



**2018 Nebraska Third Year Teacher Survey**  
Comments to Inform Teacher Preparation Initiatives  
A Statewide Analysis  
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**Introduction**

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

*Question 15*

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

*Question 16*

“Comments to inform all Nebraska teacher preparation programs to better prepare third year teachers for evolving needs in Nebraska schools.”

**Methodology**

Survey comments were coded at an individual level, and each comment or response was coded on two key elements: (1) sentiment and (2) theme. The sentiment refers to the attitude reflected by the response provided and may be coded as positive, neutral, or negative. The theme refers to the identified topic found in the comment. Note that a given comment may have more than one topic as principals may highlight a number of areas for preparation institutions to consider. In developing the coding scheme for the themes, the 12 Model Core Teaching Standards as identified by the Council of Chief State School Officers Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) was used. Since these standards are nationally recognized as indicators of teacher quality and are consistent with teacher evaluations during the clinical experience of third year teachers, aligning the themes behind the comments with the InTASC standards can best inform institutions how to evaluate, adapt, and improve teacher preparation programs in their current forms.

Additionally, for comments provided by principals, the target of the response was also coded. The target refers to who the response was aimed at: the teacher or the institution.

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

**Results for Question 15**

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

Approximately 29% of principal respondents (n = 232) provided information for question 15.

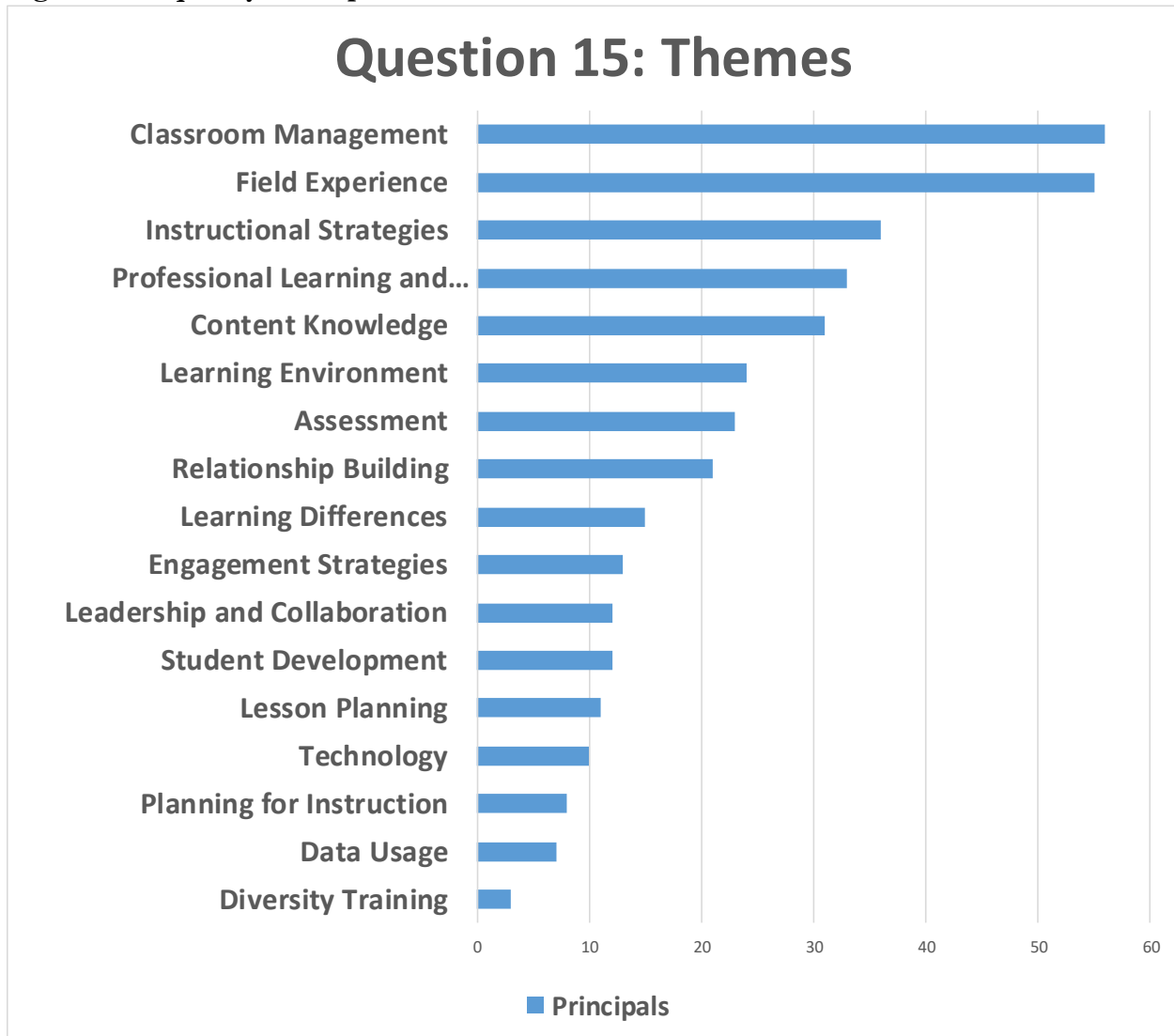
The results show that most of the positive comments provided by principals were directed towards the teacher instead of the institutions (n = 72). On the other hand, all neutral and negative comments were directed towards the institution (see Table 1).

**Table 1. Response Target and Sentiment for Question 15**

Respondent	Target	Sentiment			Total
		Positive	Neutral	Negative	
Principal	Teacher	72	0	0	232
	Institution	10	127	23	

The frequency of themes in the comments given by principals is displayed in Figure 1. The two most frequently mentioned themes as indicated by respondents are Classroom Management and Field Experience. Principals commented on the need for more preparation in the area of Classroom Management especially in the area of dealing with student behavior. Although not one of the 12 Model Core Teaching Standards, the theme of field experience was also frequently mentioned in the responses to question 15. The theme of Field Experience revolved around the need for to provide variety of experiences in the field prior to beginning the first year of teaching. The comments underscored the critical need for providing hands on experience in order to prepare new teachers. Responses with this theme underscored the importance of having real-life experiences in the classroom prior to beginning the third year of teaching. This helps teachers to be prepared for the reality of teaching, as principals commented on the need for more time spent in actual classrooms by student teachers.

Figure 1. Frequency of Response Themes for Question 15



**Results for Question 16**

*“Comments to inform all Nebraska teacher preparation programs to better prepare third year teachers for evolving needs in Nebraska schools.”*

Approximately 21% of respondents (n = 171) provided information for question 16.

An overwhelming majority of principals provided neutral comments to inform statewide programs with evolving needs in schools (n = 160). In comparison to question 15, approximately 98% of responses (n = 168) provided by principals correctly targets the preparation programs. The breakdown of response target (only for principals) and sentiment are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2. Response Target and Sentiment for Question 16**

Respondent	Target	Sentiment			Total
		Positive	Neutral	Negative	
Principal	Teacher	2	1	0	171
	Institution	3	159	6	

Figure 2 displays the frequency of response themes for question 16. Similar to that of question 15, the top two themes that were mentioned the most are Field Experience and Classroom Management. This is not a surprising result as question 16 asks respondents for the same piece of information as question 15, but for the utility of *all* Nebraska teacher preparation programs. Thus, principals highlighted the necessity of preparing third year teachers in the area of classroom management, and providing more field experience for students in the program before they graduate and step into the classroom as teachers for the first time.

**Figure 2. Frequency of Response Themes for Question 16**



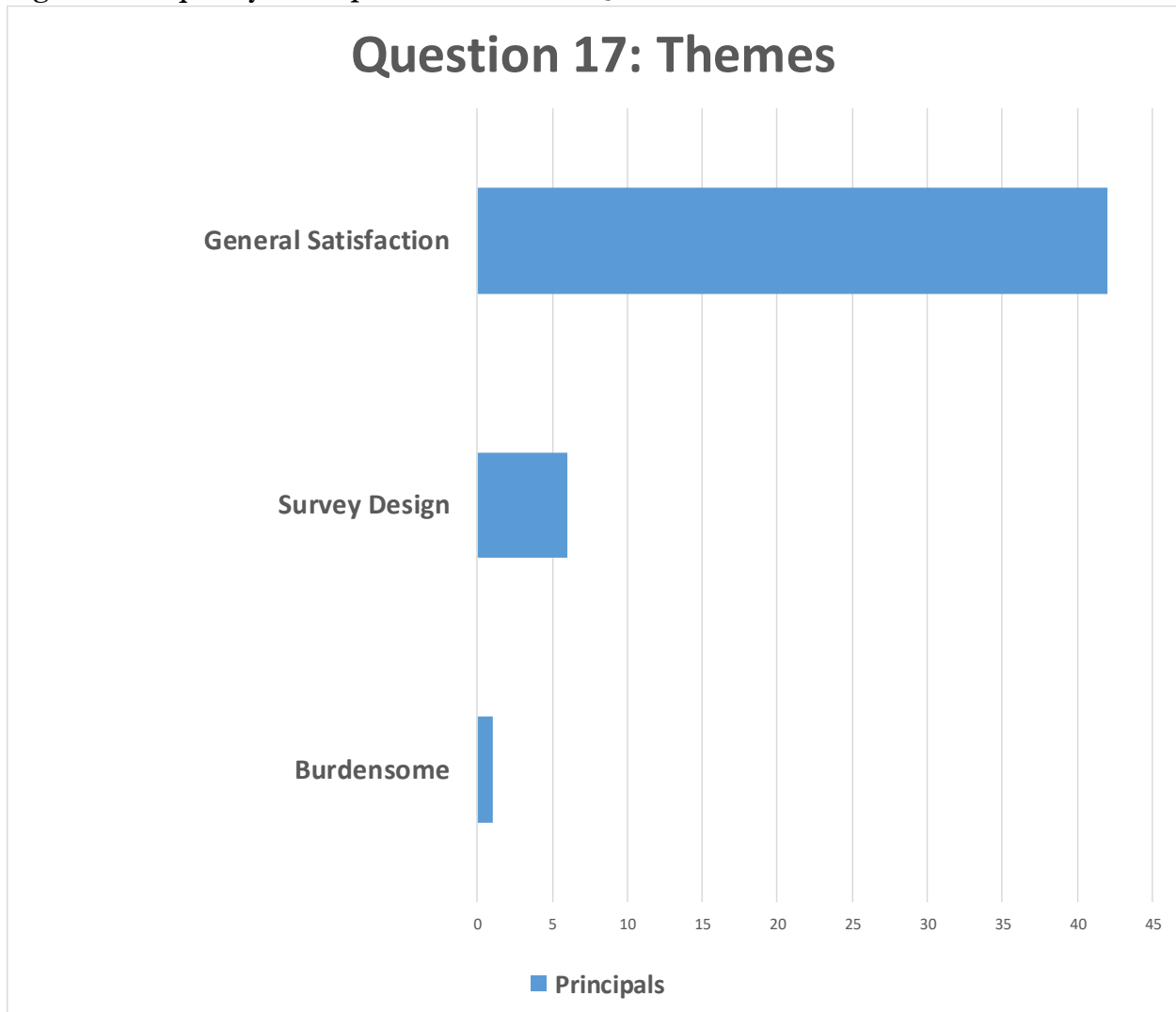
### Recommendations for the Survey Process

Further analyses was conducted on other aspects of the survey to identify several recommendations for the Nebraska Department of Education. These analyses are described as follows:

- 1) A content analysis on responses to question 17: *“Comments which can help the Nebraska Department of Education improve this survey process.”*

Figure 3 shows the themes found in the responses provided to question 17. A majority of the responses reflected respondents’ general satisfaction with the survey. However, respondents also commented on experiencing difficulties with the format of some questions. On the other hand, principals with multiple third year teachers described the multiple survey requests as being too burdensome.

**Figure 3. Frequency of Response Themes for Question 17**





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

- 1) Reduce open-ended questions to reduce respondent burden.
- 2) Simplify terminology of the survey questions.
- 3) Randomly sample a subset of teacher records for principals with multiple third year teachers in the building to prevent too many requests being sent out to a single principal. While this comes at the cost of lesser information, burden on the principals can be reduced and higher quality data may be obtained.