

Perceptions of Preservice Teachers toward Preparation to  
Teach the Science of Agriculture

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## ABSTRACT

Preservice Agriscience Education teachers at The Ohio State University are enrolled in a block of courses prior to student teaching. The block was planned following a theory of immersion to prepare and shape Agriscience Education majors for their student teaching semester. The purpose of this study was to describe perceptions of preparedness of the preservice students' who engaged in the immersion block experience. Prior research on preservice ASE teachers was focused on the preparation for licensure, content knowledge and understanding teacher self-confidence. Prior research showed that with the increase in agricultural education positions, it's becoming increasingly important to assess the success or failure of developing preservice teachers. A synthesis of other studies demonstrated Agriscience Education programs vary across the country. Courses on teaching methods and planning curriculum are available at a majority of the institutions that offer Agriscience Education as a major. Some of the courses such as being an FFA advisor and managing students SAE (Supervised Agricultural Experience) projects are only offered at a select few institutions. This study utilized content analysis on transcripts of structured focus groups and journals kept by population to identify themes related research objectives. The population for this study was eleven preservice teachers in agricultural education at the university level. The focus group debriefs were all transcribed by a third party to ensure trustworthiness of results. Results of the study are being analyzed using thick, rich descriptions. Conclusions will be drawn that will not be generalized beyond the populations being studied. The recommendations made by the researchers will be used to inform the curriculum for preservice teachers in Agriscience Education at The Ohio State University.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### Perceptions of Preservice Teachers toward Preparation to Teach the Science of Agriculture

Preparing agricultural science teachers to meet the needs of a changing global environment is critical for career success. Therefore, in the Department of Agricultural Communication, Education, and Leadership at The Ohio State University, the foundation of our philosophy of teacher preparation is a Modern Philosophy of Immersion for Teacher Preparation (Whittington, 2105). We believe that educating preservice (undergraduate student) teachers outside of the four walls of a classroom on campus, is critical. Therefore, immersing them into the learning environments of a more global clientele of learners, provides authentic opportunities for them to apply their classroom learning.

For the purpose of this proposal, a philosophy of immersion in agriscience teacher preparation is one that combines non-traditional context-setting with traditional, tested teaching approaches like problem-solving. Immersion also incorporates delivery strategies like experiential learning, and assessment techniques like authentic assessment, to create a Modern Philosophy of Immersion for Teacher Preparation (see Figure 1).

As a result of A Modern Philosophy of Immersion for Teacher Preparation, in 2002, a Professional Block for Preservice Educators was tested as a total immersion experience in which OSU preservice teachers in agriscience education teach in non-traditional contexts: they teach adults, youth, and elementary learners in both formal

(traditional classrooms) and nonformal (education occurring beyond walls) learning environments.

Implementing a Modern Philosophy of Immersion for Teacher Preparation affords our preservice teachers more time to be immersed in 21st century learning environments filled with globally-represented student populations, and less time in a four-walled classroom listening to lectures.

Our preservice students begin their Professional Block immersion experience, not on the Columbus Campus on the first day of OSU classes (late August), but in the schools where they will student teach beginning in January. By spending the first week of school immersed in the traditional classroom with high school youth and the master teacher that will serve as their cooperating teacher, they observe the start of a new school year, and watch a master teacher prepare learners for the next 180 days together. Because our cooperating teaching sites range from rural Ohio to urban Columbus, our preservice teachers also begin to build a relationship with the learners with whom they will student teach beginning in January.

Our preservice students come to campus after Labor Day to begin the following courses: Methods of teaching agriculture (syllabus attached), Laboratory pedagogy and management, Classroom media and technology, Experiential learning, and Engaging in FFA and Supervised Agricultural Experiences. Included in this beginning week of classes are daily lesson planning preparation for their next immersion experience.

Teaching in non-formal environments to all clientele is important to us, so the Farm Science Review becomes our next “classroom”, i.e., a non-formal learning environment. Preservice teachers provide education in Environthon preparation, soil

science, and conservation practices at the 67 acre Gwynn Conservation Farm for three days to over 100,000 adult and youth learners. In addition to their teaching, they each serve as the “FFA Advisor-in-charge” at the annual fundraising event for the Agricultural Education Society, our undergraduate student organization in the department. Since advising FFA chapters will be an important component in a successful career, serving as the FFA Advisor-in-charge provides authentic experience.

In preparation for OSU’s agriscience education preservice teachers to work with learners with special needs (currently Ohio agriculture classroom enrollment is approximately 20% learners with special needs), we immerse them in a three-day experience as the teachers of learners with special needs in a non-traditional context at our FFA Camp on Leesville Lake (see attached itinerary). Our students create daily teaching plans the lessons for teaching workshops, flag ceremonies, campfire programs, and mealtime events for 40 learners with special needs.

As the students return to campus to again engage in traditional classes in traditional classrooms, we begin to provide the teaching methods and leadership strategies they will need as FFA advisors preparing learners to engage high school students in FFA Career Development Events (CDE); our students, in their Laboratory Pedagogy and Management class, design, plan, practice, implement, and evaluate the Ohio FFA Agricultural Mechanizations CDE.

During the time that they are planning and practicing for the Ag Mech CDE, National Tagged to Teach Ag Day arrives. National Tagged to Teach Ag Day encourages high school agricultural science teachers to identify, and bring to campus, students in their agricultural science program whom they believe will be good agricultural science

teachers. Our preservice students write a daily teaching plan and teach a workshop to the high school students who come to Ohio State's campus eager to learn more about becoming a teacher of agricultural science.

Every third week of the Preservice Block, 1/3 of the Block students (a different third each three weeks), shares in feedback/reflection/research data collection lunch with the faculty, staff, and graduate students involved in the Block (2 grad students, 4 faculty members, 1 lecturer). Our purpose is to touch base with the students every three weeks to acquire feedback/reflection regarding the learning community that we are establishing, and the impact of the immersion curriculum among the preservice teachers.

Our next series of traditional classroom opportunities prepares the learners for the following immersions: A trip to Fort Hayes Alternative High School in inner city Columbus to receive training from the Ohio Soybean Council and Grow NextGen on STEM agricultural literacy; An experience at Dublin Coffman High School to shadow science teachers for the day to receive instruction in inquiry-based learning for STEM instruction; a trip to Greene County Career Center to engage with teachers in writing Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) for meeting state mandates in STEM instruction (itinerary attached).

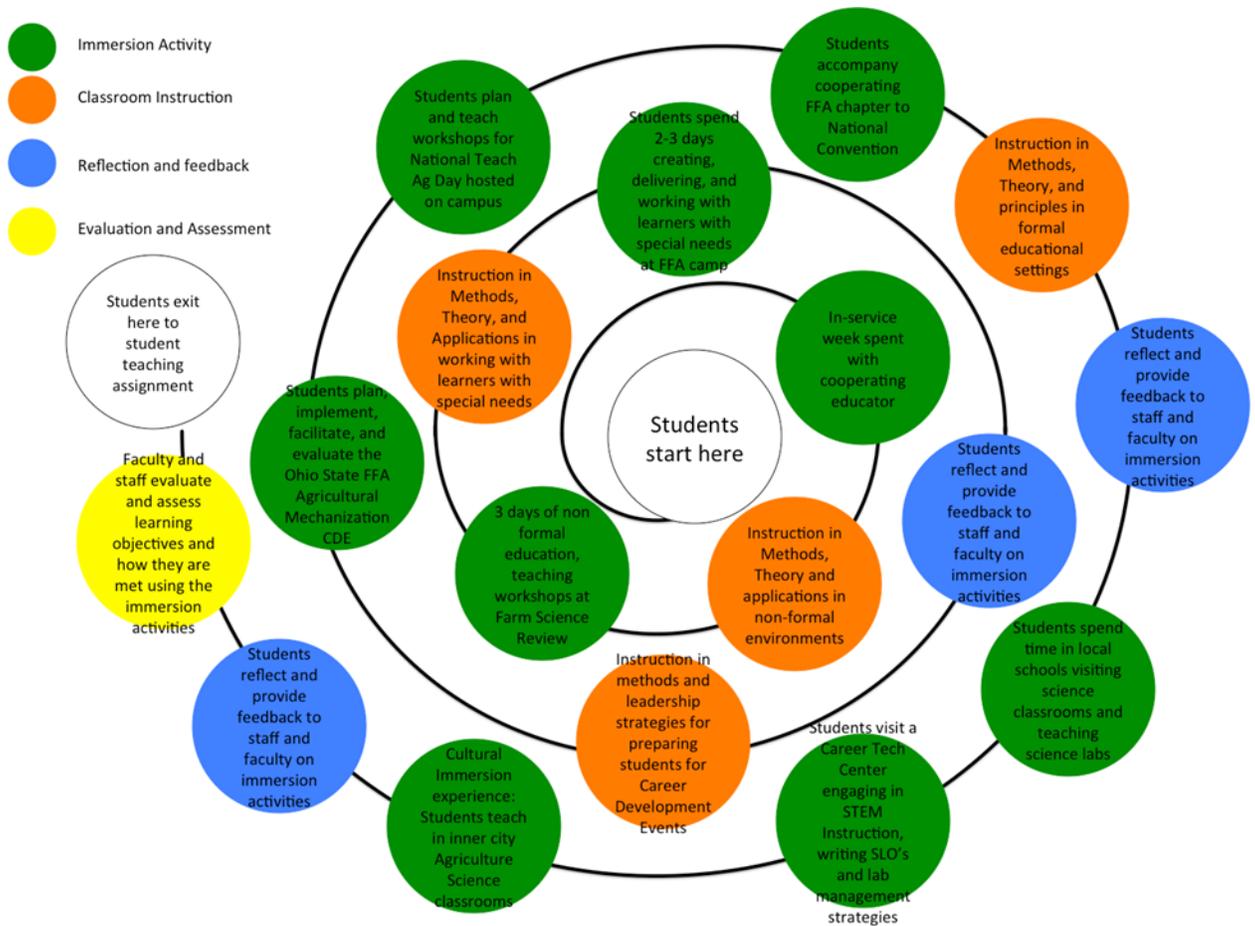
The preservice teachers receive an "FFA Advisor" immersion when they accompany their teacher and students from their cooperating schools to the National FFA Convention as chaperones and advisors.

Our Agricultural Literacy for the preservice teacher curriculum is met when we accompany our preservice teachers to Trevitt Elementary School (inner-city Columbus

Public School) to teach an agriculture STEM education lesson. The lesson is designed to meet the national standards for Science education.

The capstone immersion experience is a three-day educational engagement experience in an inner city school. Our block has spent time teaching at WB Saul High School in Philadelphia, at the Chicago High School for the Agricultural Sciences in Chicago, and Nashville Academy in Nashville (one school per year).

Finally, in addition, the Department of Agricultural Communication, Education, and Leadership enjoys a relationship with Central State University, a traditionally black institution, and most recently Ohio's newest land grant institution. In that relationship, our preservice teacher education students have collaborated with CSU's preservice teachers to plan for opportunities for our students to learn from one another and to partner in grantsmanship for acquiring resources for our high school classrooms (objectives attached). CSU's Men's Leadership Camps were the model as we worked jointly with OSU and CSU students to propose "Reading Camps" for Appalachian Ohio middle school boys. We have collaborated on focus group interviews around building inclusive school environments, and we joined CSU's students for four years at the National Conference on Urban Education held at CSU's and Cedarville University's campuses.



*Figure 1.1. A Conceptual Image for A Modern Philosophy of Immersion for Teacher Preparation (Ray & Whittington, 2014).*

### Statement of the Problem

The Preservice Agriscience Education (ASE) teachers at The Ohio State University are enrolled in a Block of courses prior to student teaching. The Block was planned following a theory of immersion to prepare and shape Agriscience Education majors for their student teaching semester. The Block provides opportunities for preservice teachers to apply teaching methods and strategies in authentic learning environments including: adults in nonformal education, learners with special needs, culturally diverse agriculture classrooms, and agricultural literacy education through the

science of agriculture. However, little data has been formally collected using strategic research methodologies. Therefore, no formalized assessment has been conducted to scientifically make informed recommendations for continuous improvement to the preservice teacher curriculum.

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to describe perceptions of preservice teachers in Agriscience Education toward the components of A Modern Philosophy of Immersion for Teacher Preparation

### Research Objective Guiding the Study

The objective guiding this study was to describe perceptions of ASE preservice teachers' preparedness for teaching the science of agriculture.

### Definition of Terms

#### **Constitutive Definition**

Immersion Experiences - "a 21st century curriculum of immersion in agriscience teacher preparation, is one that mixes non-traditional context-setting with traditional, tested teaching approaches like problem-solving, and adds delivery strategies like experiential learning to weave A Modern Philosophy of Immersion for Teacher Preparation"

(Whittington, 2014, p. 1).

#### **Operational Definition**

*Student Preparedness* – Students' self-reported level of preparation to engage in selected immersion activities related to the professional block.

### Limitations of the Study

Participation in this study was limited to preservice teachers in the 2016 professional block at The Ohio State University.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### Conceptual Framework

The term *immersion education* came to prominence in Canada during the 1960s to describe innovative programs in which the French language was used as a medium of instruction for elementary school students whose home language was English (Cummins, 1998). In the United States, two-way immersion (TWI) is an educational approach that integrates native English speakers and native speakers of another language for content and literacy instruction in both languages (Howard & Christian, 2002). Considerable research has demonstrated the effectiveness of the model for both native English speakers and native Spanish speakers (Howard & Christian).

Merriam-Webster (2015) defined *immersion* as, complete involvement in some activity or interest. Consequently, this study does not incorporate *immersion education* experiences to the extent utilized by Howard and Christian (2002), but for the purposes of this study, the model meets the definition of Merriam-Webster. In this study, “a 21st century curriculum of immersion in agriscience teacher preparation, is one that mixes non-traditional context-setting with traditional, tested teaching approaches like problem-solving, and adds delivery strategies like experiential learning to weave A Modern Philosophy of Immersion for Teacher Preparation” (Whittington, 2014, p. 1).

A Modern Philosophy of Immersion for Teacher Preparation (see Figure 1), is reflective of *immersion education* (Howard and Christian, 2002). Through context-setting, problem solving, experiential learning, and assessment opportunities, preservice teachers gain valuable experiences before entering student teaching (short term) and careers (long term). Developing a series of immersion experiences for preservice agriscience teachers provides opportunities to

reinforce cognitive learning of educational theory, concepts, and principals. The immersion also provides psychomotor activity related to integration and application of content and experience in 21<sup>st</sup> century, global, agriscience classrooms. In this study, the researchers were interested in describing the final immersion experience in the model (see Figure 1). The final immersion experience provided an opportunity for preservice teachers to teach learners in a 21<sup>st</sup> century, global, agriscience classroom.

#### Preparation to teach Science of Agriculture

In 2000, Camp and McLean performed research on ten institutions that offered agricultural teacher education programs to examine curriculum structure of Agriscience teacher education in the United States. The study looked over the institutions syllabus and graduation checklists of each Agriscience teacher education programs. McLean and Camp concluded that Agriscience Education programs vary all over the country. The research concluded that methods and the practice of teaching are offered in the most institutions across the country. They also noted that only a few institutions offered classes on serving as an FFA advisor and managing students SAE (Supervised Agricultural Experience) projects. The authors offer an in depth overview of the programs looked at during the study (Camp et al., 2000).

In 2008, Houck researched pre-service teachers content knowledge preparation due to it being a crucial part in starting curriculum for education. The purpose of this study was to determine if the amount of content preparation helped prepare pre-service Ag teachers by looking at Praxis II agriculture exam scores. The study concluded that there was variability in coursework preparation for pre-service teachers at the University of Kentucky. Looking at the Praxis II exam scores from students, who attended college at the University of Kentucky, ranked at the moderate level. It was concluded that the University of Kentucky needs to adjust their curriculum or the Praxis II needs to adjust its test material to better accommodate pre-service Ag teachers. Furthermore it was suggested that more pre-evaluations be done to test pre-service teachers Agricultural Education backgrounds prior to entering college (Houck, 2008).

In September 2015, Rice and Kitchel explored preservice agriculture teachers' experiences in content preparation for pedagogy development. The researchers looked at six preservice teachers the semester before student teaching. The researchers found a general dissatisfaction with the majority of content courses offered to preservice Ag teachers. Agriculture content areas and preservice Ag educators' views of expertise, and what they wanted their students to gain were found to be areas affecting pedagogical content knowledge (PCK). These findings provided support that there is action needed to close the gaps between content knowledge and the professions understanding of PCK. The researchers recommended considering ways to incorporate content knowledge in pedagogy courses or working with content faculty on developing content that will help preservice teachers learn pedagogy content in a meaningful way (Rice et al., 2015).

In 2008, Stripling, Ricketts, Roberts, and Harlin performed research on preservice teachers expected skills that make them an effective educator. One successful trait of successful educators is confidence. Confidence allows educators to be skillful, effective, and competent in the classroom. The attitudes and beliefs of preservice agricultural education teachers could be the key to determining the success or failure of the future teacher or the University's Agriscience Education program. The purpose of this study was to look at preservice teachers last year in college and their self-efficacy in teaching. With the increase in agricultural education positions, it's becoming increasingly important to assess the success or failure of developing preservice teachers. As teacher recruitment and retention become of increasing concern, teacher efficacy may also be an area of concern (Stripling et al., 2000).

#### Preparation to Teach Diverse Audiences

In 2000, Griggs, Jones, and Slocum conducted research on 15 universities pre-service agriscience education preparation. The purpose of this study was to identify which courses these students were taking and how they are comparable. These classes included in this study are Methods of Teaching Agriculture, Program Planning in Agricultural Education, Student

Teaching, Ag Ed Seminar, Orientation, or Introduction, Foundations & Philosophies of Ag. Education, Field Experience, Personal and Professional Leadership Development, SAE, Ag Mechanics, Computers in Agriscience Education, Contemporary Issues & Emerging Technology, Principles of Teaching in Lab settings, Principles of Teaching, Programs for Out-of-School Groups, Agricultural Youth Organizations, Curriculum assessment and development, Ethics in Ag Ed and Extension, and FFA Advisement. The study concluded that the three most popular classes are Methods of Teaching Agriculture, Program Planning in Ag Ed, and Student Teaching. (Griggs et al., 2000)

In 2014, Skepple conducted research on 82 pre-service teachers' cultural diversity knowledge base. The purpose of this study was to identify: What personal factors influence pre-service teachers' cultural diversity knowledge base? What cultural diversity learning experiences are in place to prepare pre-service teachers to effectively teach culturally and linguistically diverse students? How do pre-service teachers perceive their professional preparedness to implement culturally responsive teaching practices in a diverse classroom? The study concluded that these inadequacies can be modified by teacher educators expanding their curriculum to include a conceptual framework that weaves practices of culturally responsive teaching across disciplines. (Skepple, 2014)

In 2008, Batchelder conducted research on cultural proficiency training for pre-service teachers. The purpose of this study was to identify preservice teacher's perception of classroom composition, practical solutions, and critical literacy. Professional Action Groups are one way for preservice teachers to learn more about culturally proficiency and become a culturally responsive teacher. The study concluded that it is evident that the need for training techniques in multicultural perspectives continues to need to be enhanced and developed for the preservice teacher (Batchelder, 2008)

In 2009, Lyon conducted research on pre-service teachers' understanding of diverse families. The purpose of this study was to offer preservice teachers the opportunity to broaden

their perspectives and understandings of young children who are different from their personal family background and experiences. The researcher had the preservice teachers' draw what they pictured their future students to look like and a majority of preservice teacher drew white middle class families with a mother and father. The study concluded that these preservice teachers need to develop a better understanding of diverse families. (Lyon, 2009)

In 2012, Kritzer & Bovill conducted research on students from Nebraska on diversity issues to preservice teachers. The purpose of this study was to increase preservice teachers exposure to diversity issues from rural areas. They determined several ways to help increase exposure for pre-service teachers to diversity issues these include: collaboration, case study pedagogy, service learning, technology, and multicultural literature. The study concluded that pre-service teachers in rural settings need exposure to diversity issues in order to prepare them for a future that will see inevitable increases in the diversity of their student populations. (Kritzer & Bovill, 2008)

In 2009, Kang & Hyatt conducted research on preparing pre-service teachers for diversity. The study included 22 preservice teachers that were in a required class and had to participate in this study. The purpose of this study was to help preservice teachers understand diversity better In order to prepare them for a career as a teacher. The researcher had the preservice teachers' journal from the book *Voices of Diversity*. The researcher evaluated these journals using qualitatively. The study concluded that the vast majority of the preservice teachers (over 90%) were also able to see beyond general, surface problems to identify a range of deeper, intricate multicultural issues. Specifically, about 96.5% of the narrative responses contained critique of several deeper, intricate problems; and about 90.4% contained critiques of a variety of different problem areas rather than a single problem area. (Kang & Hyatt, 2009).

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to describe perceptions of preservice teachers in Agriscience Education toward the components of A Modern Philosophy of Immersion for Teacher Preparation

#### Research Objective Guiding the Study

The objective guiding this study was to describe perceptions of ASE preservice teachers' preparedness for teaching the science of agriculture.

**Methodology.** The research was a descriptive, qualitative case study research design using post-reflections for each immersion experience as the primary source of data. Other sources of data collection included group interviews. The researchers received approval by The Ohio State University human subjects review board (#2016B0094).

**Population.** The population (N=11) for this study was the 2016 pre-service agriscience teachers, in professional standing, at The Ohio State University. The research design focused on pre-service teachers during classroom and program immersion experiences. Pre-service agriscience teachers in professional standing, the semester before student teaching, are enrolled in a set of courses referred to as The Pre-service Professional Block (*The Block*). Within *The Block*, students are provided experiences that immerse them in content delivery and classroom management. Through the data collected before, during, and after each experience, the researcher described the pre-service immersion philosophy, and drew conclusions regarding student perceptions of the immersion experiences in meeting the needs of pre-service teachers.

**Data collection.** As an approach to integrating an immersion philosophy in pre-service teacher education, faculty and staff implementing the pre-service agriscience teacher program at The Ohio State University developed several immersion experiences for pre-service teachers. The experiences included opportunities for pre-service teachers to plan, teach, and engage with adult, adolescent, and elementary learners in formal and non-formal learning environments, and to reflect upon their experiences. As an example, one of the immersion experiences developed for pre-service agriscience teachers included teaching diverse student populations in an urban school, which is a non-traditional pre-service agriscience learning environment. Additional immersion experiences included, teaching learners with Individualized Education Plans and 504 Plans in a non-school environment, teaching in traditional rural learning environments, teaching agricultural literacy in an affluent suburban elementary school environment, and teaching in non-formal adult learning environments.

**Gaining access.** Gaining access refers to the researcher's acquisition of consent to go where one wants, talk to whomever one wants, and obtain the information wanted for the study (Yin, 2014). The researcher followed the procedures outlined by Glesne (1999) to gain access with each participant by guaranteeing confidentiality and anonymity prior to data collection. The population of pre-service teachers was asked to sign a consent form to indicate their willingness to participate in the study. To guarantee confidentiality and anonymity, the researcher had participants use only a course assigned number when submitting work associated to the study. The researcher also assured participants that their names would never be connected with their numbers for any reason during the study.

All data, for the pre-service teachers, were collected across a 14-week semester. The researcher communicated, in advance, the potential need for further discussion and assistance in the future, including a review of the interview report for the member check.

**Instrumentation.** The instruments included post- reflection protocols, and group interview protocols. Instruments provided opportunity for an in-depth examination of the pre-service teacher immersion experiences, and to explore the preparedness of pre-service agriscience education students to enter diverse educational settings and to teach agricultural science. These multiple sources of data collection were imperative to a case study design (Creswell, 2013).

**Post- reflection protocols.** Throughout the semester, data were collected from the immersion experiences, which occurred after related material was presented in lecture. While still at the site of the immersion experience, students completed a short, written, post-reflection at the conclusion of each experience [Appendix B].

**Group interview protocols.** Three group interviews were conducted throughout the semester where students were asked questions related to the most recent immersion experiences they had completed. One-third of the students were asked to attend one of three lunches with *The Block* faculty. Across the semester all students attended one lunch, in order to gain student insights related to their overall professional pre-service agriscience education immersion experiences. Each of these interviews lasted for approximately 60 minutes. Students were first asked to individually reflect on their experiences, by completing a personal written reflection with guided questions [Appendix B]. Once students completed their personal reflections, each of the guided questions were asked aloud by a graduate student serving as the group interview proctor.

The process allowed for instructors of *The Block* courses to ask additional questions to assist with understanding the students' experiences and how *The Block* could be improved for future pre-service agriscience teachers.

**Data management and analysis.** All data were securely handled. This helped to ensure the analysis process had no effect on the course outcomes for the participants. Recordings of the group interviews, having received permission from the participants, were stored in the researcher's computer files. The electronically-recorded interviews were transcribed, word-for-word. The transcriptions were modified based on comments received during the member check, and the documents were stored in the researcher's secured computer files. The initial analysis of the data involved coding of the participant interview transcripts, and reading and coding of the post- reflections. Themes that emerged were coded accordingly.

**Role of the researcher.** The study was conducted from interpretivism epistemology. Interpretivism assumed that realities were socially constructed by participants in the study and that variables were complex and interwoven (Glesne, 1999). Thus, the researchers served as the data collection instrument and meanings were created through the researcher's interpretation of the participants' realities (Schwandt, 2000). The data gathered from participants were filtered through the feelings and experiences of the researcher as the data collection instrument to generate the complete data for the study (Patton, 1990).

**Ethical considerations.** The researcher committed to the guidelines outlined by Christians (2000). Thus, informed consent was established by providing full and open information about the study. Participants were also informed, both orally and in writing,

that their participation or non-participation would have no effect on course outcomes. Students were also made aware that by participating in the study, they were agreeing to have their reflections and interviews saved anonymously for data analysis. Participants also knew that they could choose to not respond to a particular question. The researcher avoided deception by being honest with participants about their status and the purpose of the research. The researcher guaranteed privacy and confidentiality to all participants, by tracking all data with course assigned student numbers instead of names, initials, or aliases. A member check was conducted to ensure that participants felt the information they provided was accurately reported.

***Limitations.*** A limitation of the study included over-use of reflections for data collection. The researchers could not control the number of additional reflections that participants were asked to complete during regularly scheduled coursework associated with the professional block.

***Trustworthiness of the study.*** Trustworthiness was explained by Lincoln and Guba (1985) as encompassing the conventional components of internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity. Lincoln and Guba proposed that conventional measures of quality were not appropriate for qualitative inquiries, and that the measure of trustworthiness was appropriate. The components of trustworthiness included credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility, or the likelihood that credible findings and interpretations were produced, was addressed in the study by using methods outlined by Lincoln and Guba (1985). Triangulation, the use of multiple sources of data collection methods, was guaranteed by utilizing the pre- and post- reflections, and multiple document sources to

corroborate findings. Peer debriefings were conducted throughout the duration of the study to probe the researcher's biases, explore the researcher's meanings, and clarify the researcher's interpretations. Peer debriefings were conversations with a peer that provided the researcher with a mode of external reflection to explore aspects of the study that had not been explored. Finally, member checks were conducted with participants in the study to ensure that what was reported accurately represented the information provided. Through the member check process, copies of the interview transcriptions were sent to participants to allow the opportunity to review and make adjustments, before the data were analyzed.

Transferability addressed the question, "How can one determine the degree to which the findings of an inquiry have applicability in other contexts or with other respondents?" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 218). The current study provided a thick description allowing other researchers to decide if making a transfer between the current study and future studies is possible. A thick description referred to providing enough evidence of the study to allow readers to determine if transferability of findings is possible.

Dependability and confirmability were established through an analysis of the audit trail maintained by the researcher. Dependability referred to the likelihood of the findings being repeated if the study was replicated with the same participants in the same environments. Confirmability ensured that the findings reflected the characteristics of the participants in the given setting, not the biases, motivations, interests and perspectives of the researcher (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

#### Results for FFA Camp Transcription 1:

Moderator: We'll do about a 20-minute discussion on the first two questions, and then... you'll have 10 minutes to answer the first two and 10 minutes to answer the last two. Does that make sense? Okay. Alright. So, the first question is: FFA Camp, please write two positives and an item that can be improved upon. Two positives and an item that can be improved upon about FFA Camp... About your experience at FFA Camp, two positives, and an item that can be improved upon. No names. You can answer it now... And the second question is: overall, my experience in the Block has been... Same front. Overall, my experience in the Block has been blank... Is everybody good? Okay, so the way we're going to do this is we're kinda gonna round robin, like, around the circle. And so, [student] will start, and you can kind of share one positive about FFA Camp, and we'll just kind of popcorn around and [student] will start sharing the second and then [student] will start item that needs improved upon, and so on... Okay? So, first positive...

Student 1: One positive I had was the fact that we get to work with these types of learners in an informal setting, as opposed to being kind of thrown in with them in a formal setting in a classroom. It's nice to get to know them and to see how they work in their comfort zone, so that way we don't just jump into a school and, I don't know, things are a little bit awkward with them, maybe. So I liked that.

Student 2: I liked Adventure Valley the first day with them because I think it gave a more laid-back situation, and I liked being, more or less, out of an educator of the classroom role and more of just a team member that was here to work with them because I think it just invited us a little more in with them and it gave them a little more trust in us and not just this authority figure.

Student 3: I kinda, like what they [student] was saying about informal setting. I encourage students to learn and participate in an informal setting, like at the high ropes or the low ropes or even at the class session, encouraging them to participate and get out of their comfort zones and try new things. That was great.

Student 4: I said it was great to teach in a non-classroom environment, like the types of classroom management when you're not actually in a classroom.

Student 5: I said getting to interact with students who have IEPs. It's good practice it you've never done that before, and even if you have, just getting more practice with students who have IEPs. They're all different, so just learning how to understand them and learn how to teach them.

Moderator: Good. [Student], would you like to start with the second question?

Student 2: Yeah, I said having us do the very first campfire was extremely positive because it forced us to work together as a team, even though we were like, "I don't really know what we're gonna do." It just made us all pull together, and from an educator standpoint, it got me really excited when the students wanted to participate and wanted to help and wanted to correct what we were doing because it just shows the knowledge that they do know and the knowledge that they want to know because they wanted to see him do it, they wanted to see him do the interview right, they wanted to make it happen, and they wanted to talk about it again afterwards again, too. So seeing that kind of, like, growth in them from an educator standpoint, that got me excited for today to actually teach them.

Moderator: Cool.

Student 3: I had a lot of the same things, but, like, in the classroom sessions kind of thing, I liked being able to see, like [student] said, the differences. With some of our students, it was a hard activity, kind of. They were getting maybe a little bit frustrated. But then others were, like, good

with it and others it was, like, below their level of “We got this. This is boring. Why are we even learning this?” So I think it’s interesting to see those different levels of IEP students.

Student 4: Yeah, mine was similar, too. Learning to work with students who have different levels of physical and cognitive functions. Not only did they have to do something physically, but they also had to work with each other, so watching that and seeing how to work with those different levels.

Student 5: Yeah, mine was just more practice with informal teaching. Like we said, we were just in groups of about five students... So, just more practice.

Student 1: I mean, mine was also the campfire activity.

Student 2: Because [student 1] worked with me.

Student 1: Yeah, because I worked with [student 2]. No, I loved that it was our first day, and I loved working together with the Block, we all work together really well. I like you guys. I mean, I liked being able to do that, but I liked when we were up there, and the students in the audience were totally getting a lot more than I thought they would. And I think that that was good for me because I maybe didn’t give them enough credit, I guess, for some of the things, but some of them... And like [student] said, they’re on different levels. They’re on different levels, so I don’t know who’s gonna need what or if someone is a little bit higher and someone is a little bit lower, you know, we didn’t pick up on something so you kind of have to pick up and work with all the different ranges... I loved it because afterwards they were all like, “Wow, they did a really good job” and it was, I don’t know. It was neat. I liked it.

Moderator: Okay, now [student] can you start us with the item that can be improved?

Student 3: Like I was mentioning it to them, is communication of our roles with the camp staff beforehand. Because we should be in teacher, or maybe not teacher, but counselor roles the whole time because I didn’t like participating as students in all the activities, especially the touchy-feely, but that’s because I had a bad experience, so that’s me. Also, I threw one other thing in there, like, tonight at the session, most of the students got all of our questions right off the bat because they’re already been taught all of this, so, I don’t know, there were fun, like, extra activities to remind them they [audio unavailable]. So...

Student 4: Yeah, so one of mine was more communication and for us to know more about our assignments. I still don’t know what we’re supposed to do with these little committee assignments, who we’re supposed to interview. And have the staff know our role. And I also said maybe we could take two vans next year so that we can pack for the winter because I only have one sweatshirt.

Student 5: I talked about learning more about the students before our lesson because before our lesson, it would have been more helpful to know about their IEPs. So, whether that be spending more time with them, or actually receiving some of their modifications and adjustments they need. We had a session where we had a girl who wouldn’t talk the whole time. And we had no idea when we grouped them that we put two kids who didn’t talk a lot in a group, so that group didn’t accomplish near as much as they could have, had we known about their IEPs beforehand.

Student 3: Which group was she in?

Student 5: I think two?

Student 3: One of my positives, I actually talked about her we were able to play the story game, is what I call it, and she was actually talking, and she was loud enough that everyone could hear, and she was smiling and laughing and not being frowny all night. Just to be able to see her do that was awesome.

Student 1: I just said more communication with the camp staff. I think they need to establish early on our roles with the rest of the campers, whether that be as staff members and they’re treating us kind of as staff members who enjoy the time with them, or they’re identifying us as, “Hey, these are your teachers” something. I don’t know. And I realize that that’s miscommunication... I don’t know...

Student 2: I just said I would encourage during our free time and our free time to go do activities with them. When they are doing the stuff that they are super pumped to go and do, no offence, they are not excited to come to our class sessions that much. But, like, I had a 20 minute conversation about pontoon boats because I was just out there interacting and it was great and I learned a lot and talked a lot. And I know we're all tired, but it's not that I don't want to hang out with anyone here, but we can come back at night here and play euchre and we can play games and we can sleep in. You only come to camp one time; you only get these types of experiences with these types of students one time, and full advantage should have really been taken and I felt like most of us just stayed up here and stayed away from it when we have free time.

Student 3: Yeah, make it something you can build in to, like "Here, you have an hour break, but don't call it an hour break. Use it to participate and go be with their activities." Because if you just give us a break, yeah I'm gonna go take a nap. I'm sorry. But if it had said, "Hour break. Go have fun with students" then I would have been like, "Oh, I have to go do that" so...

Moderator: Alright, so for our second question, [student 4] if you could start us off... Overall my experience in the Block has been blank.

Student 4: Overall, my experience in the Block has been okay, which is what I said last time. I have learned a lot, but I would like more guidance on assignments and more time to prepare. So, like, I felt really unprepared for some of the assignments, like, I didn't really know what was required, and I didn't feel like I accomplished that to the best of my ability because I wasn't sure what the assignment was. I would like more communication as a whole between the teachers, and then also between the teachers and the students because I know some of the teachers had no clue what different assignments we had for here or for National Convention, and then it was hard for them to plan an assignment for us. And I don't like... I know the schedule is many hours of preparation, but I don't like how it's different every week. It drives me crazy because I need to put it in short-term memory, and it's hard to plan food, and I am broke, so I can't buy food on campus so I pack one and I have to carry that with my backpack and it's just... I hate having to carry food on campus and then have it all day. So I don't really like the breaks in how the schedule is that we can't really go back, or, you know, whatever.

Moderator 2: Do you all know we have a refrigerator?

Student 4: Yeah, but if we have [teacher]'s class and get out at 8:00 at night and have to go back over there...

Moderator 2: Okay, just making sure you know.

Student 5: I would say overall, my experience in the Block has been good. I like the way the structure is set up. There's not, "Here's what you have to do". I think that's preparation for next year. Actually no one is going to tell you you have to do this, this, and this. So I like the way it's set up. I also like being with the same people all the time. We learn each other's strengths and weaknesses, so if I was looking for something, like I know nothing about Ohio Soybean Council or Ohio Corn and Wheat, hey [student], can you help me with that? It helps with group work to know each other's strengths and weaknesses that way. But I also like the aspect of there's a lot of individual sides. Most of our teaching is individual, yet we still get to bounce ideas off of each other because we see each other all day long. So anytime you have a thought, you get to be like, "Hey, what do you think about that idea?" Yeah...

Student 1: I wrote my experience has been hectic, crazy, unorganized at times, but overall pretty good. I wrote it's hard and challenging, but it's preparing us for the future, whatever we're gonna do. Because, like [student 5] said, we're gonna be thrown something and it's gonna suck, but, you know, [student 2] and I spent 15 hours on campus the other day, so we're ready for it, right? So, I wrote that I complain about it a lot, but I know I will look back on it and be thankful for it. I love being able to work with everybody super closely because we are able to bounce ideas off of each other and work with each other. It's a super positive environment, so even when we have a problem and we come to you guys and we complain and we talk your ears off, you guys are like,

“Okay, we can fix it. We hate that you’re talking to us like this, but we’ll fix it for you”. So, I like that. It’s been good.

Student 2: I said overall my experience has been a glass that’s at the half mark because I feel like there’s improvements that could be made that are my empty part, but the half full part, I feel like there are so many more positives because I feel so much better going into a classroom now than I did at the beginning of my two weeks experience going, “No way”. So, like, I think that there’s improvements that can be made, but I think that also depends on the group we have every year. Like, I think next year’s Block is going to be a little bit bigger than our, so they’re going to have way different personalities than we are. So, like, some of those improvements you can’t really predict until we come and complain to you guys and say, “This is not working”. And like [student 1] said, I’m thankful I have ten other people who are going through this exactly with me. I would not survive at all. So I like being together with everyone as well and... sometimes...

Moderator 2: The funny thing about this is we listen to you, we take your advice, and we make then changes. And then the next year it goes [scrambling bomb noises].

Student 2: That’s why I’m like, my glass is half empty, but it’s just too hard to say... It’s always different with different people. So it’s really more half full than half empty because I think it’s been positive overall. At least for my sanity. I haven’t, like, hated anything.

Student 3: Mine is kind of like [student 4]’s, like more communication and direction about our assignments, like, getting the unit plan directions just last week and it was due Sunday. I know it didn’t have to be that detailed, but we were still kind of, like, kind of stressing out about it. I feel like there wasn’t a lot of direction on what we were supposed to do, it was just thrown on the end, “By the way”... Just communication between you guys at the Block would be really great too because I feel like, even though you guys have Block lunches, and that’s the whole point, you guys still don’t know what you’re giving us for assignments. And I would like to be able to go to your guys’ things. I know [teacher] doesn’t, which is hard because they plan for us to go to their lab session while we still have methods class, and we always remind them, they always forget. And it’s just... it’s frustrating. But, I mean, I also like the variety of the classroom setting, and I like working as a group and everything. I like that I kind of forced myself to kind of learn time management now, like, rather than when I start teaching because we kind of need time management to survive Block. Maybe that could be part of the methods class is time management because I feel like everyone could use a little bit of that.

Student 2: I am way better now than I was in, like, regular classes. I am way better now, at least. Like, knowing I have four things due, at least I know, like, guess what, you’re not going out tonight unless you want to get done tonight. So if you want to enjoy a night on the weekend, you better do it now.

Student 3: That’s what I do. I actually go to all my classes because my teachers actually care and not just lecture.

Student 1: There’s no way you can skip one of these classes. Everyone’s like, “Where are they? Are they okay?”

Student 3: And I actually make lists, like, “This is what I’m going to be doing today” and then, when you guys throw in a random assignment, like, what are we gonna do? It throws everything off. It kills [student].

[Various laughter and side comments]

Moderator: We try not to throw random things at you. But sometimes it happens.

Student 2: I think you like to do it just to see how we all react.

[Various laughter and side comments]

Student 1: She was kind of laughing when she handed us that unit plan.

[Various laughter and side comments]

Student 2: Yeah, she was like, “This is the best thing. You guys are gonna have so much fun. You know what you’re doing.”

Moderator: Okay, so now flip your papers over, and we have two more questions. So the first question is: how did FFA Camp influence your perceptions of the practice of teaching?

[child noises]

Moderator 2: Enjoy the rest of your day, I'm going to take this monster away.

Various: Bye!... See ya!

Moderator: How did FFA Camp influence your perceptions of the practice of teaching?

Student 2: Is this used for research? That's going to skew my answers...

Student 3: Isn't there something else...

Moderator: They have Block lunches where you come in and debrief, but nothing like this research.

Moderator: Okay, so the second question is: describe how FFA Camp has influenced your understanding of the unique needs of diverse student groups. Describe how FFA Camp has influenced your understanding of the unique needs of diverse student groups.

Various students: [telling stories about a camel and a bruise]

Moderator: Alright, [student 5], would you like to start us off, answering how did FFA Camp influence your perceptions of the practice of teaching?

Student 5: One thing I really observed from FFA Camp was really how involved in the lives of the students the teachers were. The teacher at [school] said they were just sitting down with them and they've only known them since the end of August. Now it's the beginning of October?

Middle of October? Whatever. And they just told them about just struggles they've had in their life and some experiences they've had. I think it's really cool that they feel comfortable talking about things like that. So really just how involved they are in their life. Like, how involved the teachers are in the student's lives, just because they spend so much time together.

Student 1: So I talked about, that I noticed some of the students, like I said, some of them are on different levels. Some of them get it really easy, some of them will just go with the flow, and then some of them just don't want to do it or can't grasp what you're going for. So it's been nice getting to see that and understand when you're completing your lessons, you need to plan for all three of those students. You can't, you know you gotta work with what you got and you gotta maybe modify it for that one student who is in the back and just doesn't wanna do it or doesn't get it. You gotta be able to throw the ball for that. And I said they're also, they're super fun to work with. And they're really no different. Getting to talk to them and know them on a more personal level, I think, than, like, a teacher level, they're no different than other students at all. They are high schoolers. Like, there is no difference. In the end, they're the same. So, it's been nice. I loved my experience.

Various Students: [comments and audio unavailable]

Student 1: Yeah, they're no different than high school students.

Student 2: Okay, I just said that I just noticed that, like, from here, like, talking with [teacher] that you don't ever lower the expectations of your students. Adjust your teaching methods, adjust your clarity, but every student can learn the skills that you want them to. And [teacher] doesn't expect any less because if they want to get a job, they're not going to carry it for them. They have to put in the effort. They have to do it. But you just have to adjust some things. So, you know, all of your students are never expected anything less... just how you do it.

Student 3: I said that I realized the interactive activities don't have to be that elaborate, but can easily be intertwined with lessons, like, our classes tonight. Some of those activities were great to introduce listening skills and communication. And then, I realized that IEP students are different, but they're not horrible to teach because they've always... the topic just kind of scared me. So I'm not used to that. And I liked how it was explained, "IEP students have the hormones of regular teenagers but not the mindset of them." And I'm just gonna keep that in mind because they don't always know that what they're saying is not always appropriate and they don't always understand, but they, like, they still want it. So...

Various: [loud laughter]

Student 4: Well, to follow that one up... So, for me, it changed, I guess, I saw that the majority of the students, actually, I think all of the students here, they really do wanna learn what we have to say, what their teachers have to say. They just can't learn effectively in a typical classroom. So I think that's why it's really good for them to be in Ag or whatever career classes they're in. It's not a typical classroom, so it helps them learn more effectively. And I am also learning that just because my high school Ag teacher or my cooperating educator does a lesson or an activity or something one way doesn't mean it's the best way or that I have to do it that way. There's tons of other ways that I can do it that maybe might be better for my students or whatever.

Moderator: Back to [student 1]. Okay, so the last question is describe how FFA Camp has influenced your understanding of the unique needs of diverse student groups.

Student 1: I feel like I answered that question in the last one, but they kind of went hand in hand. I did. I answered that question previously. So the first part, just, like, adapting my teaching, you know, you just gotta throw things together. It's gonna be hard, and you gotta work with different types of students. Like these questions go hand in hand. I have learned to adapt from the whole experience. That's all I've got. I messed it up.

Student 2: I said learning about the group first before trying to make perceptions will help you out more than just assuming that you know because I think we all came into this thinking that we were gonna have to modify all these things or we were just gonna have to try... like, it's gonna be really, really simple and all that. And after, I think, campfire realizing that we got to get to know them a little bit more that day, doing the activities, I think, helped. And even [teacher] tonight saying, you know, like, "Talk with the parents. Talk with people they work with. You know, interact with who they're interacting with, and you can understand the group you're working with". And I think that goes for any group. If you get to know their lifestyle as an educator, or as a person in general, you get to... you can have a better relationship with them. You can just understand them better.

Student 3: Yeah, mine kind of goes with that. I feel like I can't do a good job for planning lessons and accommodations until after I've actually interacted with the students in a classroom setting because then I'll actually understand. So maybe there will have to be one bad lesson or two before I start having good ones. Who knows? And then what [student 1] said earlier about there's high functioning ones and others that are lower functioning ones, so... I didn't realize there'd be such a broad spectrum in actual IEP students. And then with the campfire, like, those kids caught everything that they were doing. They were very smart. And they processed it really quickly, and that surprised me, too. And I was surprised how excited they were just to answer those questions, where I feel like regular students would be like, "I know this. I don't really care. I just wanna sit here. I don't wanna participate". So I feel like, not all of them, but some of them, it's easier to get them excited to participate.

Student 4: So, mine says that I was learning that, when I make a lesson, that when I am presenting that I will need to be able to make quick adjustments, like my lesson plan didn't really work out a few times. There were a few issues we just had to change real fast. And I think if we had [audio unavailable] at a different point it would have gone really bad because if [student] had been facing the opposite direction, they would have been unable to read people's lips when they were talking because they couldn't hear them very well. And so, we'll need to make quick adjustments while we're teaching. Also learning that some students need to be physically able to do something in order to learn. And that some students may not be able to reach that top, top goal, but... So, like, the rock climbing, like, some of the kids just they couldn't. But set the goal that was a little bit out of their bounds, but still achievable, and then let them know that they are still exceeding to the best of their ability and not to let them feel like they're failing because they didn't reach the top.

Student 5: What I talked about was that not every group needed the same amount of help. When we did our 30 minute activity, the first group needed help every step of the way. The needed someone to really push them on actually doing the activity, itself. The second group, I just got to

sit back and watch. They were just so enthusiastic about it. They started. They named off all the reasons. They prepared a skit. They had everything done. I was just there to help make sure they were staying on topic, and they were. So that just shows how, even with the diverse student groups, you give... some need more help than others. It really just depends on what they need, and just adjusting to that on the fly.

Moderator: So now, popcorn style, do you have any other comments, questions, concerns, about anything, really?

Student 2: It's been fun.

Student 4: Two vans. I need two vans.

Student 5: It's been a good team bonding experience.

Various: [comments about a student who had to miss the trip]

Moderator: We'll stop this little...

### Results for FFA Camp Transcription 2:

Moderator: ... that way we have a backup. So, that way, say something happens to my phone, and I'm like, "Oh, no!" and it gets destroyed, we have a backup. And one thing you guys will have an opportunity to do later is, you're a part of this in a lot of ways. So you'll see what we discuss here through other venues later on. [audio unavailable]... To start with, since this is camp a little bit different than normal, normally we have this in written form, and you will see this in written form, I don't have a um... I don't have a printer. So, I can't print. So, we're actually gonna go through four total questions, and we're gonna do it in two-question sets. The function is going to be up front a ten-minute, little writing time, especially to give you each time to think. You can take up to ten minutes. If you do not take ten minutes, that's fine, too. If you need more than ten minutes, just like in the classroom, awesome.

Second Moderator: Two options: we can tell them to be quiet, or we can check out another room.

Moderator: Well, since we're about to be... they're about to go on a night hike, so...

Second Moderator: Okay.

Moderator: Since we're gonna start with ten minutes of writing.

Student 1: Yeah, I was gonna ask if we could tell them to be quiet.

Moderator: I don't think it will inhibit our discussions at all, so no stress there. So the other side of this is please don't put your names on any of these papers that you're going to write on. Just 'cause I'll want those for visual artifacts later. So that's why there's also a lot of white paper... So we're gonna start with over all kind of experiential questions, and then we're gonna move into kind of deeper questions. The deeper questions, this is your time to really share, so please, I hope you feel comfortable with me after two months of craziness that you can share anything. This is a non-judgmental situation. This definitely isn't anything that has a reprisal attached to it. This is just for us to learn from you and about your experiences and be better because of those experiences. So that being said, the first two questions, if you'd like to start writing them down – question one: reflect on your experiences of FFA Camp, listing, at minimum, two positives, and one thing that could be improved. So, reflect on FFA Camp in written form, and list at least two positives and one item to improve.

Student 1: An item to improve as far as our programming goes?

Moderator: That is one way of saying it.

Student 3: Two positives and one...

Moderator: Improvement. And if you want to write about halfway down, again the second question being about your experiential concept is: overall, my experience in the Block has been... So starting when, to frame what the block is, when you entered the classroom in August with your co-op teacher until now, that is overall Block. And, again, it is currently 7:51. Go ahead and take ten minutes... [pause] We have about two minutes left... [pause] How much more time do we need? So for the way we're gonna debrief, we're gonna take, again, we're gonna take

about 20 minutes. But if we take less because we discussed it at the length that you guys need, then we'll take less [interruption]... So we'll take 20 minutes, and if we need to take more for people to discuss, awesome. And if we take less, also equally as awesome. We're gonna start with the positives, and we're just gonna round robin. So we'll start to my left this time and then go to the right the next time. And, just go ahead and share your two positives, and we'll continue around sharing your two positives—open it up at general positives, and then start on the next part.

Student 1: I think it's been a really good opportunity for us to experience working with special aid students, since they all are. And so, even though we have, probably in our student teaching placements, we don't work with this amount. I also liked getting the opportunity to talk with [teacher] and we've talked with many of the other teachers here. It's been really helpful to hear hands on stories of experiences that they've had. I also think it's a really good opportunity for us to bond with people who, this time next year, will be our coworkers, essentially, in the Ag world.

Student 2: I said that it's awesome getting to work with students with special needs because it's not something that I have had a lot of experience in, and I don't have a lot of students with IEPs in my classroom. I know there are a few, but there are minimal with, like, a severe IEP where they're only gonna be in hospitality or whatever these kids were doing. The other one I said was it's been awesome experiencing camp from another perspective, other than being a camper because that's all I've ever been here as. And I really enjoyed it... So...

Student 3: We're just doing the two positives?

Moderator: Yes, ma'am.

Student 3: Okay. Yeah, what they both said. I said great experience with learners in a informal classroom with special needs. I've also learned some interactive leadership games to incorporate in the classroom with upperclassmen and the officer team. So...

Student 4: I said specifically, doing the workshops with the students because, like, doing anything with them in general is nice, but I think they're a lot more just like kids at camp when they're just running around. But doing the workshops gives you a good idea what they're gonna be like in the classroom, with their attention spans and how distracted they are and rude they can actually be, sometimes. But then, the other one was talking to the teachers about how they deal with that and, I talked to [teacher], but I also talked to the aide... and how they've been with them for so long and what they do and I thought that was cool.

Student 5: So, to kinda go off that, I wrote I really like actually getting to sit around and eat meals with them because you learn, like, a lot about them. And then you also learn a lot about the people who came with them and why they came with them. You know, much like the aide, like, why are they here, what do they do? So, from, like, an educational perspective, and then, totally 180 from that, I honestly really liked getting to do the high ropes course, and I understand that that's not why we're here. But getting to do the high ropes course, one, with each other and getting to experience that as kind of a team building, and then also getting to watch a lot of those kids succeed, like, down there, like pure joy across their face. It was awesome. They were so happy.

Moderator: So, that being said, is there any general positives you wanna talk about or anything your peers talked about that you would like to add to?

Student 3: I want to add to theirs. I think that it's great for us to bond for when we're out in the real world together because I feel like I've become even closer with you guys in the last day and a half. That's awesome. So...

Student 2: I think it's always good to, like, know who you're gonna be working with so you can, like, bounce ideas off, and just, like, we were doing in there with the campfire and stuff, it gave us a chance to all work together and bounce ideas off and, like, make a skit. And then see how our skit turns out, and that's an accomplishment for all of us, not just one person. So it was neat to see us all work together like that.

Moderator: Cool. We're gonna go the opposite direction now for the thing to improve about FFA Camp.

Student 5: The thing to improve about FFA Camp would be, like, the communication of why we're here. I know I've said this time and time again, but, like, yesterday, it was really awkward being thrown in as campers because that's not why we're here. I mean, we're here to experience it, but we're also here to experience it from an education standpoint... So that's my thing on that...

Student 4: Kinda pulling off yesterday, have us do at least one of the adventure valley things with the students, but not do all of them because I know the staff is here for a reason, but I think it would be neat if we each had one thing that we're strong at or, like, a team of us and we teach that to the students with the instructors there to help if we needed it. But it would give us a chance to see them in, like, a fun environment in our role as a teacher personnel instead of as a student. I think that would be cool. And it was like... that was like what we thought we were kinda gonna be doing, and so I was excited to do that.

Student 3: We're doing, like, the negative?

Various: Improvement.

Student 3: Improvement. Basically just building off of that, I feel like if we were introduced as, like, a professional teacher, then we would have the respect of the students, they would listen better. I feel more like I am a camper, myself. I feel like I am not really in charge, so that's the only thing I would critique. Oh, and not playing those games with them. I don't ever wanna touch spoons again.

Student 2: I also, what I have is communication between OSU and Camp staff. With the staff not knowing our role here, it was really awkward, and this confused the campers. And that's not something that we want to do. So...

Student 1: Yeah, I think it was a really great missed opportunity for us to be, to learn. It's... learning how to be a teacher in an informal setting is a really valuable thing, even in a formal setting. And I think that if... if possible to give camp, the nature's classroom staff, the week off, they chill, and we do everything they do because the lessons we teach are environmental based, and that's something we might have to teach in a classroom, anyways, so it's not out of our range. We can develop content for a 20 minute lesson for these students. And we're seen in a classroom setting. So I think just replace everything they're doing, and let us do it.

Student 4: Yeah, 'cause they also don't care about what we were teaching tonight. They told us, they were like, "The kids that were here last year were not excited to do it again. And the kids that weren't here either were tired or uncomfortable." And they straight-up told us, like "I don't want to be here." 'Cause they have a lack of filter. But they didn't want to do the night hike, either. They were too tired; they wanted to go to bed. So making us try to make them pay attention is not... it's not fun.

Student 1: And in my experience in the night hike, I've given night hikes here at camp before. I got a 20 minute session on how to do it. It's not something that takes a lot of training. Low ropes, same thing. We've all, because of the training we've had, we could go through a short process of learning how to conduct those activities, and we could easily apply them and teach them.

Student 3: That's something we can help is with the camp staff's sarcasm towards the kids has got to stop. Like I said, that's nothing we can control. Their sarcasm is through the roof, and it's not something they should be doing with these kids.

Moderator: Anything else on FFA Camp for improvement? Concerns? Other ideas? Okay, then let's move on to the next one: Block. We're, like, two months in. What's the overall experiences? Now, I went this way last time, so we'll start with [student]. And you'll get to choose who's next.

Student 3: Oh, wow. Okay. Well, yes, there are a lot of positives. But I am going to, like, pick out my, like, my negatives and kind of talk about them. I loved my first two weeks with my cooperative teacher. I thought it was super valuable because the kids got to meet me that know that I'll be coming in later. So I got to meet them, feel the vibe of the school, meet other teachers,

principal, higher administration, that was great. I would have liked maybe to see some more structure. Like, okay, please start prepping for this assignment when you come back to Ohio State or start asking about stuff for our future unit plan, and you know, just start taking notes so that I can use it for in a classroom now. Coming back to Ohio State, at first it was, like, super overwhelming. I was super nervous. We didn't know what we were gonna be getting thrown at. When we got thrown at we were like, "Oh my gosh, this is so much." But after the first two weeks it kinda mellowed out. It got better. Some of the stuff we do in lab, I feel like the lessons we teach could, like, be longer. I wouldn't mind doing a full lesson instead of just doing, like, ten minutes. I feel like I'm putting all of this work in a daily plan, and I'm only presenting for ten minutes, it doesn't feel beneficial to me. ASM's been going great. And working with [name], I got to speak with the welding instructor, and I talked to him, and I said, "Personally, I'm nervous to teach the shop aspect. I feel like I am not prepared. And having just two ASM classes, it's not been beneficial at all. I do believe we should have a separate welding, woodworking, and small engine class, so that we can have more hands-on experience in the shop. [Teacher] is a great instructor. By far, he is an excellent, excellent teacher, and I'm so grateful for him, but I believe that it needs to be structured so that we're having, you know, more hands-on learning in all aspects of the shop, instead of, like, a week in a semester. But, I have been enjoying it, so... It's been good. I'm very passionate...

Moderator: [laughing] I just wanna say you looked at the microphone and spoke into that. We are not grading you. This is not secretly gonna be graded... Who's... who would you like to give the opportunity to share to?

Student 3: I'll go with [student].

Student 4: Okay, so... I described Block in a couple different words, and I kinda went into depth a bit of, like, why. So, I said stressful, time consuming, slightly inefficient, and but, also, it gets you thinking as a teacher. So stressful, kinda like [student] said. Very... a lot of information thrown at us that first week, and then, as we've come along it's gotten better, but then we also get kind of random assignments thrown at us. Maybe we saw them in the syllabus, but, like, didn't understand, so we can't start planning them. So, I know the unit plan, especially, for most of us, especially myself, was a little stressful. Once I started it, it was okay, but it was just this overwhelming feeling at first. Time consuming. Obviously we have a lot of classes and we have a lot of, like, almost 12-hour days most the days, I think that's okay, but to kinda tie in with the time efficiency, I think there's times that we could be utilizing that time better than, like, sitting in a lab. Or we, like, have them back to back with time to go warm up our lunch because, like, the hour breaks are great, but I would almost rather just get my classes done and go home because the night classes, I know [teacher] can't control them, but we're done. And I feel really bad for them because we just don't want to do anything anymore. And so, we end up taking it out on them. And so, the time inefficiency. But I also spent four weeks with my cooperating educator, and I had nothing to do. I sat there. I taught one lesson. I taught one lesson over ethanol in a bag, and it wasn't even a full lesson because my teacher had no idea what I was supposed to be doing, and it was four weeks. And so I just sat there for four weeks awkwardly in the back. But then, it does start getting you thinking like a teacher with the daily plans. The questions that are asked for us and, like, the things that are asked for us to do, the stress might come, but I do think, like, the 24 hours to get things done is how it's gonna be, so I think it's okay, but just, like, the mental stress is not always the best for us.

Student 5: Alright, so, I kind of agree with everything [student] said. One thing that I think, like, needs really improved is, like, communication. Not only between, like, the teachers, and that includes, like, [TA], and you, and everybody else involved. So communication with all of the teachers and all of the classes because I think, like, I feel like sometimes, like, even, like, assignments don't match up. Were, like, we'll be given an assignment, but then, like, it's due the next day then it's due the next day, and the next day is, like, a full class load. So it's very overwhelming. And then to go, also with teachers and students, is sometimes I think that we all

feel lost, like, we're given this thing, we're expected to do it, but then we're not really told, like, not necessarily how to do it, we don't need to be spoon-fed, but like, a general, like, starting point sometimes, or at least, like, ten minutes in class is, "This is what you need to do. If you have any more questions, ask me later." And then also something to, like, be improved on is, like, the time in our cooperating schools. Because we have two weeks there, and it's just, like, I don't know, maybe, like, the first two weeks are just kind of slow, so it was a lot of, like, repeating classes, like, over and over again. So, once you, like, once you see it once or twice, you can't really do anything with it four times later. And it gets really boring. But, with our, like, personal course load, like, I understand it's heavy, but, like, at least then I think it's preparing us for how it's going to be in the real world, especially as teacher. But then, also, we'll have more control over, like, the time aspect of it, and we're not gonna be relying on, like, as much other people to be like, "You have to get this assignment done then." So I think it's just, it's a time management issue.

Student 1: So, I described my time in Block as not incredibly positive, but with some positives. I would agree with whoever said it, I think most of the time, the program, as a whole, is incredibly inefficient. I don't think we're given adequate communication about things. So, for example, I wrote down not seeing a schedule or an itinerary, not having any kind of idea what we would be doing or expected to do at FFA Camp until six days prior to leaving. And, like it was mentioned, in the real world, we're not always gonna have that type of communication, but there will be times when we do. And so, I don't think that it should be... I don't think that the example of Block should be that you're always going to be rushed and never have great communication. I think it will help with stress level. It will help with, just our personal, emotional, mental, social health to have better communication. I also wrote that I do not feel I am being properly prepared to enter a classroom when considering content. I think the methodology of things is very important, and knowing how to work with your students, and having a basis in psychology, and being introduced to educational theory, and all those things we've been talking about are incredibly important, but if you don't have any content to apply to that, then why do you need to know that. And that's how I feel like a lot of things kind of happen in Block. I wrote that the lab pedagogy classes has been one of my favorite classes that I've taken at Ohio State. I think [teacher] has done an excellent job of mixing content with the teaching methodology, which is exactly what I came into Block expecting it to be like. I wrote that the ODE class was incredibly helpful and applicable because everything we're doing, we are going to be doing this time next year. So that was really, really great. They also have the most teaching experience of anyone in Block faculty, and hearing their stories and experiences, alone, helps us so much more than some of the other classes do as a whole. I don't think Ag Comm is a useful use of our time because we are doing such basic things. I understand it's important to have this basis, but I don't know if we can test out. Everything that has been covered, I already know. I don't know if everybody else does, but I know other people in our class know those things. I don't know if we could test out of it, but I do not feel it is a useful use of my time. I'm not incredibly impressed with the amount of the teaching experience of the individuals who are expected to be our instructors. I don't think... I struggle to be taught by instructors who I don't think have adequate teaching experience to be teaching me. Sorry to be negative. I loved the experience of being in the classroom at the beginning, but I wish we would do it more often. So, go weekly or biweekly. I think it would be a really good experience to do almost a pre-student teaching in the classroom type thing. I think it also would be really great if we had been given expectations of what to do during that time, like, "Oh you should teach two lessons while you're there. Work it out with your cooperating educator what those will be, but you should." Because, since we just started fresh, new school year, haven't even seen any of our instructors, we haven't been given any expectations. For me, at least, and that was just a lack in myself, I did not take the initiative to say, "I'd like to teach a lesson." So, therefore, all I did was sit in the back of the classroom. That was a negative on my own part, but also because I hadn't been given a lot of expectations. I think it would be cool, too,

if we would go biweekly during the semester and teach a lesson there to start practicing. Like [student] said, ten-minute lessons is helpful, sure, but doing a 45-minute lesson is more applicable. And doing it to the students that you're going to spend a whole semester with is incredibly applicable. I do think that the practice lessons that we do in methods are guided really well. The information and communication that we are given there is probably the best communication that we're given through the whole program. And to my experiences, I think they have been graded really fairly. Oh, I also would have loved to have syllabi before starting classes. Someone mentioned that. Like, knowing what we could have been working on in those two or four weeks that we were at our cooperating schools would have been really cool for time management purposes. But, other than that, I think the biggest positive that I've gotten from Block is working with individuals who will be people that I will need to lean on in the future. But I think, as a whole, as someone who came into the semester on the fence of if teaching is the career for me, I will not say it has pushed me in a positive direction.

Moderator: Thank you.

Student 2: Well, they have covered literally everything. But my overall experience in Block has been stressful. I do not like that we are not told information in enough time, or far enough in advance because I know that I am a person that likes to plan, and I like to know things way far in advance. And I know that that's not going to happen in the real world, but I also know that I have a lot of mental health issues. And that would just help. And then having three assignments due for one class in a two-day period is just ridiculous, I think. But... that's... I know they're not hard assignments, but it's still... and we get thrown at something, like a unit of instruction that, by the way, you gotta have this done on Monday before you go to camp, as we're also trying to plan lesson plans for camp. So that was kind of a little ridiculous. I agree with everything everyone else has said about pedagogy. Ag Comm, I didn't even think about that one, but I agree 100 percent, is not useful. It's not useful, 'cause the chances of me using a bunch of that stuff is, like, very slim. I'm not gonna be doing videos or anything in class. Like, 98 percent positive I'm not going to be doing any of that. But lab pedagogy has been amazing. I have learned a lot, but I also agree with [student], I think we need to do everything, I think instead of having the three or two and a half hour classes, or whatever they are three times a week, I think we need to have each, like, woodworking, concrete, all of that stuff that they listed, in separate classes that, like, for those hours during the week. That would be more efficient, I think. I would learn more. And I do like that [teacher] is doing, like, content with teaching. That's awesome. But then, lack of communication with everything really needs to be worked on. Structure, having the syllabi. I agree 100 percent with everything. 'Cause, like I said, I didn't, I had no idea anything about a unit instruction. I'm like, "Oh, that's cool. I don't really know what I'm gonna be teaching." So... But, yeah, I agree with everything everybody else was saying.

Student 1: Can I say one more thing?

Moderator: Of course, please. It is your turn.

Student 1: So, I also think it's ridiculous that we didn't have a schedule until after Ohio State has even started. And I don't care whose fault it is, and I know it was everyone trying to cooperate, everyone else has their schedules starting in the Spring. I understand that we're not supposed to be working, but that's not acceptable either because a lot of us can't afford college without having to work. And it's not fair to ask us all to take loans out for a semester for when we should all be in the classroom like a normal, college semester. Student teaching, that's more understandable to not have as many hours. But I was trying to plan work and other activities for positions that I am a leader, in a leadership role in, and I couldn't do that until school had even started, and I don't think that's acceptable because, whether that is real world or not, we are still paying for college. And while we are still paying for college, I think we should be given the same opportunities as everyone else paying for college. So, I was... I was very unimpressed. Because I was trying to do things for the college, for Ambassadors, that I couldn't even plan because we weren't given a schedule until the Monday or Tuesday after our Ambassador retreat,

which is ridiculous. So, that's my little rant on that because I had to rant at the Ambassador retreat, too.

Student 5: I would say if there is an expectation for us to be in the classroom for a set number of hours that is much greater than the credits we're given, and that is going to inhibit our ability to be financially stable, then there needs to be some kind of financial assistance provided to us because... I know that goes far past Block and their faculty, but I know it's not an unreasonable suggestion. 'Cause, yeah, college is expensive. And I agree with [student], I think that part of the reason I believe in myself and my abilities to be a good teacher are the other experiences I've gotten outside of the classroom at Ohio State, as well. And so, to just go into your senior year and, essentially just be asked to just shut that down, I don't think is a reasonable suggestion, especially, when we're still expected to pay for those types of experiences that are written in to our tuition fees.

Student 3: I... I felt confident to be a teacher before Block. During Block, I don't feel so confident. So, there's that...

Student 5: Yeah, I feel like I'd like to know more of what's ahead, like with getting our license, what tests we have to take, how much it's gonna cost, when are we scheduling to take this? You know, I'm blind. I don't even know when we're gonna start doing that. And that freaks me out. I think right now, I don't feel prepared to enter a classroom.

Student 4: Yeah, I would also have to agree with that, just like everybody else probably. Thinking that I was, like, really excited to teach, and really prepared... I just want to get there because I'm tired of taking all of these classes that I think are an inefficient use of my time. And I would rather be in the classroom, getting told how to change it, maybe screwing up a couple times, but actually having real world experiences instead of talking to mics here, which, I feel more comfortable, probably, than I would in a classroom setting being told I need to treat them like students because I need... like, I don't feel... I feel comfortable doing that, but I don't think it reads fair, because it's not what I'm going to be doing.

Student 5: Something else I feel like needs changed is not necessarily with Block, but it's not gonna get changed without the Block students saying something. I know that every other major in our college, you have to have internships. With us, we are in the classroom one time before student teaching, and we need to be in the classroom once a year. That is something, like, that needs to be required. And we need to be in a different school, every four years, I think because we're not gonna get enough experience outside of classroom... outside of Ohio State.

Student 3: I think the whole curriculum needs adjusting because...

Student 5: Yeah, we are not getting...

Student 3: some of these classes have not prepared me at all. Like soil science lab, nothing.

Student 5: Yeah, we are not getting enough experience outside of the classroom, outside of the Ohio State Classroom, that's something that needs changed because, in every other major, you have to have two internships? Yeah, at least two. And all we do is an early field experience for, all of us did two weeks at the end of a school year, which did get changed, which is awesome. But I got nothing out of that. I got nothing. Except the ability to work with [teacher] because they're an amazing ag teacher. But it was the end of the school year. They were closing everything down from banquet. They were shutting down... I learned nothing. I think, maybe one other, at least one other time...

Moderator: The big suggestion being, more time in class. Several of you brought that us. Awesome.

Student 2: I think Block's a great time to implement that internship experience expectation.

Moderator: Sure.

Student 1: With that being said, I actually have been back to my cooperating school twice now this year, I've used the two Fridays that we've had blocked off for doing stuff like this. I've gone back, and they're like, "Well, if you have, like, a day off, why don't you take a day off?" because there is so much that I can see in this classroom that I can't learn, like, in my classroom.

Student 4: If I could do that more often, I would, but I have a job on the weekends.

Student 3: This whole fall break, I'm gonna be in the classroom, and that's my choice.

Moderator: So, I've heard that from you guys several times now... do we need to add to it? To the concept of restructuring. I've heard that now from each of you. So, do we need to add more to that, since all of us have said that?

Student 5: I want to add to it a bit...

Moderator: Do we still need to discuss it, I guess, is the question I should ask.

Student 5: Yeah. So I think one thing that I definitely think is the normal education majors on campus, they do a thing called FFEP, where they go in every single year. And it's, like, a couple hours... We have no idea if we'll even like teaching because we've never done it, other than our EFE, which some people do the spring before they come to student teaching. Granted, that changed, whatever. But for some of us, it could have been last semester that we did it. And some people could have come in this semester and said they totally hate it and have nothing else to do. So, they go to grad school. The other thing I notice is the content that we're learning in the other major classes, which has nothing to do with Block, but the animal science classes, the ASM classes, they're great for students in those majors. Because they're in-depth. They get down to the nitty-gritty stuff. We're never gonna teach that. There's some points if we're in an animal science program, we're gonna need to know everything about animal science. Most of us are never gonna be in that program, unless we're in a career center. So I think it would be better to have classes that generalize what we would need to know for our classroom, and then we can pick and choose what we're actually gonna teach. But, I know, like, I took animal nutrition, which I don't think is in their major anymore, but it was like every little enzyme that they use to break things down. I'm never gonna teach that, and I thought that was a huge waste of my time, but I had to take it to graduate, so...

Moderator: So maybe more structure. Maybe more fluidity in the structure of your content classes.

Student 5: Yeah, like, basic level of every major. Because I never took food science. I can never teach food science, unless I taught myself.

Student 3: I'm in it right now, and it's excellent.

Student 5: Yeah. I wish I would have had the opportunity to take it. But it was an option, and I wanted to learn more about animal science. But I didn't realize that the content was going to be irrelevant for what I wanted to teach.

Moderator: So what else do we need to say on this?

Student 2: I also wanted to say, a lot of the topics, if you look at the pathways are soft skills. Those are easier to teach yourself. The hard skills, like welding, I cannot go out and teach myself to weld. So looking at the hard skills, the content with more hard skills, put us in those content classes. And the classes like the curriculum writing and the fluffy classes, the ones with the methods are more important, but the ones that are a little more soft-skill based, that we could probably teach ourselves as educators, could probably be taken out of the... but those hard skills, man. We gotta learn those, and we're not.

Moderator: Thank you for these suggestions, guys, and being very candid. I very much appreciate it. Any other burning topics here?

Student 3: The textbook in methods is a little bit dated.

Student 5: Yeah, that's the other... 'Cause there's a newer one, and we have to take a test off of that and I gotta take it off of that...

Student 2: The optional textbook in ASM, though, is really awesome.

Moderator: So, to honor your time, 'cause I said we'd be about an hour, but we can take, of course, as long as this discussion needs...

Various students: We needed that... Thank you... That was great.

Moderator: You're welcome. And, again, thank you guys. You all know part of my goal in life is one day to sit in that chair and be in charge of one day being able to make those decisions. So

being able to hear from you guys helps me keep the context going, so I can keep that in mind. I do feel that after such a grave discussion, I am very proud of all of you. I hope, I don't know if anyone's said that this Block. Especially considering what you guys have been going through and just some of the things you've shared now, I think it's kind of appropriate. You guys are rocking it, so please keep pushing forward. And your honesty helps with us helping you. So... Various students: Thank you... Thank you... That is much appreciated.

Moderator: Of course... We're gonna shift a little bit of gears from Block as a whole to, kind of, the purpose of this activity, this being FFA Camp. And so the next two questions are gonna be kind of related more to that concept of cultural immersion and diversity. We're gonna follow the same structure. I'm gonna give you the two thought questions, and I'll give you about ten minutes. Again, as little or as much time as you need to work through them. And we'll do a general debrief. The first question is gonna be related to the concept of practice of teaching, kind of what you guys were discussing, the methodology and stuff like that. So, how does this experience in FFA Camp influence your perceptions of the practice of teaching? How does, or how did, FFA Camp influence your perceptions of the practice of teaching?

Student 5: Perceptions of the practice of teaching?

Moderator: The practice of teaching. And last time, I saw you guys write awesomely as much as you needed, that's again why there's extra paper. So, if you do, throughout the time, just need more, please just grab... The second question for this time period will be: describe how FFA Camp has influenced your understanding of the unique needs of diverse student groups.

Student 5: Has influenced what?

Moderator: The unique needs... Oh, sorry. Scratch that. How FFA Camp has influenced your understanding of the unique needs of diverse student groups. 8:36, so I'll check back with you guys in about ten minutes.

Student 1: This might be a dumb question, but do we need to write in complete sentences, or can we, like, bullet?

Moderator: No. You can write however you want.

Student 1: Okay, 'cause that was not efficient.

Moderator: This is your collection document.

Student 1: If just wasn't efficient the first time.

Moderator: We'll do about two more minutes on this one, unless you need more time... So, we'll kinda start similarly with this. We'll start with [student] and let you popcorn out on the first question. And we'll start with: how did FFA Camp influence your perceptions of the practice of teaching?

Student 2: I don't really think it's helped me at all with the teaching practices because we don't know what kind of accommodations and modifications these students need. We've just been kind of guessing of what these students have on their IEPs and kind of playing it safe with everything. Like, for example, [student] and I had a listening game, and with that it comes with speaking softly and listening. And some of those kids were hard of hearing, and some of them have speech impairments, and it's really hard when we just don't know, you know, what to do in those situations. Like, I kinda just felt like we were singling students out with the different needs that they have. Because we didn't know how to accommodate them in any way. So we kinda just played it safe in a way because we didn't know what students we were gonna get. And, I mean, [audio unavailable], and that's just playing it safe. So... I don't want to say "dumbing it down", but basically dumbing it down. So...

Moderator: Choose someone next, please.

Student 3: I would have to agree with [student]. I don't really know that I took too much away from that. But, just generally, it helped me realize that students all have individual needs. As an educator, I need to recognize those needs and help my students to the best of my ability.

Specifically for camp, FFA Camp helps students build better communication skills along with leadership roles, with the games and the high rope courses. And camp has helped reach students

who may struggle in a formal learning environment. I just puts a different feel out on the field for different students to open up, maybe, build more confidence.

Moderator: Okay. Please pick someone else.

Student 3: It's all you.

Student 4: Thank you. So, I actually feel a little bit different. I think, so maybe we didn't know how to accommodate, maybe we're not hitting some of the objectives that we wanted to, but sometimes that's not how things work out anyways. But I think, I like just realized how our teaching can affect the students. So, like, I said we need more excitement. This is the first time most of us have worked with students because most of us didn't have students for our SOA. And... so this is the first time we've really gotten to teach students. So, to see that lots of hands-on, especially with students with IEPs because they get distracted really easily, so you keep them busy, they can start, like, get focused on something that they maybe think is really cool. Might push them out of their comfort zone a little bit, but that's normal for anyone. It really makes you get to know your students because, if not, you won't know how to accommodate them. I think 10-15 minutes and then an activity, is what I learned here, I think is a great way to get things going. Because, especially for students with IEPs, they're not gonna be able to focus that long, depending on their IEP. Positivity can influence them, so if you have a bad attitude, it's not gonna work. 'Cause, like, we, I think we all did a good job tonight, but they were, like, already tired, so then it influenced us. So, it's like, vice versa. Planning and being flexible, we've had to do that a lot this week. Because we went from 45 minutes, 35 minutes, 20 minutes, 5, not doing something completely, so that was a great real-life experience in the classroom. Maybe not in a, like, normal school setting. Informal and formal teaching can be greatly related, so I would take away a lot of the things I learned in this camp and put it in a classroom. Maybe like the activities or something like that, just to get things started. And, even when you're tired, just stick through it and push, keep going. I know we're all exhausted, and we have been all day, but, like, push it out and have a positive attitude. So I think that, like, plays into teaching methods, maybe not, like, the concept that we're here for, but, like, I think I can still take something away from it.

Moderator: Would you like to pick the next person?

Student 5: So one of the things I learned here at FFA camp is having diverse groups of students because, like, for some of us, like, even having, like, students, I mean, we're talking about students with a wide variety of special needs. So it kind of, like, threw us into it. And with that came, like, high-function versus low-function, specific disabilities and needs, and how do you, like, kinda accommodate on the fly with that. And then classroom management was a huge one, especially during our sessions tonight because, during our first session, [student] and I almost had a fist fight, had to break that up. And during the second session, it was two friends that had to, like, started to get on each other's nerves and one of them was very, very tired, so we had to quickly diffuse that situation because they were starting to argue and we didn't want session one to have a repeat during session two. And then, also how to be an educator, like, outside of the classroom, so, like, how do we go into this room especially, like, when we weren't introduced as educators, like, how do we get that role, like, going with them? And how do we kind of, like, command the room and, like, make it a lesson, even if it's just a quick, little activity? And that it's not always sunshine and rainbows.

Moderator: Thank you.

Student 1: So informal education is an excellent way to engage and excite the students and integrate them with other students new to them and also new experiences, so... Especially in our content area, just getting them out of the classroom. This has affirmed or reaffirmed that it's such a effective way to teach your students. Clarity, enthusiasm are essential to the success of teaching. I think we've seen a few not-great examples of direction sets here, like giving directions, and that's reaffirmed how important clarity is. And also enthusiasm. I think it's easy, especially when you're in a camp setting to be excited and have fun. But it's just a reminder that, in the entire concept of teaching, enthusiasm is the thing that should really carry through. The

biggest thing I feel that my perception has been influenced is that teaching is not just a practice of educating, but also a practice of mentoring, caring for, and encouraging your students constantly. They need to feel excited in your classroom, they need to feel encouraged by you, and they need to feel like they can trust you as a mentor in life, even if it is just for those 45 minutes that they sit in a chair in your classroom. So just, not just students with IEPs, but I think students all around just being reminded that the whole idea of the practice of teaching is so much more than just sitting in the front of the classroom and educating. And also that teaching includes more than content learning, so much more than teaching whatever it is you're hired to teach, but also emotional, mental, and physical learning. I think that's really tangible and easy to see for students with IEPs as severe as those we've been encountering because a lot of them have those kind of accommodations that they clearly need to be adjusted for, but I think that goes a long way with students in our classroom, too. For example, we'll get students with bad attitudes who had a bad day, and so it comes down to, a lot of times, to educate them more than just a content way, but maybe to help them move out of that classroom for that day with a more positive attitude, and that's just one example. So, yeah.

Moderator: Thank you. Anything else burning from this that maybe you heard from one of your peers that you want to highlight again? Alright, next question. Would you start us off?

Student 4: Yeah, so working with the diverse groups, I think this has been a good experience just to know them because I've never really worked with anyone like that. So I definitely learned a lot of clarity, which it kind of goes, like, with the teaching methods one, but more clarity. Lots of patience because you're not ever gonna have them just get it right away. Different levels of hand-holding. We're used to kids that kind of come from an ag background and this gets us started, like, thinking outside the box of what we're gonna have to be dealing with. And so, if they don't know what they're doing or they need a little more help, we know how to do that. Choice of words because we saw some bad examples of choice of words with them. So we, and we picked it out, which I think was good, and we told them, and we weren't the ones saying them. Giving them a chance to do things that they might not get to do because people might not trust them, especially out in the shop, I think it's a good experience for them to, like, 'cause they got to shoot the bow and arrow, and they thought that was the coolest thing ever. Figuring out how to get them to tell us things because some of them are either really quiet, or they tell us things that are way off the wall. So just making it, this kind of goes with another one, relatable for them. So, like, our second skit, the girls had no idea for their skit. I was like, "Well, do you work somewhere?" And she was like, "Yeah!" "Have you ever had a bad experience with a customer?" she's like, "Oh, yeah!" So that's the skit we did – three sentences long, but they got it. They understood what we were trying to get across. Getting to know them is really important because if not, you'll never get anything from them. Making it fun and relatable to their normal lives is important, too, because they won't care if they don't think they're gonna use it. And that's the same for normal students, too, though. Attention for positive things, so, like, giving them attention for positive things instead of negative things so they don't keep acting out, instead of you punishing them every time. Treating them like normal kids, but not, like, using their accommodations to call them out, but, like, you don't wanna call them out, but my biggest thing is you never lower your expectations. They might not ever reach them, but you're always gonna have them. So as long as you push them to be the best that they can be, I think that's the most important thing I think I got from it.

Moderator: Please pick the next person.

Student 4: I'm gonna switch it up. [Student].

Moderator: Anything to add?

Student 1: So when we talk about diverse student groups, I think that's a pretty broad statement. I think the concept of a normal student is nonexistent, anyway. Every student is going to be diverse and unique in their own needs. So when we are talking about specifically diverse student groups with IEPs, some things that have really influenced my understanding of that, from this

experience, students with IEPs are still incredibly capable of learning, their learning just needs to be adjusted. So that's just been really reaffirmed here and just seeing that, especially talking with [teacher]. Also, just being really upfront about understanding that that learner is going to learn in a more unique way. I think that can form a more effective teacher-student relationship by saying, for this example, you have an IEP, but you are not your IEP. And that just improves your learning environment as a whole, I think, if you have that upfront conversation. When talking about diverse student groups in general, like I mentioned, all students are gonna be unique in their learning needs, and the highest performers in your class could come from a background that is going to make their learning needs still very unique. All students, but I think especially those students with higher IEPs, need to feel and be understood. They need to feel and be cared for, and they need to feel and be wanted in your classroom, despite, or maybe even including, that diverse situation. And then perceiving students in their diverse situation, so maybe perceiving them as a student with an IEP is not going to be an effective way to teach them... So... [student]. Student 3: okay, I'm just gonna piggyback off of all those great answers. I really connected with what [teacher] had to say with us today. His experience in the classroom and all the years under his belt were awesome. He was great to talk to. What I really took away from understanding the unique needs of diverse students groups is, specifically, although students might have an IEP, that does not define them as an individual. As an educator, you need to treat them as much as possible the same as a general classroom student, while keeping in mind the accommodations he or she might have. Just the little things, you know, like giving students your attention at appropriate times means the world to them, you know. And, as an educator, it's important for me to help prepare my students for the real world. I don't need to hold their hands; I need to be like, "Well, you realize you can't do that when you leave high school." You know, you need to be upfront with them, just like [teacher] is. He is respectable, appropriate, but delivers a nice blow, like, takes the cushion underneath away and lets them realize, "Hey, you're gonna fall sometimes, but you have to be mature about it." So, that's what I took away.

Moderator: Thank you [student]. Next?

Student 3: [student]

Student 5: Okay, so, something that I've taken away, like, something about diverse student groups here at FFA camp is, like, you have, like, a wide variety of, like, functions and abilities, like, not just focusing on, like, mental function, but all functions. So, you know, sight, sound, motor ability, mental ability, like, all that. And with that, you have to take the time to figure out, like, get to know them, understand them, like, every child has specific needs and how do you meet those needs? You can do that by taking a little time to understand them, like, maybe each individual students, like, there's some students here that I've spent a lot of time with over the past couple days, and so when those students came around to, like, my groups tonight, like, I knew how to, like, work with them a little bit. And then, also, like, how do you judge, like, ability? So, like, do they understand? Is this where they need to start? And then, they don't, like, how can you help them? Like, do you need to just give them ideas? Do you need to, like, help them? Because sometimes you can see, like, the wheels turning, they just don't know how to, like, verbally say it, so, like, helping them think out loud and work through problems and stuff like that. So it's just, like, how do we adjust them in the classroom?

Moderator: Thank you so much.

Student 5: Um, [student].

Student 2: Well, I don't like anything that I wrote here, so we're not gonna deal with it. Okay, I did write that I don't feel like it's made a whole lot of difference, like, in my head because of our special education class that we had to take, I did learn a lot. So I kinda already, like, knew a lot of this stuff. But I haven't worked with these kind of students before. But it really has made me understand that the confidence level in these students is very low. It is very low. And that is very unfortunate; however, getting to see the one student today, she has not smiled the whole time she's been here, but when she was working with [student] and I, and she did laugh. And that

made my day better because it was just like, I mean, we were playing a simple game. None of them really understood what we were doing, and she laughed anyway, and I thought that was cool. But I agree with everything everybody else has said. So... Yeah.

Moderator: Well, thank you so much. Any other major, burning thoughts on this topic? Then we'll go ahead and stop this and say awesome. Thank you guys so much for sharing with me... I might stop it... Who knows?

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Conclusion

Preservice teachers demonstrated a desire to plan for teaching that engages all learners.

#### Recommendations

Preservice AgriScience Education teachers had an overall positive experience with the completion of the preservice professional block. The students in the block found the immersion experiences to be very rewarding experiences that helped them work with diverse audiences in different educational environments. A common area that needs improved in the block that was found throughout the research was a lack of communication with what was expected of block students. Many times students felt a lack of direction for planning their daily plans for lessons for the immersion experiences. The recommendation for improving this area is to make sure the professors involved in block are using clarity to deliver the content in a way that Preservice Agriscience Education teachers can better understand. This issue can be improved by using different styles of learning modalities to better accommodate the learning styles of the block students.

#### Recommendations for Further Research

My recommendations for further research are to continue this study with next year's block of students. The researcher suggests that everything that continues be anonymous, so students can continue to speak their minds about their experiences in the block. One thing the researcher would like to see done differently is to have students be interviewed once at the beginning of the block and one time at the end of block. This should be done in a one-on-one research interview methodology with the moderator. The thinking of the researcher is that this is a prime time for students to be able to talk about how they are feeling with the process of the block before and after the immersion experiences. This one-on-one research interview methodology is an excellent way to assure that students are not swayed by the opinions of others in the group interviews. The one-on-one research interview methodology also allows students who may be shy or timid to have a chance to tell how they feel about the block.

Over time I would like to see the research begin to yield consistent results throughout a five to ten year period. Once we begin to see saturation from Preservice Agriscience Education teachers, the program can present our findings to a national board to help better prepare preervice teachers across the country.

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APPENDIX A

MODERATOR

## BLOCK LUNCH 1

For each of the following experiences reflect and provide the two best things and one item that could be improved about the experience.

### **ASM Train the Trainer Immersion Experience:**

First positive:

- *Logical decisions for lab*
- *Practicality*
- *Learning through teaching*
  - *Lab management*
  - *Self learning*
- *Relation that same*

Second positive:

- *One-on-one time*
- *Decisions*

Item that could improve:

*Concern for peer level relationship (following: relating to other Block)*

➔ *Tone or frame to set stage*

➔ *Help → peer to peer*

*(Interplay of assumptions and actions)*

*Others → issues scheduling?*

### **Science of Ag. Experience:**

First positive:

*Can modify Instructure? /Try new things (v)*

*Seeing kids “understand”*

Second positive:

*Own space “natural setting*

Item that could improve:

- *Track → relation of concepts (plan according to concepts) → the “what” to teach (relate to standards)*
- *“Lunch Zone” → locations of the students*

### **National FFA Convention:**

First positive:

*The "teacher side" behind the curtain → process for selecting kids*

Second positive:

- *Direct application*
- *Connection w/students*
- *Becoming "a teacher"*

Item that could improve:

- *Personal growth*
- *Have the student's igiske [sp?]*
- *Time management → class expectations vs. school expectations*
- *Purpose and synergy*

**What is your definition of a reflective practitioner, and how is/is not the block concept contributing to developing your definition?**

**Describe the reflective process you engage in related to your teaching.**

- *What didn't go well?*
- *"Worst critic"*
  - *Self-destruction first?*
- *Positive (tone is positive)*

*Self-eval.*

*Developed structure → specific questions → personal notes*

**Overall my experience in the block has been:**

- *Stressful and overwhelming*
  - *Planning*
  - *Positive*
  - *Immersion activities are*
- 
- *Prior Block meeting w/student teachers and co-ops*
  - *In spring?*

*Newsletter?*

*Home*

## APPENDIX B

### PANEL OF EXPERTS

## PANEL OF EXPERTS

1. Dr. M. Susie Whittington, Professor, Teacher Education
2. Dr. Caryn Filson, Lecturer
3. Caitlyn Black, MS Student
4. Aaron Giorgi, Ph.D. student

