship learning, the model emphasizes how student teachers develop competencies through guided practice and reflection. It highlights the importance of consistent and meaningful feedback from cooperating teachers, aligning with this study's focus on lesson evaluations as formative assessments. If lesson evaluations correspond with mid- and final evaluations, it would support the validity of early feedback as a predictor of overall teaching success, reinforcing the model's emphasis on structured mentorship and development.

Methodology

This study utilized a quantitative correlational research design to examine the relationship between student teachers' lesson evaluation scores and their overall performance ratings. Data were collected from a convenience sample of 17 cooperating teachers between January 8 and April 30, 2024. Cooperating teachers were all from Texas and all supervised a Texas Tech student teacher. Each cooperating teacher completed evaluations for their assigned student teacher, including assessments of four lessons throughout the semester and a final evaluation. These evaluations measured student teachers' competencies in lesson design, classroom

management, instructional implementation, and fulfillment of professional roles and responsibilities. A maximum score of 84 points could be obtained by a teacher candidate on each of the four lesson evaluations and the final evaluation. To analyze the data, the mean lesson evaluation score for each student teacher was calculated and compared to the combined mean score of the final evaluation. Pearson's correlation analysis was conducted to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between formative lesson evaluations and overall performance ratings. The p-value was set at .05 a priori. Descriptive statistics were also reported to summarize score distributions, including means and standard deviations. A limitation of the study included sample size. Normality was checked, and both kurtosis and skewness were between 2 and -2.

Results/Findings

The findings of this study showed a consistent upward trend in lesson evaluation scores throughout the semester, suggesting improvement in teaching performance over time. Specifically, mean scores increased from Lesson 1 ($M = 66.29$, $SD = 11.73$) to Lesson 2 ($M = 67.47$, $SD = 12.30$), followed by a more substantial increase in Lesson 3 ($M = 72.53$, $SD = 10.59$) and Lesson 4 ($M = 73.53$, $SD = 11.28$). By the final evaluation, the mean score reached 74.53 ($SD = 11.73$), indicating overall growth in instructional effectiveness. Furthermore, Pearson's correlation analysis revealed a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between the average lesson evaluation score and the final performance rating ($r = .83$, $p < .001$). Based on these results, the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected.

Conclusions/Implications/Recommendations/Impact

The results of this study indicate that student teachers' lesson evaluation scores increased throughout the semester, which demonstrates measurable growth in instructional competence. This aligns with existing research emphasizing the role of structured feedback and guided practice in fostering teaching effectiveness (Eck & Ramsey, 2019; Jones et al., 2014). The strong, positive correlation between mean lesson evaluation scores and final performance ratings suggests that formative lesson evaluations are strongly related to overall perceived teaching effectiveness. This supports the idea that ongoing, structured evaluations offer meaningful insights into student teachers' progress and highlight the importance of formative assessments in teacher preparation programs (Darling-Hammond, 2006). These results align with Roberts's (2006) Model of Cooperating Teacher Effectiveness, which highlights the critical role of cooperating teachers in providing structured mentorship, professional guidance, and constructive feedback. The study's implications emphasize the need for teacher preparation programs to enhance cooperating teacher training in delivering consistent and meaningful formative feedback. Given the observed halo and leniency effects in prior research (Edgar et al., 2011; Phelps et al., 1986), additional calibration efforts may be necessary to ensure accuracy in evaluations. Based on these findings, it is recommended to integrate targeted training for cooperating teachers on providing structured formative feedback that aligns with summative assessments. Future research should explore how specific feedback characteristics influence student teacher growth and whether different feedback-framing methods affect performance outcomes.

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