

STRUCTURED COMMUNICATION: EFFECTS ON STUDENT TEACHER – COOPERATING TEACHER RELATIONSHIPS

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Abstract

Perceptions held by agricultural science student teachers about their relationship with cooperating teachers during field experiences is a variable that may affect the number of student teachers entering the profession. The purpose of this study, which was part of a larger study, was to examine the effects implementing structured communication between student teachers and cooperating teachers would have on student teachers' self-perceived relationship between the student teacher and cooperating teacher during the student teaching experience. The learning environment of these field experiences must be more fully understood to explain why some student teachers enter the profession of agriculture science teaching, and others do not. This study employed a quasi-experimental design with a non-random sample (N=81) in a multiple time-series design. The average respondent in this study was a 23 year old white undergraduate female placed at a multiple placement cooperating center. Through contrast analysis, the age and academic standing of student teachers significantly affected their perception of the value cooperating teachers placed upon student teacher – cooperating teacher relationships. Structured communication influences student teachers' perception of their relationship with the cooperating teacher. To better understand perceptions of student teachers regarding the student teacher – cooperating teacher relationship, additional research should be conducted.

Introduction

The National Council for Agricultural Education (The Council, 2002) created the initiative Reinventing Agricultural Education for The Year 2020. The first goal outlined in this report was to provide “an abundance of highly motivated, well-educated teachers in all disciplines, pre-kindergarten through adult, providing agriculture, food, fiber and natural resource education” (The Council, 2002, p. 4). Agricultural education is charged to provide the most highly motivated and efficacious teachers to improve knowledge about agriculture. How can preparatory agricultural education professional programs accomplish this task? Does preservice teacher education provide skills and abilities, beliefs, and motivation to teacher education graduates of agricultural education departments? Are there avenues of research to improve those abilities and skills, beliefs, and motivation of preservice teacher education?

The discipline of agricultural education continually faces a deficiency of qualified teachers filling positions in public schools (Camp, Broyles, & Skelton, 2002). Camp et al. (2002) reported there were 798 secondary agricultural education positions available for new graduates of agricultural education in 2001. Of the 857 newly qualified agricultural education graduates, only 509 (59%) chose to enter the profession of agricultural education at the secondary level. The discipline of agricultural education graduates enough professionals to fill the positions available, and yet many of those graduates choose not to enter the field of agricultural education. What factors contribute to a graduate’s choice to enter the profession of agricultural education?

A significant element of preservice teacher preparation is the field experience portion of most teacher education programs. Field experiences are usually conducted as early field experiences and student teaching. Both have been found to contribute to a decision to enter the profession of agriculture education. Myers and Dyer (2004) stated that being involved in early experiences contribute to preservice teachers’ decision to enter the profession at the secondary level. They also stated that preservice teachers in agricultural education programs alter their beliefs as a result of field experiences. Therefore, it is concluded that field experiences can have dramatic effects upon the perceptions of those involved in these experiences.

Student teaching is an important element of the teacher education program (Borne & Moss, 1990; Deeds, Flowers, & Arrington, 1991; Edwards & Briers, 2001; Harlin, Edwards, & Briers, 2002; Norris, Larke, & Briers, 1990). Furthermore, both early field and the student teaching (field) experiences positively impact preservice teachers of agricultural education programs (Myers & Dyer, 2004). Teacher education programs must place student teachers at cooperating centers that provide the best experience available (Borne & Moss, 1990). Agricultural education must look into how the teacher education programs are structured and define avenues that will allow graduates to be motivated to enter the agricultural education profession. Camp et al. (2002) stated teacher education programs should expand their capabilities to prepare student teachers to meet the needs of secondary agricultural education programs.

Fritz and Miller (2003) concluded student teachers should “reflect on their daily concerns and receive feedback ... communicate with other student teachers and supervisors” (p. 51). Structured communication between the cooperating teacher and student teacher is a vital link that needs to be addressed to understand beliefs held by student teachers. Dewey (1980) stated:

Not only is social life identical with communication, but all communication ... is educative. To be a recipient of a communication is to have an enlarged and change experience. One shares in what another has thought and felt ... has his own attitude modified. Nor is the one who communicates left unaffected. (p. 8-9)

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of the study is grounded in the theory of constructivism. Constructivism operates under the premise that learners create understanding through experience (Fosnot, 1996; Schuman, 1996). Doolittle and Camp (1999) proposed four epistemological tenets of constructivism based upon literature (Dewey, 1980; Garrison, 1997; Gergen, 1995; Larochelle, Bednarz, & Garrison, 1998; Maturana & Varella, 1992; Von Glaserfeld, 1984); the four tenets are as follows:

1) knowledge is gained through dynamic cognizing by the individual, 2) individual behavior becomes more viable in particular environments because of the adaptive nature of cognition, 3) cognition is not a method to create accurate representations of reality but organizes and clarifies an individual's sense of experiences, and 4) learning is mutually rooted in cultural, social, and language-based interactions and neurological/biological construction. (p. 6)

Therefore, Doolittle and Camp (1999) concluded that constructivism recognizes the student's constant position in "the personal creation of knowledge, the importance of experience (both individual and social) in this knowledge creation process, and the realization that the knowledge created will vary in its degree of validity as an accurate representation of reality" (p. 7). These basic principles provide the foundation of the learning, knowing, and teaching process which can be differentially emphasized resulting in a menagerie of degrees of constructivism.

Social constructivism will act as the foundational principle for this study. The two basic tenets of social constructivism provide that knowledge is social in nature and knowledge is the result of social interaction rather than an individual experience. Therefore, we must conclude that through social interaction learners are able to gain knowledge through the dynamic interplay of social interactions that clarify knowledge based on experiences rooted in cultural, social, and language-based interactions and neurological/biological construction.

Student teaching is the capstone experience of many teacher preparation programs. This event impacts the experience held by student teachers through numerous experiences occurring during the field experience. One of the major factors during this experience for student teaching is the cooperating teacher. Many institutions have stringent guidelines for choosing cooperating teachers and placing student teachers at cooperating centers.

Kasperbauer and Roberts (2007a) found that the student teachers' perceptions of the student teacher and cooperating teacher relationship were not predictive of a decision to teach. This study further concluded that the student teacher and cooperating teacher relationship is important to student teachers involved in field experiences (Kasperbauer et al., 2007a). This finding implies student teachers value their perceptions of relationships with cooperating teacher. Another study conducted by Kasperbauer and Roberts (2007b) evaluated changes in student

teacher perceptions of the cooperating teacher and student teacher relationship during student teaching field experiences. This study concluded that student teachers' perceptions of cooperating teachers' relationship level exhibited decreased throughout the student teaching experience (Kasperbauer, et al., 2007b). This study, although not to be generalized beyond the population studied implies that as student teachers engage in field experiences their perception of the level of relationship exhibited by cooperating teacher decreases.

David Berlo developed the Source-Message-Channel-Receiver (SMCR) model. The SMCR model consists of four main areas: source, message, channel, and receiver. However, the model also considers feedback in order to make the model more complete. In this model, source is where a communication originates (Guth & Marsh, 2006). The use of this model can readily be translated through the communication that occurs through the student teacher and cooperating teacher relationship. As the cooperating teacher is considered the supervisor of the student teacher during the field experience, the cooperating teacher will serve as the source of many communication roles such as subject matter expert, daily performance evaluator, and supervisor.

Purpose

Understanding the needs of student teachers during the student teaching phase of their professional training program is paramount to producing highly qualified and motivated professionals who will enter the profession. The purpose of this study, which was part of a larger study, was to examine the effects implementing structured communication between student teachers and cooperating teachers would have on student teachers' self-perceived relationship between the student teacher and cooperating teacher during the student teaching experience. A secondary purpose was to explore relationships between selected variables including gender, age, ethnicity, agriculture science experience, academic standing, agriculture work experience, and placement at cooperating center.

Based on consulted literature, the following hypotheses were developed to guide this study and tested *a priori* at the .05 level.

- Ho₁: There is no difference in student teachers' perception of their relationship with their cooperating teacher when cooperating teachers use a communication tool.
- Ho₂: There is no difference in student teacher's perception of their relationship with their cooperating teacher when cooperating teachers use a communication tool in the presence of gender, age, ethnicity, agriculture science experience, academic standing, agriculture work experience, or placement at cooperating center.

Procedures

This study employed a quasi-experimental design with a non-random sample in a multiple time-series design (#14) (Campbell & Stanley, 1963). Campbell and Stanley (1963) defined quasi-experimental designs as follows:

There are many natural social settings in which research person can introduce something like experimental design into his scheduling of data collection procedures (e.g., the when

and to whom of measurement), even though he lacks the full control over the scheduling of experimental stimuli (the when and to whom of exposure and the ability to randomize exposures) which makes a true experiment possible. (p. 34)

The design of this study was employed as follows:

Fall 2006 student teachers ($n= 20$)	O_1	X_1	O_2	X_1	O_3
Fall 2005 student teachers ($n= 27$)	\bar{O}_1		\bar{O}_2		\bar{O}_3
Fall 2004 student teachers ($n= 35$)	O_1		O_2		O_3

The first measurement of the student teacher’s perception of the relationship with the cooperating teacher (O_1) was taken at the end of the first four weeks of the semester in which the participant was involved in a field experience (student teaching). The second measurement (O_2) was taken during the fifth week of the 11-week field experience at the mid-semester conference between student teachers and teacher education faculty (university supervisors) of a university. The third (O_3) and final perception of the relationship between the student teacher and the cooperating teacher measurement was taken at the end of the 11-week field experience. The intervention, or experimental variable (X_1), was introduced during the full field experience of the fall 2006 teacher education student teaching semester, incorporated weekly.

Threats to internal validity were addressed in the design of this study (multiple time-series design #14) (Campbell & Stanley, 1963). Tuckman (1999) stated “internal validity depends, in part, on the condition that the effect attributed to a treatment is a function of the treatment itself, rather than a function of some other unmeasured and uncontrolled differences between treated and untreated persons” (p. 9-10).

The sample for this study was student teachers enrolled in field experience at a university. This purposive sample was chosen to represent student teachers engaged in field experiences. This sample included three semesters of students during the student teaching phase of their teacher education program. The control groups consisted of student teachers enrolled in field experience at a university during the fall semesters of 2004 ($n= 35$) and 2005 ($n= 27$). The treatment group consisted of student teachers enrolled in field experience at a university during the fall semester of 2006 ($n= 20$). Therefore, the researcher makes the assumption that the results from this study can be inferred and inferential statistics are employed (Oliver & Hinkle, 1982). Judgments based on the findings from this study should be made with caution when generalizing to other groups of student teachers in agricultural education (Oliver & Hinkle, 1982).

The communication form employed in this study is an adaptation of a form used by the Department of Education at Florida State University. The communication form contains 12 sections of accomplished practices of the student teacher. Accomplished practices included: assessment, communication, continuous improvement, critical thinking, diversity, ethics, human development and learning, subject matter knowledge, learning environment, planning, role of the teacher, and technology. The cooperating teacher rated the student teacher based on their observation of prescribed practices each week. Comments and recommendations fields were available for each accomplished practice to further describe observations of the student teacher. Directions on using the communication tool and the submission process were outlined in both a

short and long form provided to cooperating teachers. The communication form was used to aid in the communication process between the cooperating teacher and student teacher. The role of the communication tool was to document the implementation of the treatment in this study.

A researcher-developed instrument (Roberts, 2006; Kasperbauer & Roberts, 2007b) was utilized to collect perceptions of student teachers concerning the student teacher's relationship with the cooperating teacher. This instrument was developed to coincide with the background/demographic instrument. Cooperating teacher/student teacher relationship section consisted of 43 items rated on the student teacher's perception of this relationship. The four constructs used in this instrument were as follows: teaching/instruction, professionalism, personality, and cooperating teacher/student teacher relationship. The teaching/instruction construct consisted of nine statements. The professionalism construct contained 10 statements. The personality construct contained 10 statements. Finally, the cooperating teacher/student teacher relationship consisted of 14 statements. The scale used ascertains the level that the cooperating teacher exhibits those characteristics as perceived by the student teacher. Face and content validity were established through an expert panel in the Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education, and Communications at Texas A&M University. Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient for the relationship questionnaire was .78.

A researcher-developed instrument (Roberts, et al., 2006; Kasperbauer & Roberts, 2007b) was utilized to collect background and demographic data for this study. This instrument was developed to coincide with the relationship instrument. Background/demographics section consisted of seven items: gender, age (years), ethnicity, placement at cooperating center, semesters of high school agricultural education courses completed, academic standing, and agriculture work experience. Dillman (2000) stated that questions having ready-made answers such as demographic questions gain more accurate responses. Face and content validity was established through an expert panel in the Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education, and Communications at Texas A&M University.

Data were analyzed using SPSS® 15.0 for Windows™ statistical package. Demographics and background characteristics were assessed using descriptive statistics – means, frequencies, and standard deviations. In order to ascertain the influence of the independent variable, use of the communication tool, upon the dependent variable of perception of relationships, data collected on contextual variables (gender, age, ethnicity, agriculture science experience, academic standing, agriculture work experience, or placement at cooperating center) were used as covariates during data analysis. Repeated measures mixed design and repeated measures analysis of covariance were utilized to further delineate the findings of this study.

Data were analyzed for normalcy and an outlier was identified when descriptive statistics were employed. Further investigation of the data, revealed through box plot analyses identified the specific case contained in the treatment group ($n=20$). This case was identified and removed from further data analysis ($N=81$, treatment group ($n=19$)). Judd and McClelland (1989) argue outlier removal is desirable, honest, and important.

Findings

The average respondent in this study was a 23 year old white undergraduate female placed at a multiple placement cooperating center. Data showed similar make-up of control and treatment groups in gender, age, and placement. The treatment group was composed of all white respondents but the control group reported two Hispanic and one Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander. Differences in demographics were also noted in agricultural sciences taken in secondary schools. It was reported a greater percentage of the control group respondents had never been enrolled in secondary agricultural science classes. In addition it was reported that a greater percentage had taken at least three or more semesters of secondary agricultural science classes.

Perceptions of student teachers on level of relationship exhibited by the cooperating teacher shown in Table 1 yielded data for control, treatment, and an overall measurement of groups of study. Data were collected at three points of the field experience. Mean scores for the perceptions of the student teacher on level of relationship exhibited by the cooperating teacher in the control group ($n=62$) for the three measurement points were 4.23 (SD = .63), 3.82 (SD = 1.04), and 3.89 (SD = 1.04), respectively. Mean scores for the treatment group ($n=19$) at the three measurement points were 3.88 (SD = .79), 3.91 (SD = .83), and 3.77 (SD = .94). Data showed a decrease in mean scores by the control group from first measurement to the second measurement and then an increase from the second measurement to the third. The data for the treatment group showed a decrease from second measurement to the third measurement as the control group data also indicated an increase in mean score. The treatment group showed an increase from the first measurement to the second measurement in mean score whereby the control group's mean scores indicated a decrease in the perceptions of the level of relationship.

Table 1

Means Comparison of the Level of Relationship Exhibited by Cooperating Teacher

	1 st measurement		2 nd measurement		3 rd measurement	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Control Group ($n=62$)	4.23	.63	3.82	1.04	3.89	1.04
Treatment Group ($n = 19$)	3.88	.79	3.91	.83	3.77	.94
Overall Group ($N=81$)	4.14	.68	3.84	.99	3.86	1.01

Note. Scale used to measure relationships had a range from 1 through 5. 1 indicating low importance perceived and 5 indicating the highest perception held by the respondent(s).

Null hypothesis one stated there is no difference in student teachers' perception of their relationship with their cooperating teacher when cooperating teachers use a communication tool. Repeated measures analysis was used to test for differences in perceived level of importance of the relationship with cooperating teachers as seen by student teachers (see Table 2). This test produced a significance level of $p < .00$ (*Mauchly's W* = .78). In this case, the sphericity assumption was not met; therefore, Greenhouse-Geisser adjustment was used. The significance level of $p = .16$ ($F = 1.88$) suggests there were no differences in the student teachers perceptions of their cooperating teachers current level of relationship exhibited throughout the student teaching semester during the three data collection points (see Figure 1). The overall model was not significant (Between Groups, $p = .59$). The null hypothesis was held tenable and not rejected.

Table 2

Student Teacher Perceptions of Their Cooperating Teachers' Current Level of Relationship

Source	<i>df</i>	SS	MS	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2	Power
Within Groups							
Relationship Level (RL)	1.63	1.80	1.10	2.34	.11	.03	.42
RL x Treatment Group	2	1.45	.72	1.88	.16	.03	.35
Error	119.31	55.98	.47				
Total	123						
Between Groups							
Treatment Group	1	.52	.52	.29	.59	.00	.08
Error	73	129.23	1.77				

Note. Sphericity assumption not met (*Mauchly's W* = .64, $p = .03$)¹Greenhouse-Geisser adjustment used

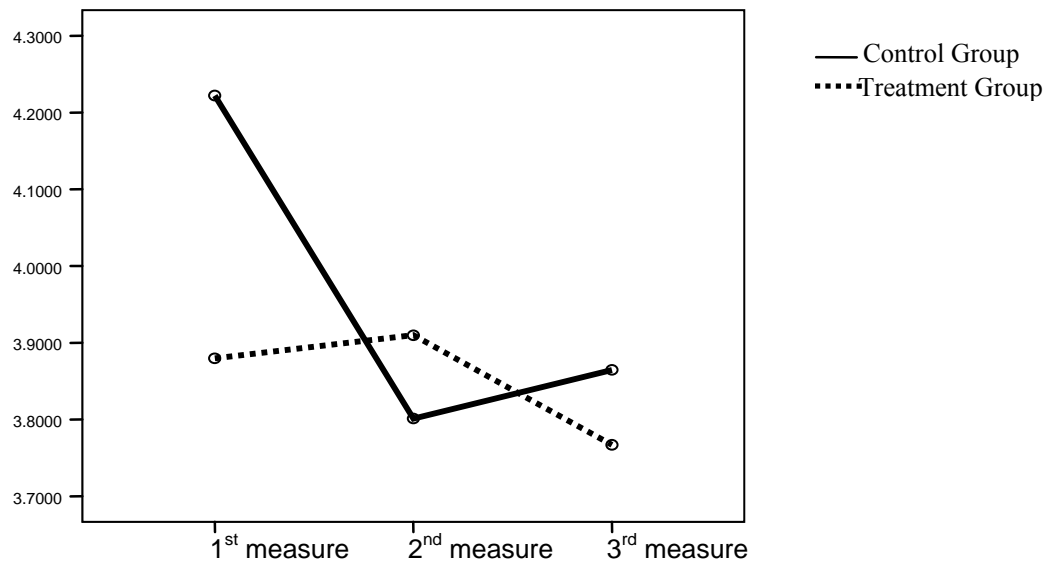


Figure 1. Mean plots of relationship level perception of student teacher for control and treatment groups.

Further data analysis revealed through within subject contrasts no significance on treatment group and perceptions of relationship of the cooperating teacher by the student teacher (see Table 3). It should be noted that overall both the treatment group and the control group displayed a reduction of their perception of the relationship through this time series design.

Table 3

<i>Within Subject Contrasts for Relationship Level</i>								
Source		<i>df</i>	SS	MS	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2	Power
Within Group Contrasts								
Relationship Level (RL)	Level 1 vs. 2	1	2.17	2.17	2.46	.12	.03	.34
	Level 2 vs. 3	1	.09	.09	.22	.64	.00	.08
RL x Treatment Group	Level 1 vs. 2	1	2.88	2.88	3.28	.07	.04	.43
	Level 2 vs. 3	1	.60	.60	1.47	.23	.02	.22
Error	Level 1 vs. 2	73	64.12	.88				
	Level 2 vs. 3	73	30.09	.41				

Null hypothesis two stated there is no difference in student teacher's perception of their relationship with their cooperating teacher when cooperating teachers use a communication tool in the presence of gender, age, ethnicity, agriculture science experience, academic standing, agriculture work experience, or placement at cooperating center. Repeated measures analysis was used to test for differences in perceived level of importance of the relationship with cooperating teachers as seen by student teachers (see Table 4). This test produced a significance level of $p = .01$ (*Mauchly's W* = .67). In this case, the sphericity assumption was not met; therefore, the Greenhouse-Geisser adjustment was used. The significance level of $p = .17$ ($F = 1.84$) suggests that there were no significant differences in the student teachers perceptions of their cooperating teachers current level of relationship exhibited throughout the student teaching semester during the three data collection points (see Figure 2). The overall model was not significant (Between Groups, $p = .49$). However, significance was found in the interaction between relationship level perceived by the student teachers and age ($p = .01$). This interaction shows high power (.82) with a small effect size ($\eta^2 = .09$). It should be noted that as age level of the sample increased, student teachers' perceptions of their cooperating teachers level of relationship exhibited was significantly increased. Overall, the model was not found significant and the null hypothesis was held tenable and failed to reject.

Table 4

<i>Student Teacher Perceptions of Their Level of Relationship with Cooperating Teacher</i>							
Source	<i>df</i>	SS	MS	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2	Power
Within Groups							
Relationship Level (RL) ¹	1.50	1.01	.67	1.45	.24	.02	.26**
Interactions							
RL x Gender ¹	1.50	.61	.41	.88	.42	.01	.18**
RL x Age ¹	1.50	4.46	2.97	6.40	.01*	.09	.82**
RL x Placement ¹	1.50	1.79	1.19	2.56	.10	.04	.43**
RL x AgSc Semesters ¹	1.50	.37	.25	.53	.54	.01	.13**
RL x Academic Standing ¹	1.50	1.28	.85	1.83	.17	.03	.32**
RL x Ethnicity ¹	1.50	.40	.27	.58	.52	.01	.13**
RL x Ag Work Experience ¹	1.50	.52	.35	.74	.44	.01	.16**
RL x Treatment Group ¹	1.50	1.28	.86	1.84	.17	.03	.33**
Error	99.05	46.03	.47				
Total	113.00						
Between Groups							
Treatment	1	.89	.89	.48	.49	.01	.10**
Error	66	122.65	1.86				

Note. Sphericity assumption not met (*Mauchly's W* = .667, *p* = .0001)¹Greenhouse-Geisser Adjustment Used), **p* significant < .05, ** power computed using alpha = .05.

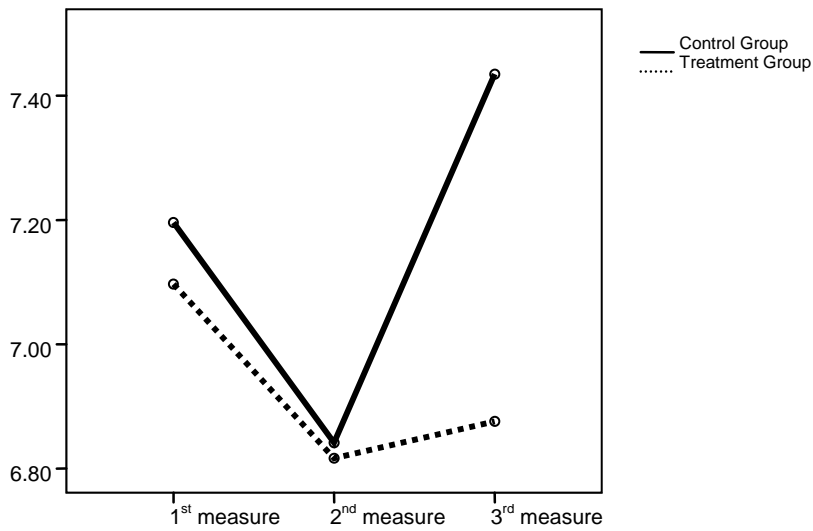


Figure 2. Mean plots of relationship level perception of student teacher for control and treatment groups with covariate adjustment.

Within subject contrasts did reveal three significant interactions. From the second to the third relationship measurement, age interacted significantly ($F = 21.01, p = .00$). Also from the second to the third measurement of relationship, academic standing interacted significantly ($F = 8.20, p = .01$).

Table 4-28
Within Subject Contrasts for Relationship Level with Covariates

Source		<i>df</i>	SS	MS	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2	Power
Within Group Contrasts								
Relationship Level(RL)	Level 1 vs. 2	1	.89	.89	.99	.32	.02	.17
	Level 2 vs. 3	1	.20	.20	.68	.41	.01	.13
RL x Gender	Level 1 vs. 2	1	.19	.19	.21	.67	.00	.07
	Level 2 vs. 3	1	.44	.44	1.48	.22	.02	.22
RL x Age	Level 1 vs. 2	1	.03	.03	.04	.85	.00	.05
	Level 2 vs. 3	1	6.20	6.20	21.01	.00*	.24	1.00
RL x Placement	Level 1 vs. 2	1	2.21	2.21	2.47	.12	.04	.34
	Level 2 vs. 3	1	.07	.07	.24	.63	.00	.08
RL x AgSc Semesters	Level 1 vs. 2	1	.22	.22	.25	.62	.00	.08
	Level 2 vs. 3	1	.15	.15	.52	.48	.01	.11
RL x Academic	Level 1 vs. 2	1	1.20	1.20	1.34	.25	.02	.21
	Level 2 vs. 3	1	2.42	2.42	8.20	.01*	.11	.81
RL x Ethnicity	Level 1 vs. 2	1	.75	.75	.83	.36	.01	.15
	Level 2 vs. 3	1	.42	.42	1.41	.24	.02	.22
RL x Ag Work Exp.	Level 1 vs. 2	1	.01	.01	.01	.94	.00	.05
	Level 2 vs. 3	1	.84	.84	2.85	.10	.04	.38
RL x Treatment	Level 1 vs. 2	1	2.46	2.46	2.74	.10	.04	.37
	Level 2 vs. 3	1	1.15	1.15	3.88	.05	.06	.49
Error	Level 1 vs. 2	66	59.09	.90				
	Level 2 vs. 3	66	19.48	.30				

Note. **p* significant < .05

Conclusions, Discussion, and Implications

No significant difference was found in relation to student teacher's perception of their relationship with their cooperating teacher when a communication tool is used by cooperating teachers. Although not significant, a difference was shown in data reported by both groups. The direction of the mean plots revealed through the implementation of structured communication

change was observed in the second measurement. This measurement illustrated the treatment group increasing in their perception of the relationship and the control exhibiting a substantive decrease in mean scores. Because of data exhibited in this study, although not significant the downward trend of both groups in relation to relationship between student teacher and cooperating teacher should be further investigated.

Kasperbauer and Roberts (2007b) concluded that student teachers' perceptions of cooperating teachers' relationship level exhibited decreased throughout the student teaching experience. This study concurs with Kasperbauer et al. (2007b) with results exhibiting a downward trend in perceptions of relationships by student teachers of cooperating teachers. Communication is important in relationships and if the perception of the relationship erodes over time, the impact of sharing knowledge and experience may lessen.

No significant difference was found in relation to student teacher's perception of their relationship with their cooperating teacher when a communication tool is used by cooperating teachers in the presence of contextual variables. The perception of relationship held by student teachers may be an impacting variable as student teachers reflect upon experience and skill acquisition during this stage of their professional career. Although not significant, a difference was shown in data reported by both groups. The direction of the mean plots revealed through the implementation of structured communication with adjustment for covariate showed a change in the overall direction of the means plot. This measurement showed the treatment group decreasing in their perception of the relationship and the control showing a substantive increase in mean scores. Significance was found in relationship level perceived by the student teachers and age during data analysis. This interaction of age and relationship level shows that as age of student teacher increases, the perception of the level of relationship of the cooperating teacher increases. This is a significant finding because although the mean age for this study was 23 (range of 21 to 47), older student teachers may perceive relationships between themselves and cooperating teachers more importantly than do younger student teachers.

Although there is negligible research available regarding the importance of relationships in student teaching experience, their impacts can be paramount upon the perception of the whole experience of student teaching. Edwards and Briers (2001) conducted a focus group with and a quantitative follow up study of cooperating teachers who attended a workshop. This research identified items and the student teacher and cooperating teacher relationship were among five of the ten highest rated items through quantitative analysis. Further research should be undertaken regarding relationships during field experiences in agriculture education.

Recommendations for further research include replication of this study at other institutions involved in teacher education in agricultural education. Further knowledge about the impact of communication on the perception of the relationship between the student teacher and cooperating teacher will explain the effects structured communication can have on relationships during field experiences. A further recommendation is to educate cooperating teachers about the impact that communication has towards student teachers during field experiences and its effect upon the perceptions of student teachers. Cooperating teachers should be educated about the value and correct communication occurring during student teaching and its impact.

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