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THE PERCEPTIONS OF PRE-SERVICE TRAINERS AND  
STUDENT TEACHERS IN SEMINARIES AND INSTITUTES  
REGARDING FEEDBACK AND COACHING TECHNIQUES.

by:

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## **Dedication**

To Tanner, Parker, Zander and Colter: with the faith that your teachers receive great feedback and coaching, and are as effective in your classrooms as possible.

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## **Abstract**

This descriptive study used a qualitative design to determine the perceptions of Seminary and Institutes (S&I) pre-service trainers and student teachers regarding the effectiveness of coaching and feedback techniques used in post-observation conferences and to determine the perceived level of improvement that resulted from the post-observation conference feedback. This study determined how useful and helpful student teachers perceived the pre-service trainer's feedback to be in enhancing instructional effectiveness. This study also determined the perceptions of the pre-service trainers regarding the effectiveness of their feedback.

The first part of this study collected responses from the population of pre-service trainers and student teachers located at the ten universities in Idaho, Utah, Arizona, and California connected to the pre-service centers in Seminary and Institutes. After responses were collected from a questionnaire made available to the entire population of pre-service trainers and student teachers, a sample of five pre-service trainers and ten student teachers was selected for follow-up interviews. Two student teachers from each of the five purposefully selected pre-service trainers were randomly selected to generate the ten student teachers that were interviewed for the second part of the study.

The data collected from the survey responses and follow-up interviews led to an analysis and coding of the raw data creating general themes. Multiple themes arose from the data, which were further analyzed via a funneling process to narrow the coded themes to eight major themes.

Results of this study produced major themes that emerged from an analysis of the survey responses and follow-up interviews. The study found that feedback is most

effective when it is specific and direct, descriptive and principle-based, focused on discovery learning, considers the zone of proximal development of the learner, is balanced, designed to meet the needs of the student teacher, demonstrates an investment in the student teacher, and included meaningful advice to pre-service trainers.

## **CHAPTER I**

### **Introduction**

The American system of education is designed to help learners gain and develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to function independently and contribute effectively in a democratic society. To achieve this goal, the American education system uses a tiered-model of graded schools, staffed by individual instructors tasked with helping each learner maximize his or her learning potential. These teachers have the most direct contact with students and therefore the greatest impact on student achievement and the education system as a whole. The public education system has developed a certification process that requires teachers in the system to meet an educational standard.

Public education also employs a system of supervisors, peers, and evaluators to monitor, support, and assess instructional effectiveness. These educational leaders work with teachers to improve instructional delivery, monitor and assess student progress toward achievement standards, and contribute to a supportive educational climate. An important role in the certification process and teacher development is the observation of teachers in practice combined with effective feedback and coaching. A combination of students, teacher, and administrator feedback has been utilized over many decades to monitor progress toward and achievement of educational goals.

Modeled after the traditional form of American education, Seminaries and Institutes (S&I) a division of the Church Educational System (CES) provides the youth in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints with the educational opportunity to study the teachings and doctrines of the Church. Seminary is a department of the CES that



works with students in grades nine through twelve. Seminary activities are held in buildings adjacent to but separate from public high schools. Seminary student's class schedules are aligned to permit release-time from the high school classes to attend seminary classes throughout the day.

From its earliest days to the present, leaders of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have encouraged education as a foundation for life. In 1888, the Church Board of Education was established to direct the education programs of the Church. In 1912, the first seminary class was taught to a small group of high school students in Salt Lake City, Utah. This was the beginning of what would become an extensive seminary program for students in many countries and territories throughout the world. As of the 2012-2013 school year there were more than 397,000 seminary students worldwide (Seminaries and Institutes of Religion, Annual Report for 2014). Nearly 130,000 of those seminary students participated in released-time seminary classes held in facilities adjacent to high schools in the Western United States.

Just as teachers in traditional American classrooms impact the educational effectiveness of students in that educational setting, the pre-service program of Seminaries and Institutes seeks to improve instructional effectiveness by training and developing student teachers with the aim of eventually hiring them as full-time seminary teachers. The S&I pre-service program provides a year of instruction to potential seminary teachers before enrolling these candidates in a year of student teaching. Classroom observation, combined with supervisor feedback and coaching during post-observation conferences, are an important element of the instructional support provided to student teachers in the pre-service program. The pre-service program in S&I serves a

similar function as the certification process for public school teachers in the traditional American system of education.

The S&I handbook articulates the importance of instructional feedback and coaching in preparing potential seminary teachers:

Teachers must learn principles of effective teaching and master effective teaching skills line upon line through study, faith, practice, and experience. There are many ways to evaluate teaching effectiveness and to receive feedback and assistance as to how to improve. Some things that will help teachers improve are formal, structured methods such as observation and feedback from peers, supervisors, or students. (Church Education System, 2012, p. 78)

The assessment of the student teacher's instructional effectiveness fulfills both a formative and summative function by helping those teachers improve as well as determining which student teachers should be offered full-time positions as seminary instructors in Seminaries and Institutes. Both forms of assessment serve to enhance the instructional effectiveness of teachers in S&I.

## **Background**

The two main objectives of the pre-service program of S&I are to help student teachers improve their performance as professionals in the classroom and to determine which of the many perspective seminary teachers are appropriately qualified to hire for teaching positions within S&I. The pre-service trainer is expected to complete these two assessment objectives.

Research supports the position that the teacher is the most important contributor to student achievement (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). Preparing and hiring the

best teachers has a significant impact on student achievement. Identifying the most qualified student teachers and continuing to provide the needed professional development is an important component of an effective educational system. An important part of the pre-service program in S&I consists of classroom observation of student teachers. A typical student teacher will be observed multiple times during a school year. While various educational leaders will observe the student teacher and provide feedback during a post-observation conference, it is the pre-service trainer that will observe and consult with the student teachers most frequently.

Pre-service trainers are selected from among S&I personnel who have demonstrated excellence as teachers and administrators. The pre-service trainer is assigned to a pre-service center associated with a university. There are ten pre-service centers in S&I. Each trainer is part of the Central Pre-Service Program. As part of their preparation, the pre-service trainers are instructed in effective feedback and coaching techniques as well as the requirements for completing summative and formative teacher evaluations by the Central Pre-Service Program.

### **Topic Statement**

This descriptive study used a qualitative design to determine the perceptions of S&I pre-service trainers and student teachers regarding the effectiveness of coaching and feedback techniques used in post-observation conferences and to determine the perceived level of improvement that resulted from the post-observation conference feedback. This study determined how useful and helpful student teachers perceived the pre-service trainer's feedback to be in enhancing instructional effectiveness. This study also

determined the perceptions of the pre-service trainers regarding the effectiveness of their feedback.

The approach used for this study included “detailed readings of raw data to derive concepts, themes, or a model through interpretations made from the raw data” (Thomas, 2006, p. 238). Both the pre-service trainer’s and student teacher’s perceptions of the effectiveness of the feedback and coaching provided were examined in order to gain a better understanding of the post-observation conference; as well as to determine how that feedback and coaching could become even more effective. The student teacher’s perceptions of feedback styles and coaching techniques that have been most helpful to them will be useful to pre-service trainers in order to help them provide more meaningful feedback and support to student teachers. Similarly, the pre-service trainer’s perceptions of effective feedback techniques and coaching strategies may be beneficial to other pre-service trainers in the system, helping to improve the feedback, coaching, and performance of other pre-service trainers, and therefore support the student teacher’s development as effective instructors in Seminaries and Institutes.

### **Significance**

The results of this study have the potential to influence the effectiveness of educational leaders who perform teacher observations particularly at the secondary level, and pre-service trainers in the S&I pre-service program. The findings of this study may influence educational leaders to critically examine the way that feedback is provided to teachers. Because classroom observation, feedback, and coaching are such integral parts of the S&I pre-service hiring program, these findings could help student teachers in S&I realize greater improvement and result in better prepared teachers being hired for S&I

programs. The ultimate goal of all these efforts is to enhance student achievement.

Although there have been other studies about the feedback process for student teachers in other pre-service programs, this is the first such study specifically about the pre-service program of Seminaries and Institutes. This study will, therefore, add to the body of knowledge unique to this system and circumstance.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **Literature Review**

This literature review provides a background of the Pre-Service Program of Seminaries and Institutes and focused on feedback and the effectiveness of feedback techniques as reported in relevant literature. This review highlights the current research on the coaching of pre-service trainers who work with student teachers. The post-observation conference is addressed in the literature review with an emphasis on concepts that focus on the strengths of the student teacher's performance as opposed to weaknesses in the post-observation conference with the student teachers.

### **Pre-Service Program of Seminaries and Institutes**

Seminaries and Institutes of Religion (S&I) is part of the Church Educational System operated by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Seminary is a four-year religious education program held each school day for youth (generally 14–18 years of age). The Seminaries and Institutes of Religion Annual Report for 2014 defines released-time seminary as:

Released-time programs are established in locations where they have been approved by the Church Board of Education. Classes are held during school hours—according to the adjacent public school's schedule—and are generally taught by full-time teachers in a Church-owned seminary building. (p. 1)

There are over 2,000 full-time educators in the Seminaries and Institutes (S&I) division of the Church Education System. Full-time employees are selected through a pre-service program. The Employment with Seminaries and Institutes portion of the organization's webpage lists the personal qualifications, career options, available benefits

and education requirements of a position with S&I. The education requirements for individuals desiring full-time teaching positions in Seminaries and Institutes include:

- An accredited bachelor's degree (S&I does not specify a major)
- Institute of Religion graduation or equivalent, with emphasis on scripture courses
- Completion of Doctrines of the Gospel (Religion 430-31)
- Completion of the seminary pre-service training process. (Seminaries and Institutes of Religion, 2014, <http://seminary.lds.org/careers/>)

The Employment with Seminaries and Institutes portion of the webpage explained the courses required for admission to the pre-service training program. Interested applicants must successfully complete Seminaries and Institutes of Religion pre-service training courses through one of the pre-service centers. A prospective seminary teacher is expected to complete the following Seminaries and Institutes pre-service training courses at one of the Seminaries and Institutes pre-service centers.

- Religion 471: Teaching Seminary

This course is an introduction to religious education as a profession. Religion 471 focuses on basic teaching concepts, the Seminaries and Institutes hiring process, and helps individuals become more effective teachers. It prepares students to teach the scriptures and involves them in a brief seminary teaching experience. During Religion 471, trainees are evaluated and screened for Religion 475.

- Religion 475: Seminary Teaching Seminar

Religion 475 addresses current teaching issues and needs. Student teachers are also employed part-time and may teach from one to three seminary classes.

Throughout the school year student teachers are evaluated to determine whether

they should be considered for a full-time seminary teaching position with Seminaries and Institutes. (Seminaries and Institutes of Religion, 2014, <http://seminary.lds.org/careers>)

After completion of these courses, including student teaching for a year, applicants enter into the hiring pool for that year. The number of applicants from Religion 471 is reduced as only some of the applicants are offered part-time student teaching positions. The number of student teachers selected for the hiring pool continues to reduce the number of applicants. From the number of student teachers selected for the hiring pool only a relatively small percentage are selected for full-time employment (See Figure 1).

Collins (2001) noted that choosing the right people and placing them in the right positions in the organization increased the organization's potential for success. Organizations that attract a larger number of applicants than there are positions available can be more selective in finding the right people for the organization. It is in light of these circumstances that the Employment with Seminaries and Institutes portion of the organization's webpage addresses the question,

What are the chances of being hired as a full-time seminary teacher and starting a career in Seminaries and Institutes?

There are openings each year for seminary teachers. The number of openings varies from year to year, but typically the number of applicants far exceeds the openings. It would be wise to have other alternatives in mind in case a career with Seminaries and Institutes does not develop. (Seminaries and Institutes of Religion, 2014, <http://seminary.lds.org/careers/>)



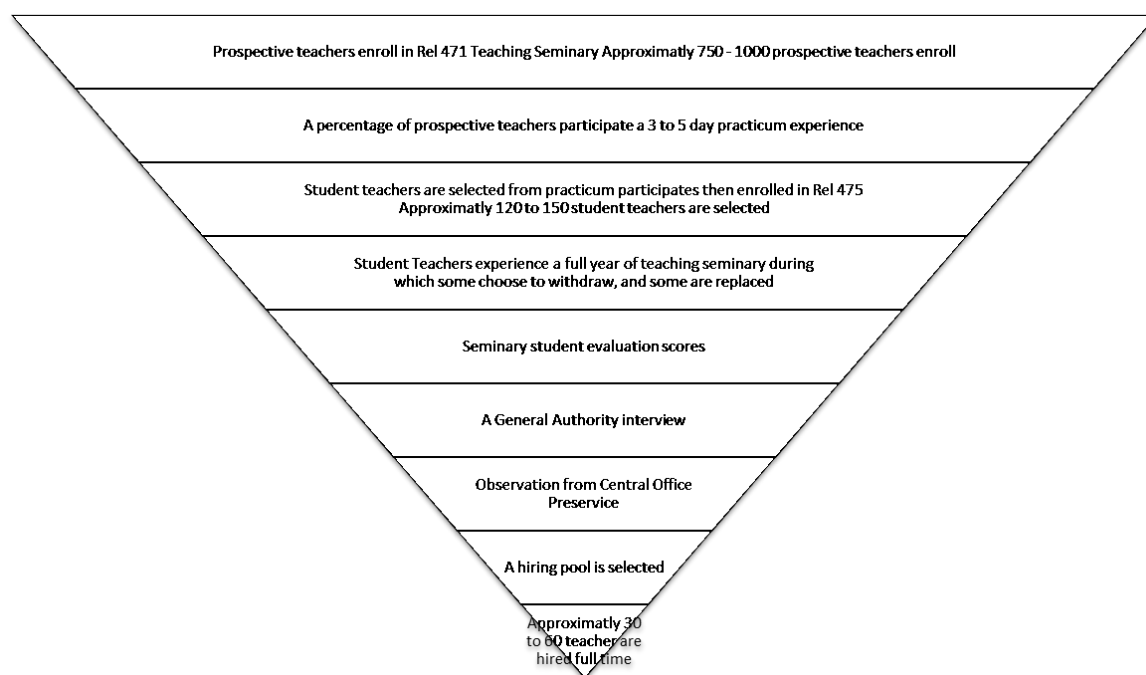
Toone (2014), conducted an interview with Brad Howell, the head of the pre-service program for Seminaries and Institutes about seminary teachers and the process for selecting candidates for hire. The interview addressed the issue of the number of applicants that are selected for employment as compared to the number of individuals seeking a position.

“It’s a fairly rigorous process, but administrators have made adjustments in recent years to reduce the burden on individuals and their families,” Howell said. “Our feeling was we could get a pretty good look more quickly than we have in the past and not cause the working professional to have to go through such an elaborate, lengthy process,” Howell said. “I think it’s making a difference.” The chances of being hired are small. In any given year, Howell estimated that 750 to 1,000 people start the process. Of those, about 120-150 become student teachers, with some dropping out and new individuals being added. “Of those, about 50 percent are hired.”

“We always ask the question, ‘What is in the best interest of the students?’ We want the best teacher in front of the kids,” Howell said. “I never feel like we are turning away our best teachers. It feels like it’s working out just right for us, and I hope it continues” (Toone, 2014, p. 6-7).

Figure 1 illustrates the process potential teachers experience in the pre-service program of Seminaries and Institutes to become hired full time as part of the Church Education System.

Figure 1

*Pre-Service Program Selection Funnel***Feedback**

Educational leaders use feedback to help teachers identify areas for improvement and make changes in the teacher's practice that will result in improved educational outcomes. "The most powerful single modification that enhances achievement is feedback. Feedback, when done well, represents a strong leverage point in the management of a school" (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005, p. 55). Findings from a study by Le and Vasquez (2011) confirmed the importance of feedback given to student teachers.

A number of strategies are considered to be effective in giving constructive feedback in teacher education contexts, such as the use of questions, the delivery of compliments before criticisms or specific suggestions, the productions of mild advice and suggestions and the assistance for the (student teachers) to pinpoint

their own problems, in addition to the provision of a comfortable atmosphere for the feedback conferences and a balance of both positive and negative comments in feedback delivery. (p. 467)

### **Effective questioning.**

A feedback strategy that has been identified through research to be particularly helpful at enhancing instructional effectiveness includes the strategy of effective questioning. Le and Vasquez (2011) explained that mentors used effective questioning as a way to “encourage the interns’ participation in the feedback interaction and to promote the interns’ thinking skills” (p. 457).

Effective questioning was identified as one of the best ways to engage the student teachers in the post-observation conference. Effective questioning activated the thinking process causing student teachers to reflect critically on their teaching practice in order to identify the strengths and areas for improvement in their lesson.

Pre-service trainers are taught techniques that encourage individual reflection of the depth and nature of their questioning practices. Effective questioning can help student teachers discover for themselves those classroom practices that are more effective and fit the learning needs of their students best. Self-discovery within this construct is considerably more valuable than specific insights shared by the pre-service trainers. Questions that stimulate thinking and feeling, rather than simple “yes” or “no” type questions or questions in which the answer is so obvious that the student teachers are not motivated to think, are strongly preferred.

Le and Vasquez (2011) found that student teacher mentors felt that effective questions used as part of the feedback conference helped the student teachers reflect and discover for themselves the concepts the mentors wanted to convey to the student teachers.

### **Sandwich technique.**

Another effective feedback strategy is referred to as the *sandwich technique*. This strategy begins with the supervisor initially providing positive feedback before pointing out the areas in need of improvement and finishing with more positive feedback. Le and Vasquez (2011) found that mentors who gave feedback “desired to create positive feelings for the interns by starting with something good in the lesson before indicating areas that need changes and suggesting ways to improve” (p. 461).

Watrous (2003) described the “compliment sandwich format” used to give teachers feedback that began and ended with “what worked for [student teachers] in the class and what did not work for them—or worked less well—in the middle of their feedback” (p. 54). The first and last compliments surround a middle of constructive criticism. “What I learn from the compliment part of the compliment sandwich can be as humbling as what I learn from suggestions for growth” (Watrous, 2003, p. 55).

Watrous (2003) explained why the sandwich technique has been found to be effective by many:

Writers and researchers in the fields of human behavior and cognition have suggested that for individuals to be able to hear and to heed criticism it must be couched in positive terms. Some say that to attend to a single correction, a student teacher should at the same time hear that he has done as many as five things right. Others say that three compliments are enough to balance one criticism. (p. 54)

Feedback that couples compliments with criticisms helps student teachers gain a more complete view of how the lesson went. Le and Vasquez (2011) reported that “the mentors in this study clarified their compliments by analyzing why certain aspects in the lesson worked. This clarification was very beneficial to the interns as it helped to explain to these new teachers what made a lesson effective” (p. 463). This sandwich technique helps create a conversation about the lesson as a whole, rather than just a report of the parts of the lesson that went wrong. This conversation helps create an environment in the post-observation conference that helps the student teachers gain the most from the feedback.

#### **Feedback environment.**

The environment in which the feedback was provided played an important role in the effectiveness of the feedback and its impact on teaching. Consideration of the setting in which the feedback was given was identified as an important part of an overall strategy to help instructional feedback to more effectively impact teaching and ultimately student achievement. Compliments given to student teachers helped to create the proper environment. “Compliments were given often at the beginning of the feedback, creating a favorable learning environment for the interns’ right from the start of the conference” (Le & Vasquez, 2011, p. 462). In this way, the sandwich technique helps create a favorable environment for feedback during the post-observation conference.

The environment and setting of the post-observation conference was impacted by the approach the pre-service trainer used to deliver feedback and coaching. An evaluation form that used a checklist of items performed correctly or incorrectly has been found to create a feedback environment that is less effective than one that uses the sandwich

technique, pinpointing, or an immediacy of feedback (Mahar & Strobert, 2010). Mahar and Strobert reported that, “the vast majority of teachers find the feedback from traditional observation checklists less than professionally meaningful. This method rarely helps teachers make a direct link with their professional growth and student learning needs” (p. 152).

In discussing the feedback environment, Mahar and Strobert (2010) stated that, “Evaluation methods that promote collegiality between teachers and their administrators support a culture of learning and professional growth” (p. 157). Mahar and Strobert recommend that “school districts consider discontinuing the use of the word “evaluation,” which suggests a top down, non-collaborative approach” (p. 158). Using approaches that help create an environment in which the student teachers feel that the feedback and coaching was for their benefit ultimately helped them want to make the improvements that impacted the effectiveness of their teaching.

### **Pinpointing.**

Another feedback technique that helped to make feedback more effective was the practice of pinpointing. This technique was defined by Mosley, Mosley, and Pietri (2011) as “providing specific, tangible information about the performance” (p. 337) of the student teacher. Rather than providing feedback in the form of general statements about the lesson that could be interpreted in a variety of different ways, pinpointing identified a specific area in which the student teacher could focus improvement efforts to enhance educational effectiveness. Pinpointing provided the student teacher with a particular area for improvement and served as a starting point and a direction for the desired improvement.

Coninx, Kreijns, and Jochems (2013) reported that feedback delivered to pre-service teachers was most effective when it was immediate, specific, and goal oriented. The pinpointing technique supports these specific characteristics of effective feedback.

Feedback is specific when it provides information about particular responses or behaviors. The feedback should be directed at the task and detailed. Research findings demonstrate that when the pre-service teacher's feedback is focused, specific, clear and obtainable, learning to teach is more effective. Research findings also demonstrate that specific feedback results in positive changes in teacher behavior. Specific feedback is more effective than general feedback, primarily because it focuses on the pre-service teachers' attention, resulting in the feedback being more directed. (p. 165)

#### **Specific feedback.**

Feedback that was specifically directed at the learning objectives of the lesson rather than on the student teacher generally or personally helped to create a more supportive feedback environment and set the stage for a post-observation conference that contributed to the effectiveness of the feedback and coaching. This environment contributed to a more positive attitude on the part of the student teacher and helped them see the post-observation conference as a benefit to them and their teaching, rather than something to be avoided or disliked.

#### **Attitude of one receiving feedback.**

Another important factor that influences the effectiveness of feedback was the attitude of the person receiving the feedback. Feedback-seeking behavior was described

as a desire to solicit and embrace feedback as a way to improve. Stone and Heen (2014) shared the following findings regarding feedback-seeking behavior:

In the workplace, treating feedback not just as something to be endured, but something to be actively sought can have a profound impact. Feedback-seeking behavior—as it’s called in the research literature—has been linked to higher job satisfaction, greater creativity on the job, faster adaptation in a new organization or role, and lower turnover. And seeking out feedback is associated with higher performance ratings. (p. 9)

Stone and Heen (2014) described three approaches to providing feedback, differentiated by the purpose of the provider of the feedback. These feedback approaches were labeled as appreciation, coaching, and evaluation.

### **Appreciation feedback.**

Appreciation feedback was characterized by the provider acknowledging, connecting, motivating, or expressing gratitude to the receiver of the feedback. Appreciation feedback included acknowledging the accomplishments and strengths that are contributed to the lesson. Appreciation filled a basic human desire to feel needed. “Appreciation is fundamentally about relationship and human connection. At a literal level it says “Thanks.” But appreciation also conveys, “I see you,” “I know how hard you’ve been working,” and “You matter to me” (Stone & Heen, 2014, p. 31).

Appreciation motivates us—it gives us a bounce in our step and the energy to redouble our efforts. When people complain that they don’t get enough feedback they often mean that they wonder whether anyone notices or cares how hard



they're working. They don't want advice. They want appreciation. (Stone & Heen, 2014, p. 32)

### **Coaching feedback.**

The purpose of a coaching style of feedback was to help the receiver expand knowledge, sharpen skills, and improve capability. Coaching is addressed further in the next section of this literature review.

### **Evaluation feedback.**

The purpose of evaluation was to rate or rank one's performance against a set of standards, to align expectations, or to inform decision making. Stone and Heen (2014) explained the purpose that lets one know where one stands relative to the standards or expectations. Evaluation is an assessment, ranking, or rating. In some respects, evaluations are always comparisons, implicitly or explicitly, against others or against a particular set of standards. One of the more difficult parts of evaluation are concerns, real or perceived, about the possible consequences.

### **Summative and formative feedback.**

Feedback can be both summative and formative. Hamilton (2009) explained that summative feedback is an evaluation of one's performance. It is ranking or scoring of the performance against another's score or performance. Formative feedback was meant to enhance or develop new skills and improve performance. Appreciation feedback and coaching are more formative in nature, while evaluation is more summative in nature.

Stone and Heen (2014) explained the effectiveness of appreciation, coaching, and evaluation to the feedback process.

Each form of feedback—appreciation, coaching, and evaluation—satisfies a different set of human needs. We need evaluation to know where we stand, to set expectations, to feel reassured or secure. We need coaching to accelerate learning, to focus our time and energy where it really matters, and to keep our relationships healthy and functioning. And we need appreciation if all the sweat and tears we put into our jobs and our relationships are going to feel worthwhile. (p. 35)

### **Immediacy of feedback**

Zenger, Folkman, Sherwin, and Steel (2012) reported that many Human Resource (HR) professionals agree that the most effective learning or teaching method ever devised was the flight simulator. They explained that the superiority of the flight simulator as a teaching device was that as the pilot practices, there was immediate feedback that told the pilot if the actions taken were correct or incorrect. The feedback came instantly from multiple instruments and software outputs. The feedback was direct and unfiltered. Zenger et al. further explained,

The basic purpose of this feedback could be described as “closing the loop,” to let another person who is performing some task or function know of the outcomes from his or her actions. The underlying objective is to be helpful and to give people information that will enable them to improve their performance the next time around. (p. 121)

### **Coaching**

Copland (2012) conducted a study regarding the role supervisors’ played in the development of highly-qualified teachers. “In training programs in which teaching practice is assessed, the supervisor must fulfil a number of roles simultaneously, from

offering support and advice, to formally assessing the quality of the teacher's work" (p. 4). The formative role of the supervisor involved coaching the student teacher with the objective of improving the student teacher's performance.

#### **Formative and summative coaching.**

Stone and Heen (2014) addressed a primary challenge associated with a single individual providing both formative feedback and a summative judgment of performance. Stone and Heen expressed the concern that coaching and evaluation can get tangled. The primary role of the pre-service trainer involved coaching the student teacher through a process of continual and constructive formative feedback that will help the student teacher improve. The role of evaluation in a summative fashion was to rate the student teacher's capabilities according to an established hiring standard. Stone and Heen noted that coaching should focus significant attention on helping the student teacher improve their performance, skill, knowledge, and capability.

#### **Coaching is teaching.**

One of the most successful coaches of all time, John Wooden, defined coaching this way, "My title is coach, but I have viewed my primary job as one of educating others: I am a teacher" (Wooden & Jamison, 2005, p. 92). Wooden felt coaching consisted of explaining, demonstrating, imitating, and correcting when necessary, followed by repetition. Wooden described coaching as teaching others how to best complete their assigned tasks.

I believe effective leaders are, first and foremost, good teachers. We are in the education business. Whether in the class or on the court, my job was the same: to effectively teach those under my supervision how they could perform to the best

of their ability in ways that best served the goals of our team. I believe the same is true for productive leaders in any organization. (Wooden & Jamison, p. 92)

Pre-service trainers fulfilled the role of coaching while teaching student teachers how to improve. The feedback given while coaching was more formative in nature than summative with the intent to improve the knowledge, skill, capability and performance of the student teacher.

### **Coaching for performance.**

Auld, Belfiore, and Scheeler (2010) found that the coaching a student teacher received during training impacted the effectiveness of that teacher once in a teaching career path. “Providing accurate performance feedback to pre-service teachers can establish effective management strategies during the acquisition phase of student teaching and can help student teachers becoming more proficient” (p. 179).

### **Reflection.**

Coaching is a form of feedback provided with the intent to help the student teacher recognize their level of performance and improve upon it. Zenger et al. (2012) defined coaching as a giant mirror that was held up to the individual. In the mirror, student teachers can reflect on practices and behaviors that impacted their professional practice in ways that could be learned in virtually no other way. Zenger et al. reported that “there are many aspects of our behavior that we cannot see without the help of some feedback in the form of a coach” (p. 131). The pre-service trainer provided the mirror that helped student teachers identify many of the strengths and weaknesses of their performance.

Kouzes and Posner (2002) believed that, “someone needs to provide the mirror” (p. 64) that helped one reflect on our performance. “By asking others to reflect back to us our behaviors, we can better examine the assumptions that might be guiding our action” (p. 64). The pre-service trainer in the CES holds that mirror for the student teachers that guided their reflection of their lesson.

### **Discovery learning.**

Reflection requires student teachers to think critically about a lesson that they just taught and the strengths and weaknesses of that experience. Engin (2013) explained that reflection involves posing questions that help the student teacher reflect in a guided way.

The aim of questioning in a teacher training context is to promote reflection and a major assumption is that critical reflection can trigger a deeper understanding of teaching. The assumption is that by reflecting, the trainee questions, examines and makes decisions about teaching and the planning of teaching. (p. 42)

Pre-service trainers helped student teachers in the reflection process by providing guiding questions that helped the student teachers discover for themselves ways in which they should improve. The motivation and ideas for improvement—when discovered by the student teachers rather than pointed out by the pre-service trainers—tends to be much stronger and more effective.

Questions which encouraged trainees to speculate on what they might have done differently prompted trainees to reflect more deeply on their lesson without the trainer ‘telling’ them what they could have done. Such questions prompt higher-order thinking skills, and encourage a deeper cognitive processing of the subject.

Applying knowledge from theory and personalizing it to their own experiences can prompt trainees to internalize the subject. (Engin, 2013, p. 45)

Reflection helps student teachers improve their future performance by examining their past performance. The “Janus Effect,” named after the two-faced Roman god, is also known as the “one-way-mirror hypothesis” (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). This hypothesis stated,

We make sense of our world retrospectively, and all understanding originates in reflection and looking backward.... We construct the future by some kind of extrapolation, in which the past is prologue, and the approach to the future is backward-looking. (p. 119)

### **Post-Observation Conference**

#### **Immediacy.**

Scheeler, Ruhl, and McAfee (2004) concluded from a study about providing performance feedback to teachers that, “The only attribute that clearly demonstrates efficacy as a characteristic of effective feedback is immediacy. Thus, it seems obvious that supervisors should seek ways to provide feedback as close to the occurrence of teaching behavior as possible” (p. 404).

To ensure immediacy, trainers should schedule and conduct a post-observation conference as soon after observing the teacher’s performance as possible. Akcan and Tatar (2010) noted,

For the purpose of improved instruction, the post-lesson conferences, in which the teacher and the supervisor evaluate the student teacher’s performance, establish a process of collaborative reflection. This reflection process forms a significant

component of the practice teaching through helping student teachers build between their theoretical knowledge base and their practical experience at the schools. (p. 154)

### **Frequency of feedback.**

As pre-service trainers engaged in multiple classroom observations, the student teachers were exposed to and came to realize the standard procedure of the post-observation conference. Teacher and trainer may meet prior to the lesson as part of a pre-observation conference to discuss and establish what will be watched for during the observation (Church Educational System, 2012). Through this discussion and a subsequent understanding of the standard procedure for classroom lesson observations, the student teachers came to realize what to expect during the observation process and which instructional practices will be most carefully observed.

The pre-service trainer may return just days after the last observation to follow-up on the items discussed in the prior post-observation conference (Church Educational System, 2012). The immediacy of this follow-up observation supported the belief that feedback was most effective when it was immediate, specific, and goal-oriented.

Immediate feedback has been used with pre-service teachers to effectively change faulty teaching behaviors. Immediate feedback has a number of advantages. One advantage is that when immediate feedback is given, coaches are able to give more feedback in less time and are able to model effective instruction techniques. If coaches used immediate, specific performance feedback with pre-service teachers, this results in more opportunities to practice, faster acquisition of new

behaviors by teachers and more careful and efficient coaching sessions. (Coninx et al., 2013, p. 166)

### **Zone of proximal development.**

The zone of proximal development represents the “gap between the learner’s actual development, and learner’s potential development with assistance by a more able peer” (Vygotsky, 1986). The zone of proximal development helped explain the role of the pre-service trainer during the post-observation conference. Through the use of feedback and coaching techniques such as reflection, formative feedback, and pinpointing questions the pre-service trainer was able to help the student teachers discover areas for needed development. Engin (2013) explained how these techniques were used as part of the post-observation conference.

In a feedback session after teaching practice, the trainer and trainee are engaged in interaction which includes questions, prompts and discussion. The questions the trainer or trainee asks are examples of how talk guides the thinking about teaching. Explicit articulation of teaching decisions encourages the trainee to construct teaching knowledge. (p. 41)

### **Performance feedback.**

The post-observation conference gave the pre-service trainer the chance to provide formative feedback as well as a summative evaluation. This conference provided the student teacher with a better understanding of ways to make improvements in their teaching performance, as well as to know where the teacher stood in relation to the teaching standards required for full-time employment. Coninx et al. (2013) discussed performance evaluation.



Performance feedback is a systematic way of providing guidance to pre-service teachers while they acquire new skills. Performance feedback helps learners determine performance expectations, judge their level of understanding and become aware of misconceptions. It also provides messages about the best approaches for correcting mistakes and improving performance. (p. 165)

### **Strengths vs Weaknesses**

Buckingham and Clifton (2001) advocated that a person's greatest potential for growth was in the area of his or her greatest strength. It has been common for an educational leader to do a classroom observation of a teacher and notice what went wrong with the lesson. However, a different kind and level of skill is required to notice and articulate the parts of the lesson that went well and could be considered a strength of the teacher. Buckingham and Clifton believed that individuals spend too much time focusing on weaknesses and trying to fix those weaknesses, rather than recognizing one's strengths and determining how one might leverage these strengths to other parts of their practice.

Humans seem to be genetically wired to focus on negative feedback more than on positive feedback. Stone and Heen (2014) explained that responses to threats and unpleasantness were faster, stronger, and harder to inhibit than responses to opportunities and pleasures. "Built into our wiring is a kind of security team that scans for threat. When it detects danger—real or perceived—the team responds instantaneously, bypassing our slower, more reflective systems" (p. 152). Stone and Heen reported that the part of our brain controlled by the amygdala causes humans to struggle to focus on and improve our strengths while weaknesses are pointed out. Our brain struggles to see the whole picture in proportion of positive and negative feedback.

### **Focus of strengths.**

Research suggested an increase in effectiveness can result from feedback that focuses on strengths rather than correcting weaknesses. Rath and Conchie (2008) reported:

In the workplace, when an organization's leadership fails to focus on an individual's strengths, the odds of an employee being engaged are a dismal one in 11 (9%). But when an organization's leadership focuses on the strengths of its employees, the odds soar to almost three in four (73%). So that means when leaders focus on and invest in their employee's strengths, the odds of each person being engaged goes up eightfold. (p. 2)

Instructional feedback that focused on teaching strengths helped student teachers improve their performance and build upon those strengths. Zenger et al. (2012) expressed the importance of working with strengths rather than focusing on weaknesses and stressed the importance of regularly giving and receiving positive feedback. Zenger et al. reported that those who requested regular feedback helped to grow their strengths. Zenger et al. stated:

We can think of no activity, which if broadly practiced in an organization, will have more beneficial impact on building strengths than if they learn to readily give and receive feedback, especially to freely ask for feedback from those around them. (p.132)

### **Literature Review Conclusion**

The current literature in this review influenced the methodology of this study in such a way that findings of this study aligned with the current literature in the field of

feedback and coaching. Feedback, coaching, and the post-observation conference were integral parts of the pre-service program of Seminaries and Institutes. This literature review demonstrated how feedback and coaching in S&I aligned with the literature in the general field of educational leadership and business feedback.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **Methodology**

#### **Population and Sample**

##### **Population.**

This study consisted of two primary parts. The first part collected responses from the population of pre-service trainers and student teachers located at the ten universities in Idaho, Utah, Arizona, and California connected to the pre-service centers in Seminary and Institutes. Each center typically has five to 20 student teachers supervised by one pre-service trainer. In the cases of larger pre-service centers, the pre-service trainer is aided by an assistant pre-service trainer.

##### **Sample.**

After responses were collected from a questionnaire made available to the entire population of pre-service trainers and student teachers, a sample of five pre-service trainers and ten student teachers was selected for follow-up interviews. The five pre-service trainers were purposefully selected to best represent the whole of the population. Two student teachers from each of the five purposefully selected (See Table 1) pre-service trainers were randomly selected, by drawing from a hat of the list of student teachers in that pre-service program, to generate the ten student teachers that were interviewed for the second part of the study.

#### **Instrumentation**

##### **Questionnaire survey.**

The questionnaire for student teachers (Appendix A) was sent to the entire population of student teachers teaching in the pre-service program of Seminaries and

Institutes in the fall of 2015. The questionnaire for the pre-service trainers (Appendix B) working for the pre-service program of Seminaries and Institutes was distributed during this same time frame. The initial contact included a cover letter (Appendix C) describing the nature and purpose of the study. The letter informed each of the student teachers and pre-service trainers that the researcher ensured anonymity by using the survey site of Seminaries and Institutes. The S&I survey site ensured that no respondent's names were revealed to any other participant in the study. The initial contact letter (Appendix C) included a message from the S&I Central Pre-service Program office ensuring anonymity and encouraging their participation in the study. No permanent record was maintained of potential participants who elected not to participate in the study.

An open-ended questionnaire was used to solicit the perceptions of both student teachers (Appendix A) and pre-service trainers (Appendix B) regarding the effectiveness of coaching and feedback techniques used in post-observation conferences and to determine the perceived level of improvement that results from the post-observation conference feedback. Each questionnaire was distributed to the respective groups electronically using a survey website. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) and Creswell (2007) explain that qualitative data collection acts as a funnel, collecting widely at first and narrowing in focus as the study progresses. The responses to the questionnaire items were then used to create a semi-structured open-ended protocol for subsequent individual interviews.

### **Survey pilot study.**

A pilot study to establish reliability of the questionnaire was conducted by electronically distributing the questionnaire to ten student teachers enrolled in a pre-

service program at a nearby university. These ten pilot study subjects were selected by faculty coordinating the pre-service program at their respective university. The pilot study was administered following the same protocols as designed for the proposed study. An email invitation (Appendix D) with a link to an electronic survey was distributed to the pilot study subjects. The invitation to participate included a cover letter (Appendix E) explaining the purpose of the pilot study and the role the questionnaire plays in the study. A cover letter also ensured participants that their responses would remain anonymous. Responses from the pilot study questionnaire were used to create greater clarity of the study questions provided to respondents.

### **Interview.**

The second part of the study involved a purposeful sample of pre-service trainers that were interviewed. Two student teachers from each of the five pre-service trainers were randomly selected from a list of the student teachers in that area to be interviewed. These interviews added to the data collected from the questionnaire and provided a more complete representation of the views of the student teachers and pre-service trainers regarding feedback and coaching.

### **Interview pilot study.**

A pilot interview was conducted after the interview protocol had been developed in order to allow the researcher an opportunity to practice the semi-structured, open-ended interview. An additional benefit of the pilot interview was to determine if the questions adequately addressed the topics that emerged from the questionnaire responses. A pre-service trainer participant and a student teacher participant were interviewed by the researcher using the protocol developed for the semi-structured open-ended interview.

These pilot interviews helped the researcher determine whether changes to the interview questions were needed, as well as provided an opportunity for the researcher to practice conducting the interviews. Minor changes were made to the interview prompts in order to shorten the length of time of the interview. The order of questions was also changed in order to address the most pertinent interview prompts first.

### **Response anonymity.**

The results and findings of this study shared quotes directly from the interviews and questionnaire responses. However, none of the student teachers or pre-service trainers are directly associated or identified with any of these comments. This process helped to minimize the risk or fear of retribution resulting from their responses, provided the respondents with greater level of assurance, and enhanced the likelihood that respondents gave honest and accurate responses.

### **Procedures**

This study used a structured data collection process to determine the perceptions of student teacher and pre-service trainers in S&I relative to effective feedback and coaching techniques. Thomas (2006) explained that the primary purpose of this approach is, “to allow research findings to emerge from the frequent, dominant, or significant themes inherent in raw data, without the restraints imposed by structured methodologies” (p. 238).

### **Questionnaire distributed.**

To collect the data from those who have experienced the phenomenon, an open-ended questionnaire was distributed to the population of pre-service trainers and student teachers at ten western universities associated with S&I. The questionnaire was sent to

prospective respondents after the mid-way point of the school year, January of 2015. This gave the pre-service trainers adequate time to have observed and provided feedback multiple times during a post-observation conference. By that point in time, the student teachers had been able to develop some accurate perceptions regarding the feedback techniques and styles that helped them improve their instructional practice. Sending the survey to the population in January 2015 gave the researcher adequate time to analyze the data in order to create the interview transcripts in time to conduct the interviews in April 2015, before student teachers were scheduled to be selected for full-time teaching positions.

#### **Questionnaire responses analyzed to create interview questions.**

The data from the questionnaire responses were analyzed in order to gain a broader understanding of the perceptions of pre-service trainers and student teachers regarding the impact of feedback and coaching techniques they have used or experienced. These data were analyzed to identify patterns and themes to be addressed during individual semi-structured open-ended interviews conducted with a representative sample of pre-service trainers (Appendix F) and student teachers (Appendix G). These interviews functioned as a cross-check to ensure trustworthiness as both the student teachers and the trainers were given the opportunity to discuss and respond to the findings from the data analysis of the responses to the questionnaire.

#### **Selection of sample for interviews.**

Case sampling was used in this study. This purposeful technique, “intentionally samples a group of people that can best inform the researcher about the research problem” (Creswell, 2007, p. 118).



Five pre-service trainers were interviewed during the semi-structured interview segment of this study. Two student teachers associated with each of the interviewed pre-service trainers also participated in a semi-structured interview. The purpose of these interviews was to increase the depth of understanding of the respondent's perceptions of the effectiveness of coaching and feedback techniques.

To represent a cross section the population of the pre-service program, the researcher selected five trainers from the pre-service centers associated with Arizona State University, Brigham Young University, Idaho State University, Sothern Utah University, and Utah State University for the semi-structured, open-ended interviews. These trainers represented different sizes of pre-service centers in different geographic and population areas of the region. Large, medium, and small pre-service centers provided the best overall representation of the entire population. Another criteria used in the selection of respondents from these pre-service centers was their proximity to the pre-service central office. Pre-service centers close to and some distance from the central office of the S&I were identified and selected.

Table 1

*Pre-Service Centers Selection for Interview Demographic*

<b>University</b>	<b>Distance from Salt Lake City</b>	<b># of Student Teachers</b>	<b># of Pre-Service Trainers</b>
ASU	506 Miles	15	1
BYU	38 Miles	19	2
ISU	148 Miles	5	1.5
SUU	268 Miles	9	1
USU	68 Miles	12	1

Two student teachers from each of the identified pre-service centers were also selected for interviews. The two student teachers were randomly selected (drawn at random from a hat) from the list of student teachers associated with the pre-service trainers that were identified and selected from the associated university.

### **Interview process.**

The semi-structured open-ended interviews were digitally recorded by the researcher. The researcher served as the primary research instrument during this phase of the study. Each participant was informed that the interview was being recorded. A digital recorder was placed between the researcher and the participant and the researcher clearly notified each of the participants of the official start and end of the interview. The digital recording was saved to a computer as soon as was reasonable to back-up the data until an accurate transcript of each interview was produced. The researcher subsequently transcribed each of the 15 individual interviews.

An analysis of the interview transcripts was conducted by the researcher in order to identify common themes. As part of the qualitative analysis, the interview transcripts were read multiple times by the researcher. Typing and rereading the transcripts helped the researcher gain a better understanding of the data. Thomas (2006) explained the purpose of the researcher doing multiple readings of the raw data.

Inductive coding begins with close readings of text and consideration of the multiple meanings that are inherent in the text. The evaluator then identifies text segments that contain meaningful units and creates a label for a new category to which the text segment is assigned. Additional text segments are added to the categories to which they are relevant. (p. 241)

## Analysis of Data

To generate a better understanding of the process of giving and receiving feedback and coaching during a post-observation conference in the S&I setting, a systematic review and analysis of the data generated from the questionnaire responses led to the coding and categorizing of emergent patterns and themes. The funneling of patterns of data from the coding and categorizing process helped define the focus of inquiry for the semi-structured interviews. For a final analysis of the data, both questionnaire responses and interview transcripts were categorized into meaningful clusters.

The coding of patterns into clusters of meaning led to the construction of significant statements that are “sentences or quotes that provide an understanding of how the participants experienced the phenomenon” (Creswell, 2007, p. 61). These significant statements were used to determine the results of the study and to identify those techniques that can be used during the post-observation conference to best enhance the instructional effectiveness of student teachers in Seminaries and Institutes.

The general qualitative approach was selected as the qualitative method for this study as the best way to evaluate and analyze the data collected regarding instructional feedback and coaching. Five analytic strategies presented by Thomas (2006) helped define the method used for this study:

1. The analysis was carried out through multiple readings and interpretations of the raw data, the inductive component. Although the findings were influenced by the evaluation objectives or questions outlined by the researcher, the findings arose directly from the analysis of the raw data, not from *a priori* of expectations or models.

2. The primary mode of analysis was the development of categories from the raw data into a model or framework. This model contained key themes and processes identified and constructed by the evaluator during the coding process.
3. The findings resulted from multiple interpretations made from the raw data by the evaluator who coded the data. Inevitably, the findings were shaped by the assumptions and experiences of the evaluator conducting the study and carrying out the data analysis.
4. Different evaluators may produce findings that are not identical and that have overlapping components.
5. The trustworthiness of findings derived from inductive analysis can be assessed using similar techniques to those that were used with other types of qualitative analysis. (p. 239-240)

### **Trustworthiness**

Credibility of this study was accounted for by using checks for inter-rater reliability. Stakeholder or member checks involved the student teachers and the pre-service trainers who were part of the study reviewing their transcribed comments to confirm that the coding and analysis of the data was accurate. The interviews conducted with selected student teachers and pre-service trainers acted as a credibility check to ensure that the data collected from the questionnaire represented the views of the participants of the study. These credibility checks fulfilled the following roles:

Stakeholder checks enhance the credibility of findings by allowing participants and other people who may have specific interests in the evaluation to comment on

or assess the research findings, interpretations, and conclusions. Such checks may be important in establishing the credibility of the findings. For example, participants in the settings studied are given a chance to comment on whether the categories and outcomes described in the findings relate to their personal experiences. Stakeholder checks may be carried out on the initial documents (e.g., interview transcriptions and summaries) and on the data interpretations and findings. Checks by stakeholders may be conducted progressively during a research project both formally and informally. (Thomas, 2006, p. 244)

### **Interviews function as stakeholder checks.**

The semi-structured interviews functioned as stakeholder checks in that the questionnaire responses were anonymous and represented the thoughts, feelings, and ideas of the population. The interview questions were designed in such a way as to fill the role of a stakeholder check. The researcher gave the pre-service trainers and the student teachers selected for the interview a chance to verify the results of the questionnaires. Interview questions were open-ended to provide respondents with the opportunity to elaborate on the findings generated from the analysis of the questionnaire, resulting in a deeper understanding of feedback and coaching techniques used in S&I.

Creswell (2007) advised that another method that increases the validity of a study was member checking. Member checking is the manner in which “The researcher solicits participants’ view of the credibility of the findings and interpretations” (p. 208). This approach involves sharing data, analyses, interpretations, and conclusions with the participants so that they can judge the accuracy and credibility of the researcher’s original account. After an analysis of the data, the findings of themes and patterns were member

checked by sharing those themes and patterns with the participants to ensure that they were accurately portrayed. Creswell suggested “not taking back to participants the transcripts or the raw data, but taking them the preliminary analyses consisting of description or themes” (p. 209).

### **Pilot Study**

A pilot study of the questionnaire contributed to the trustworthiness, as well as the reliability and validity of the instrument and the study. The pilot study included ten student teachers enrolled in a pre-service public education program. Necessary adjustments to the questionnaire were made. Adjustments were minor, such as a change in the response options from two all-or-nothing options to a range on a continuum. A pilot interview was performed prior to the 15 interviews conducted for this study adding to the reliability and validity to the interview portion of the study.

### **Reporting the Findings**

An analysis of the data collected in this study led to the creation of major categories. These categories were the result of the coding of raw data of the questionnaire responses and the interview transcripts. The results of this study are presented using these coding categories as headings and subheadings. The results include a label for each category, as well as a description of the meaning of the category and a quotation from the raw text that elaborates on the meaning of the category to provide greater voice to the participants of the study. The final summation of this study included the following elements:

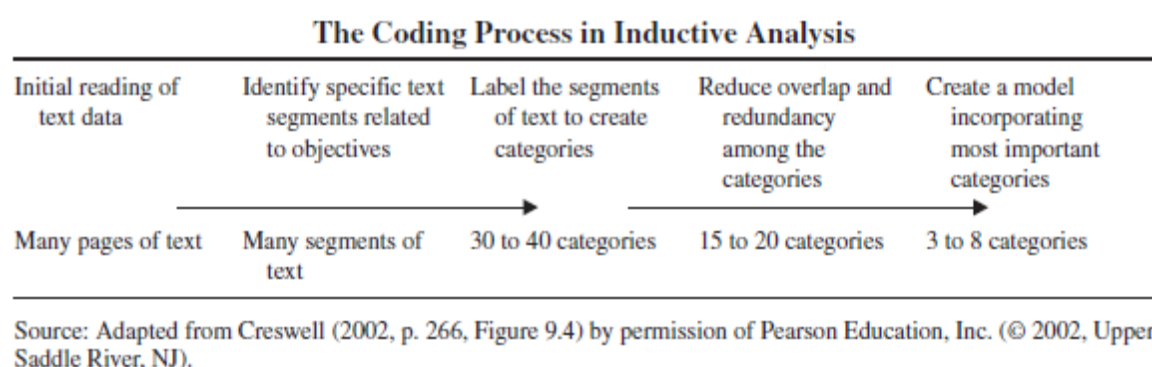
- A label for the category,
- The researcher’s description of the meaning of the category, and

- A direct quote from the raw text provided by respondents to elaborate on the meaning of the category and to show the type of text coded into the category.

This study developed eight categories by using the process described in Figure 2.

Figure 2

*The Coding Process in Inductive Analysis*



The categories include sub-headings or sub-categories. Each category was defined using the literature review of current research on feedback and coaching combined with the findings from the data analysis of this study. Analysis of the data generated from this study provided areas for additional depth to the literature review as other categories were revealed. Each category includes sample quotes taken directly from the questionnaire results and the interview transcripts to help illustrate the meaning of the category and support the findings of the study. This process gave voice to the participants of the study and contributed to the qualitative strength of the perceptions of S&I pre-service trainers and student teachers regarding the effectiveness of the feedback and coaching shared as part of the post-observation conference.

## CHAPTER IV

### Results and Findings

The data collected from the survey responses and follow-up interviews led to an analysis and coding of the raw data creating general themes. Multiple themes arose from the data which were further analyzed via a funneling process to narrow the coded themes to eight major themes. See Table 2 for a list of the identified themes, the sub-themes, and the code words. A more extensive list of survey and interview responses can be found in Appendix H.

Table 2

#### *Identified Themes from Coding*

Themes	Sub-themes	Codes
1. Specific and direct feedback	- Specific feedback - Direct feedback - # of feedback items	Specific instruction, Direct feedback, Pinpointing, Areas to improve, Tell me straight, Honest, Simplify feedback, Just a few improvements, Overwhelm
2. Descriptive and principle-based	- Descriptive feedback - Principle-based feedback	Descriptive, Model, Practice, Examples, Role play, Show me, Teach the student teacher, Principle-based, Handbook, Manuel
3. Discovery learning		Discover, Learn for themselves, realize, Understand, Question
4. Zone of proximal development		Zone of proximal development, learning zone, Sweet spot, push too far
5. Balance	- Formative vs Summative - Strengths vs Weaknesses	Positive feedback, Negative feedback, Strengths, Weaknesses, Formative, Summative, Evaluation, Test, Judge, Evaluate, Rank
6. Needs of Teacher	- Language	Communication, Needs, Transparency, Reading the needs, custom, tailored, Language
7. Invested in student teacher		Invested in student teacher, Encouraging, Love, Positive feedback, One on one, Individual instruction, Take the time, Sat down with
8. Advice to Pre-Service Trainers		



## **Specific and Direct Feedback**

Pinpointing specific areas of the lesson to give feedback helped the student teacher know exactly which areas needed work. Being direct with the feedback allowed student teachers to feel that the feedback was genuine and not sugar coated. Narrowing the feedback to two or three specific items allowed the student teachers to avoid feeling overwhelmed by a long list of items to work on. Three sub-categories of this theme emerged and will be addressed; specific feedback, direct feedback, and a narrow list of specific feedback items.

### **Specific feedback.**

Feedback that was specific is both specific in the teaching techniques and methods addressed, as well as the specific ways to correct or improve those techniques and methods. Generic statements about teaching did not help student teachers who were anxious to improve and wanted specific areas in which to improve. Giving student teachers exact feedback regarding specific items boosted their confidence to be able to act on the feedback they received. However, feedback that was more general caused student teachers to question their ability to make appropriate adjustments based on that general feedback.

Table 3

*Examples of Responses to Specific Feedback*

Participant	Source	Examples
PST 10	Survey	Don't just provide what is wrong [with the lesson], without providing solutions for improvement.
PST 5	Interview	I think they all want to improve; they know there are gaps and they need to get better and that they want to get better. I think sometimes they just don't know how, they just don't know where the gaps are. They are saying, "I want to know specifically what I need to do to get better" instead of vague ideas, "show me what it is so I can just do it."
PST 1	Interview	We hope it is a desire to change, and change seems to occur better the more specific it [feedback] is. There are general principles that apply to everyone, and then there are specific changes that are specific to the individual.
ST 7	Interview	I think having specific feedback allows you to pinpoint exact things that you need to improve on, and in my experience when I was observed, the most beneficial feedback I received was when specific areas were addressed; specific things I can improve on.
ST 5	Interview	The more specific [the feedback], the easier it is to improve. I feel like I do get specific and direct feedback. If there is a specific feedback suggestion, then I know exactly what I need to do to improve.
ST 1	Interview	So, I think the specific feedback really helps us go, and the next time we prepare a lesson we can think, that is what I didn't do very well the last time, so this is what I can improve on this time. So, the more specific the feedback is, the easier it is to actually implement in the classroom.
ST 54	Survey	It has helped most when we go back over a specific moment in the lesson that was just observed to think of a few alternative ways that I could have re-worded a question or followed up with another question to accomplish greater understanding.

*Note.* PST = Pre-Service Trainer; ST = Student Teacher

Research from other studies supported the findings from the survey responses and interview questions. A study by Le and Vasquez (2011) confirmed the importance of feedback given to student teachers.

A number of strategies are considered to be effective in giving constructive feedback in teacher education contexts, such as the use of questions, the delivery of compliments before criticisms or specific suggestions, the productions of mild advice and suggestions and the assistance for the (student teachers) to pinpoint their own problems, in addition to the provision of a comfortable atmosphere for the feedback conferences and a balance of both positive and negative comments in feedback delivery. (p. 467)

Another feedback technique that made feedback more effective was the practice of pinpointing. This technique was defined by Mosley, Mosley, and Pietri (2011) as “providing specific, tangible information about the performance” (p. 337) of the student teacher. Rather than providing feedback in the form of general statements about the lesson that could be interpreted in a variety of different ways, pinpointing identified a specific area in which the student teacher could focus improvement efforts to enhance educational effectiveness. Pinpointing provided the student teacher with a particular area for improvement and served as a starting point and provided a direction for the desired improvement.

Coninx, Kreijns, and Jochems (2013) reported that feedback delivered to pre-service teachers was most effective when it was immediate, specific, and goal-oriented. The pinpointing technique supported these specific characteristics of effective feedback.

Feedback is specific when it provides information about particular responses or behaviors. The feedback should be directed at the task and detailed. Research findings demonstrate that when the pre-service teacher’s feedback is focused, specific, clear and obtainable, learning to teach is more effective. Research findings also demonstrate that specific feedback results in positive changes in teacher behavior. Specific feedback is more effective than general feedback, primarily because it focuses on the pre-service teachers’ attention, resulting in the feedback being more directed. (p. 165)

### **Direct feedback.**

Being upfront and honest was desired in feedback more than soft, sugar-coated, easy-to-hear feedback. Student teachers expressed a desire to receive feedback that was

direct even if it was blunt or difficult to hear. Although more difficult to give, feedback that was direct was more useful and more desired by student teachers than simply pointing out the positives and ignoring the areas in need of improvement.

Table 4

*Examples of Responses to Direct Feedback*

Participant	Source	Examples
PST 2	Interview	The youth want it straight and undiluted, I think student teachers are serious about what they do, and they want to improve. You could say, you're doing fine just keep working, but that doesn't do them specifically a lot of good. What can I work on? What am I missing? Where am I falling short? I think they do want it direct so they can make improvements.
PST 5	Interview	Some [student] teachers are much more open to it and it is much easier to be direct and blunt. Some are a little more sensitive and maybe lack confidence, so it is a little more difficult with some. That can be challenging to know how to say it right, so it is productive instead of destructive to a teacher.
PST 1	Interview	It is the individual; it's like working with your own children. Sometimes my approach with one is not necessarily the same approach with the other. We should be simple, direct to the level that we need to be, that understanding is at a high level, that after the feedback session they are lifted and motivated to implement some of those ideas.
PST 2	Interview	I think as a pre-service trainer, you have a relationship with each student teacher, and you know how far you can push each student teacher. I have one that says he wants feedback, but he can never handle it. So I am very delicate it's a balance each time you go out. So I have to be careful.
ST 9	Interview	I think if you sugar-coat things that doesn't really help anybody. For me, I want to know exactly what I am doing wrong and maybe even what I am doing right. Then, I can know what I need to adjust and what I am doing well so that I can continue doing. Having that direct feedback is really helpful.
ST 61	Survey	I respond really well to direct feedback. The more direct, the better. I need to be able to see directly what it is I need to work on, so I can create goals to improve.
ST 23	Survey	Don't be afraid to give us the truth-straight and clear. Beating around the bush can sometimes lead to a misunderstanding of what it is we need to work on. For me at least, I like hearing what I need to work on put pretty directly.
ST 7	Interview	I would say just give straight-forward feedback. That's how I would appreciate it. So if I did something wrong, tell me. If I do something well, I would like to know as well.

*Note.* PST = Pre-Service Trainer; ST = Student Teacher

Research from other studies supported the findings from the survey responses and interview questions. Zenger, Folkman, Sherwin, and Steel (2012) reported that many Human Resource (HR) professionals agreed that the most effective learning or teaching method ever devised was the flight simulator. They explained that the superiority of the flight simulator as a teaching device was that as the pilot practiced the flight simulator provided immediate feedback that told the pilot if the actions taken were correct or

incorrect. The feedback came instantly from multiple instruments and software outputs.

The feedback was direct and unfiltered. Zenger et al. further explained,

The basic purpose of this feedback could be described as “closing the loop,” to let another person who is performing some task or function know of the outcomes from his or her actions. The underlying objective is to be helpful and to give people information that will enable them to improve their performance the next time around. (p. 121)

### **Narrow List of Specific Feedback Items**

Too many feedback items confused and overwhelmed the student teachers.

Narrowing feedback items to one to three areas of specific feedback that the student teachers could focus on helped them understand the feedback, as well as develop confidence in their ability to improve their teaching.

Table 5

#### *Examples of Responses to Narrowing the List of Feedback Items*

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>Examples</b>
PST 7	Survey	Feedback needs be based out of the GTL and be very specific. Identifying one or two things specifically is very important and letting the teacher work on them is very important. Giving too much or too many things is not very helpful and will most likely overwhelm the teacher.
PST 3	Interview	I think it is hard to wrap their mind around seven or eight things that they need to do. It's hard to plan a lesson with that much in mind for a class. I think having one or two things gives them a focus.
PST 6	Survey	I think a consistent visits and feedback helps to re-enforce the good they are doing and to give them one or two things to work on. Too much feedback will overwhelm them and not give them enough time to practice and implement feedback previously given.
PST 4	Interview	You don't want them confused, “I need you to work on these one or two things.” If you do too many things they can't do all that. If you are going to train on something, no matter what it is, I think there is a lot of truth in fixing the one little thing at a time.
ST 4	Interview	I feel that if I get a big list of things that becomes overwhelming and that turns me off pretty quick. I start feeling bad about myself, thinking maybe I can't do this; maybe I am not good enough. And, when it is very specific, those are things that I can do, I can focus on one or two things and change.
ST 6	Interview	I find it helpful when I get specific feedback on just one or two things to work on. I have gotten feedback and it felt like it was just so much that I had no idea where to start.
ST 64	Survey	Sometimes too much feedback can be detrimental. Trying to fix everything at once causes overload and poorer performance. Focusing on one or two things would be more helpful.

*Note.* PST = Pre-Service Trainer; ST = Student Teacher

Research from other studies supported the findings from the survey responses and interview questions generated from this study. The pre-service trainer may return just days after the last observation to follow up on the items discussed in the last post-observation conference (Church Educational System, 2012). The immediacy of this follow-up observation supported the belief that feedback was most effective when it was immediate, specific, and goal-oriented.

Immediate feedback has been used with pre-service teachers to effectively change faulty teaching behaviors. Immediate feedback has a number of advantages. One advantage is that when immediate feedback is given, coaches are able to give more feedback in less time and are able to model effective instruction techniques. If coaches used immediate, specific performance feedback with pre-service teachers, this results in more opportunities to practice, faster acquisition of new behaviors by teachers and more careful and efficient coaching sessions. (Coninx et al., 2013, p. 166)

### **Descriptive and Principle-Based**

The better a pre-service trainer was able to articulate and teach part of a lesson and demonstrate or model a correct teaching method, the more useful the student teachers found the feedback. There was more trust in the feedback when it was principle-based, reinforced a feeling that the student teachers should learn to teach this way rather than relate the personal preference of the pre-service trainer.

#### **Descriptive feedback.**

Descriptive feedback is different from specific feedback in that descriptive feedback described and explained the teaching method or skill that needed to be

addressed and a strategy to address it. Specific feedback meant that the pre-service trainer provided narrow feedback directed towards a particular teaching skill, while descriptive feedback explained and articulated that skill and the best way to improve upon the skill. While knowing that a lesson did not go well required a certain level of awareness, describing why the lesson did not go well and what would help it to go better was a skill that was very useful for the pre-service trainer.

Table 6

*Examples of Responses to Descriptive Feedback*

Participant	Source	Examples
PST 5	Interview	It needs to be clear and it needs to be actionable. It needs to be something they can do instead of resorting to vague platitudes. To pay the price and study so that you can walk into the classroom and see what it is that they need to work on and be able to articulate that clearly and in a way that is actionable, so that they can leave thinking, "Okay this is what I need to do," so they can do it instead of leaving with a foggy idea of what I need to do.
ST 16	Survey	He not only explains what I could work on, but he explains how it would be done correctly, or better. It really gets in my mind the right way to do things. It's really helpful to have it shown, or at least explained.
ST 8	Interview	So he will ask you the question, "What do you think about this?" Or "How would you approach this?" And in answering that question you realized that you create your own feedback for how you could have fixed or improved that lesson.
ST 51	Survey	Knowing what not to do doesn't help unless you know what "to" do in order to replace it.

*Note.* PST = Pre-Service Trainer; ST = Student Teacher

Research from other studies supported the findings from the survey responses and interview questions. Feedback that was specifically directed at the learning objectives of the lesson, rather than on the student teacher, generally or personally helped to create a more supportive feedback environment and set the stage for a post-observation conference that contributed to the effectiveness of the feedback and coaching. This environment contributed to a more positive attitude on the part of the student teachers and helped them see the post-observation conference as a benefit to them and their teaching, rather than something to be avoided or disliked.

Coaching is a form of feedback provided to help the student teacher recognize their level of performance and improve upon it. Zenger et al. (2012) defined coaching as a giant mirror that is held up to the individual. In the mirror, student teachers can reflect on practices and behaviors that impacted their professional practice in ways that could be learned in virtually no other way. Zenger et al. reported that “there are many aspects of our behavior that we cannot see without the help of some feedback in the form of a coach” (p. 131). The pre-service trainer provided the mirror that helped the student teacher identify the strengths and weaknesses of their performance.

Kouzes and Posner (2002) believed that, “someone needs to provide the mirror” (p. 64) that helped one reflect on their performance. “By asking others to reflect back to us our behaviors, we can better examine the assumptions that might be guiding our action” (p. 64). The pre-service trainer in the CES held the mirror for the student teachers to guide the reflection of their lesson.

### **Questions as part of descriptive feedback.**

Reflection required student teachers to think critically about a lesson that they just taught and the strengths and weaknesses of that experience. Engin (2013) explained that reflection involved posing questions that helped the student teacher reflect in a guided way.

The aim of questioning in a teacher training context is to promote reflection and a major assumption is that critical reflection can trigger a deeper understanding of teaching. The assumption is that by reflecting, the trainee questions, examines and makes decisions about teaching and the planning of teaching. (p. 42)



Pre-service trainers helped student teachers in the reflection process by providing guiding questions that helped the student teachers discover for themselves ways in which they could improve. The motivation and ideas for improvement—when discovered by the student teachers, rather than pointed out by the pre-service trainers—tended to be much stronger and more effective.

Questions which encouraged trainees to speculate on what they might have done differently prompted trainees to reflect more deeply on their lesson without the trainer ‘telling’ them what they could have done. Such questions prompt higher-order thinking skills, and encourage a deeper cognitive processing of the subject. Applying knowledge from theory and personalizing it to their own experiences can prompt trainees to internalize the subject. (Engin, 2013, p. 45)

Reflection helped student teachers improve their future performance by examining their past performance. The “Janus Effect” named after the two-faced Roman god is also known as the “one-way-mirror hypothesis” (Kouzes & Posner, 2002, p. 119). This hypothesis stated,

We make sense of our world retrospectively, and all understanding originates in reflection and looking backward. We construct the future by some kind of extrapolation, in which the past is prologue, and the approach to the future is backward-looking. (p. 119)

### **Principle-based feedback.**

Feedback that was principle-based was uniform for all teachers and was based upon an established standard rather than personal preference. Principle-based feedback gave student teachers the confidence to use the feedback they received to make the

improvements necessary to reach established standards. Principle-based feedback also gave the student teacher some direction to research those standards on their own and discover on their own the best way to meet the standards. In the Seminaries and Institutes program of the CES, those standards are established and explained in the *Gospel Teaching and Learning Handbook* (Church Educational System, 2012).

Table 7

*Examples of Responses to Principle-based Feedback*

Participant	Source	Examples
PST 11	Survey	Using the <i>GT&amp;L Handbook</i> as a standard for feedback is an absolute. The principles and skills outlined in the <i>Handbook</i> do not change from seminary to seminary or from area to area, or from pre-service trainer to another trainer.
PST 9	Survey	Give <i>Handbook</i> -based feedback and have them mark the <i>Handbook</i> , model, let them practice, give feedback, have them make a goal to use what they have learned in their teaching.
PST 12	Survey	Connect feedback with <i>GT&amp;L [Handbook]</i> standards—specifically identifying the standard and page number, when possible. [We] have teachers record themselves teaching and evaluate themselves to see if they can recognize strengths and weaknesses, when they aren't in the heat of the moment.
PST 8	Survey	KNOW the <i>GT&amp;L Handbook</i> ! [We] teach and train from it, making it the standard for all [we] do as a trainer. The shelf-life of the <i>Handbook</i> will long outlast the shelf-life and impact of a trainer!
ST 3	Interview	I think one thing that would help is to really study the <i>Handbook</i> to really know what the Church expects from seminary teachers, and then when [trainers] talk to [us], rather than [tell] what we did wrong, necessarily, [we] can compare with the <i>Handbook</i> . And [we can] look at those teaching fundamentals, and [we] can ask, "Are we reaching these?" This can be a standard for the student teachers.
ST 10	Interview	Before [the trainer] ever tells me anything, he always asks how I felt the lesson went, and how the lesson for the day fit into the fundamentals of gospel teaching. We have gone through the checklist of what was accomplished that day with regards to the fundamentals in the <i>Handbook</i> .
ST 33	Survey	Every comment is always tied back to the <i>Handbook</i> . It's helpful to see that it's not just pre-service [trainer] coming up with their own opinions, but rather things [that are] directed from the <i>Handbook</i> itself. It helps me have more confidence in the <i>Handbook</i> and want to apply it more into my teaching.
ST 35	Survey	I think my pre-service trainer has the Gospel Teaching and Learning Handbook memorized, paragraph by paragraph. This is something that both my wife and I have noticed that almost 100% of the feedback he gives, he references it with a page or paragraph from the <i>GT&amp;L Handbook</i> .

*Note.* PST = Pre-Service Trainer; ST = Student Teacher

## Discovery Learning

A student teacher that figured out for themselves the strategy they needed to employ to improve meant so much more than if the pre-service trainer told them exactly what to do. Feedback became more effective when a pre-service trainer guided the

student teacher in such a way that the student teacher discovered for themselves the appropriate approach to conduct the lesson. A natural investment was created for the student teacher when a student teacher felt that they had figured out on their own the appropriate approach to conduct the lesson. Just as good teaching leads to student discovery, good feedback led to teacher discovery. This happened through a combination of good questioning, effective modeling, and thoughtful discussion of the lesson just observed in such a way that the feedback guided the student teacher toward corrective actions or confirmation that appropriate practices had been used.

Table 8

*Examples of Responses to Discovery Learning*

Participant	Source	Examples
PST 5	Interview	The same principles of teaching a lesson apply to giving good feedback. In fact, my student teachers are my students, and the feedback process is how I get to teach them. Asking good questions is at the heart of it, just like asking good questions is at the [heart of] discovery learning of a teaching lesson. Asking good questions is at the heart of them discovering at the feedback session. Instead of [me] telling [them, I ask] good questions.
PST 13	Survey	Discovery [happens] for the student teacher through good questions. This allows them to discover and own it themselves, but also allows the pre-service trainer to see if the student teacher understands where he or she is doing well, and where he or she needs to improve.
PST 10	Survey	I choose to ask them discovery questions about their lessons. [I, use] follow-up questions allowing me to explore more [about] what they saw. As they discover it for themselves, rather than me pointing it out, they comprehend better, own the feedback, and are more willing to try to implement it.
PST 9	Survey	Reserving time for the teacher to figure out for themselves what they could improve [is vital]. Discussions from the <i>Handbook</i> are most fruitful. Never give what to change without giving the how to change it.
ST 10	Interview	It's that discovery learning part [where] I feel like whenever I have been given feedback, it's because I have said it. He has guided me by asking the right questions and helping me realize what changes I need to make. I have discovered because he has coached me into realizing [it], not just [by] him telling me. So [my] discovering what I need to do better is far more effective than him telling me [that] I should work on this, or this is what I should do. Ultimately, it is usually what I have discovered on my own that makes me improve my teaching.
ST 1	Interview	I think if we can really discover on our own what they would like us to do in the classroom. I think it sticks in our minds and in our hearts a lot more. I can remember [thinking], "Okay, now I really understand what the Handbook is teaching and what [they] would like us to do, because I went through this rigorous process of trying to figure it out."
ST 48	Survey	[By] helping me to discover for myself areas of strength and areas needing improvement; by [him] simply sharing an "outside" perspective of what my teaching looked like, I am usually able to work through [the] GT&L [principles] and [his] observations to make specific goals and plans.

*Note.* PST = Pre-Service Trainer; ST = Student Teacher

Research from other studies confirmed the findings from the survey responses and interview questions used in this study. Le and Vasquez (2011) confirmed the importance of feedback given to student teachers.

A number of strategies are considered to be effective in giving constructive feedback in teacher education contexts, such as the use of questions, the delivery of compliments before criticisms or specific suggestions, the productions of mild advice and suggestions and the assistance for the (student teachers) to pinpoint their own problems, in addition to the provision of a comfortable atmosphere for the feedback conferences and a balance of both positive and negative comments in feedback delivery. (p. 467)

A feedback strategy that has been identified to be particularly helpful at enhancing instructional effectiveness includes the strategy of effective questioning. Le and Vasquez (2011) explain that mentors used effective questioning as a way to “encourage the interns’ participation in the feedback interaction and to promote the interns’ thinking skills” (p. 457).

### **Effective questioning led to discovery learning.**

Effective questioning was identified as one of the best ways to involve student teachers in the post-observation conference. Effective questioning activated the thinking process and caused student teachers to reflect critically on their teaching practice in order to identify the strengths and areas for improvement in their lesson.

Pre-service trainers were taught techniques that encouraged individual reflection of the depth and nature of their questioning practices. Effective questioning helped student teachers discover for themselves those classroom practices that were more

effective and fit the learning needs of their students best. Self-discovery within this construct was considerably more valuable than specific insights shared by the pre-service trainers.

Pre-service trainers should ask questions that stimulate thinking and feeling and avoid questions that can be answered with a simple “yes” or “no,” or where the answer is so obvious that the student teachers are not motivated to think. During the post-observation conference pre-service trainers used *analysis-type* questions to help student teachers better understand the content of the lesson, identify teaching and learning principles, and develop a deeper understanding the application of those teaching and learning principles.

Le and Vasquez (2011) found that student teacher mentors felt that effective questions asked as part of the feedback conference helped the student teachers reflect and discover for themselves the concepts the mentors wanted to convey to the student teachers.

### **Zone of Proximal Development**

The zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1986) is an educational term for that area in a student’s learning potential in which students are encouraged and excited about improvement. The zone of proximal development is enhanced because the feedback is neither below the learner’s current understanding level and they are not motivated or stimulated and lose interest; or the feedback is beyond their current understanding level and they feel unable to implement the feedback and give up. Each student teacher has a zone where they can be pushed to improve beyond their current teaching level. Because each student teacher is an individual with a different zone of

proximal development, it became the responsibility of the pre-service trainer to determine each student teachers' zone of proximal development and push them just enough to stay in that zone.

Table 9

*Examples of Responses to the Zone of Proximal Development*

Participant	Source	Examples
PST 3	Interview	I think one of the most essential things we are looking for in student teachers is someone that has the desire to continue to grow. If I have a super talented teacher with a limited zone of proximal development, sometimes there is an attitude that limits [him or her] as well. They want to be praised and [told] they are good. If there is resistance there, that throws up a huge red flag for me. Because, I have seen those guys ten years into their career, and they [think they] are good enough. So, I don't know how to determine the zone of proximal development exactly, but ... I have major concerns ... if [at] this stage in their career we are giving them feedback, and they are already showing that they just want you to build them up. I don't know if ... revealing itself at this stage bodes well for a really successful career in S&I. If there [are] teachers teaching at a level between 1 and 10, [and] you know a teacher teaching at seven who is just anxious, not only to receive, but you came back and you really saw that [he or she] is really trying to develop, verses a teacher that is at a nine over here, and they are pretty good, but every time you go to give them feedback there is a little resistance there, I would hire the seven guy every time.
PST 2	Interview	I think ... one of the main battles of pre-service is how far do I push where there is growth rather than [create] a panic zone or discouraging. I think everyone has a different level. I think you have to come back and see [by] checking your old notes over the feedback previously, [and ask]: "Are we making progress?"
PST 5	Interview	I think [we] have to tame the inner expert, as a trainer, meaning that we have a lot of experience, so we see a lot of things—we see all kinds of things that they can improve on. [We] have to select what will make the most difference for them at this time, and just focus on a few things that will make the most difference. Selecting just a few things that will make the biggest impact will keep them in that learning zone.
PST 4	Interview	I think a lot of it is that you have to know [each] teacher. You will know when you have pushed them too far. I think that is a key thing; you want to invite them to do things that you are comfortable and confident that they can pick it up.
ST 10	Interview	I don't know how they do it, but I do feel pushed. When I walk out of a classroom that he observed, I wish I would have recorded what he said because it was such good information. I think what it does is it inspires me to see things that I wouldn't have seen before. It causes me to look at things in a different way than I have before. I think he tries to push me right to that edge where I do want to get better, but not push so far that I want to call it quits and say I'm done.
ST 7	Interview	It seems that he knows me well enough that he knows where my zone of proximal development might be. I feel like he has pushed me just enough, and I think that is because he does do a blend of strengths and weaknesses.
ST 2	Interview	Something that I have appreciated is when they tell me how I can improve for the next lesson, and help me progress in that way. That keeps me on edge; keeps me wanting to improve, when they show me what I can do tomorrow to improve the next lesson.

*Note.* PST = Pre-Service Trainer; ST = Student Teacher

Conclusions from other research studies supported the findings from the survey and interview questions responses generated from this study. The zone of proximal development is the “gap between the learner’s actual development, and learner’s potential

development with assistance by a more able peer” (Vygotsky, 1986). This zone of proximal development helped explain the role of the pre-service trainer during the post-observation conference. Using feedback and coaching techniques such as reflection, formative feedback, and pinpointing questions, the pre-service trainer was able to help the student teacher discover areas that needed improvement. Engin (2013) explained how these techniques were used as part of the post-observation conference.

In a feedback session after teaching practice, the trainer and trainee are engaged in interaction which includes questions, prompts and discussion. The questions the trainer or trainee asks are examples of how talk guides the thinking about teaching. Explicit articulation of teaching decisions encourages the trainee to construct teaching knowledge. (p. 41)

### **Balance**

Pre-service trainers must be aware of and complete many different responsibilities simultaneously during the short post-observation feedback conference. The skill to be able to read the needs of the student teacher, especially because all teachers were different and all had different needs, was one of the main talents student teachers reported in their survey responses that made feedback most effective. Providing balanced feedback was a good way to account for many of those different needs. An appropriate balance of feedback regarding the strengths of a lesson, as well as a discussion of the weaknesses that need to be improved upon was repeatedly emphasized by the respondents in this study. That balance needed to change depending on the unique needs of the student teacher. It was the pre-service trainer’s role to establish the proper balance of formative

and summative feedback to help the student teacher improve and ultimately decide which teachers should be hired as full-time seminary teachers.

### **Strengths vs weaknesses.**

In this study, student teachers were asked, “What method of feedback do you think helps you improve more?” When choosing between strengths or weaknesses, the majority (72%) of student teachers selected that they wanted to receive feedback regarding their weakness. When given a chance to explain their selection, most student teachers stated that discussing strengths helped them more, but they desired to improve so much that they selected weaknesses. When given a chance to explain in follow-up interviews, student teachers explained that a balance of supportive and corrective feedback was needed, but that balance needed to lean much more toward the side of discussing strengths. This statement was consistent with the responses the pre-service trainers reported in both the survey and the subsequent interviews. This balance of feedback was also supported by the current research in the field regarding the use of strengths and weaknesses in feedback.

Findings from a study by Le and Vasquez (2011) confirmed the importance of feedback given to student teachers.

A number of strategies are considered to be effective in giving constructive feedback in teacher education contexts, such as the use of questions, the delivery of compliments before criticisms or specific suggestions, the productions of mild advice and suggestions and the assistance for the (student teachers) to pinpoint their own problems, in addition to the provision of a comfortable atmosphere for



the feedback conferences and a balance of both positive and negative comments in feedback delivery. (p. 467)

Table 10

*Examples of Responses to Strengths vs Weaknesses*

Participant	Source	Example
PST 6	Survey	I believe they are both important, but as we build on their strengths, and the things they are doing well, they are more open to corrective feedback. If we help them see the things that are working well and continue to build upon them, gospel teaching is enhanced.
PST 8	Survey	Sometimes I think we can destroy their confidence with too much negative feedback.
PST 13	Survey	You are making this black and white. It isn't that way. Some student teachers respond better with more positive comments and one suggestion. Some student teachers respond better with "straight talk" and less compliments.
PST 7	Survey	I don't think [either] is more important. I tell them what they did well, not to prepare them for negative feedback, but to encourage them to continue to do what they did well. If we don't help them see areas of improvement, then they won't be able to adjust and grow.
ST 6	Interview	Most of the trainers have seen the wisdom of someone hearing [that they] are doing a very good job; you need to keep doing that. Whereas, the student teachers are so focused on "I need to get better, I need to get better," [that] we don't realize that sometimes the way [we] get better is by continuing to improve on what [we] are already doing well. Student teachers are constantly hungry for how to get better, but we need to have a little bit better perspective, probably. I think weaknesses will naturally dissolve when you focus on those strengths. I think it is easy through this process to really feel down on yourself, and to feel like you are not doing a good job. I think it is healthy and appropriate to hear sometimes that you are doing this well. So, you are hungry to hear what you could do better, but you are desperate to hear [that] you are doing a good job. So, I think the balance is key.
ST 42	Survey	Because when we focus on the good, we understand what the bad is, and when we improve more and more with ... [strengths], that will automatically flow over to the bad and raise that level.
ST 67	Survey	Though I prefer a little of both, I find that I am sometimes hard on myself when all we discuss is what went wrong. If we can discuss some of the things that they thought I could do better, and then finish on some of the things that they thought were well done, then I feel like I know what I need to improve and things I can keep doing. A little positive feedback goes a long way.
ST 21	Survey	I believe that when strengths are looked at, they can be magnified, and weaknesses will improve as a direct result of strengths being improved.

*Note.* PST = Pre-Service Trainer; ST = Student Teacher

**Sandwich technique addresses strengths and weaknesses.**

A feedback strategy identified as effective has been referred to as the *sandwich technique*. This strategy began with the supervisor initially providing positive feedback before pointing out the areas in need of improvement and finishing with more positive feedback. Le and Vasquez (2011) found that mentors who gave feedback "desired to create positive feelings for the interns by starting with something good in the lesson before indicating areas that need changes and suggesting ways to improve" (p. 461).

Watrous (2003) described the “compliment sandwich format” used to give teachers feedback began and ended with “what worked for [student teachers] in the class and what did not work for them—or worked less well—in the middle of their feedback” (p. 54). The first and last compliments surround a middle of constructive criticism. “What I learn from the compliment part of the compliment sandwich can be as humbling as what I learn from suggestions for growth” (Watrous, p. 55).

Watrous (2003) explained the reason that the sandwich technique has been found to be effective by many:

Writers and researchers in the fields of human behavior and cognition have suggested that for individuals to be able to hear and to heed criticism it must be couched in positive terms. Some say that to attend to a single correction, a student teacher should at the same time hear that he has done as many as five things right. Others say that three compliments are enough to balance one criticism. (p. 54)

**Focusing on strengths.**

Buckingham and Clifton (2001) advocated that a person’s greatest potential for growth was in the area of his or her greatest strength. It is common for an educational leader to do a classroom observation of a teacher and notice what went wrong with the lesson. However, it took a different kind and level of skill to notice and articulate the parts of the lesson that went well and could be considered a strength of the teacher. Buckingham and Clifton believed that individuals spent too much time focusing on weaknesses and trying to fix those weaknesses, rather than recognizing one’s strengths and determining how one might leverage these strengths to other parts of their practice.

Humans seem to be genetically wired to focus on negative feedback more than on

positive feedback. Stone and Heen (2014) explained that responses to threats and unpleasantness are faster, stronger, and harder to inhibit than responses to opportunities and pleasures. “Built into our wiring is a kind of security team that scans for threat. When it detects danger—real or perceived—the team responds instantaneously, bypassing our slower, more reflective systems” (p. 152). Stone and Heen report that the part of our brain controlled by the amygdala causes humans to struggle to focus on and improve our strengths when weaknesses are pointed out. Our brain struggles to see the whole picture in proportion of positive and negative feedback.

Instructional feedback that focused on teaching strengths helped student teachers improve their performance and build upon those strengths. Zenger et al. (2012) expressed the importance of working with strengths rather than focusing on weaknesses and stressed the importance of regularly giving and receiving positive feedback. Zenger et al. reported that those who sought feedback regularly helped grow their strengths. Zenger et al. state:

We can think of no activity, which if broadly practiced in an organization, will have more beneficial impact on building strengths than if they learn to readily give and receive feedback; especially to freely ask for feedback from those around them. (p.132)

### **Formative vs summative.**

The pre-service trainer had to balance the roles of molding the student teachers into the best teachers that they could be through formative feedback; and determining whether or not to recommend the student teacher for selection as a full-time seminary teacher. While the pre-service trainers were helping student teachers improve throughout

the school year, at the same time they were regularly ranking each of the student teachers and reporting those rankings to the pre-service manager. Both pre-service trainers and student teachers' responses to survey questions and follow-up interviews indicated that a good balance between these two types of feedback was to provide mostly formative feedback to the student teacher, even though the pre-service trainers were making summative evaluations at the same time. Student teachers also expressed a desire to “know where they stand” in terms of the summative assessment.

Table 11

*Examples of Responses to Formative vs Summative*

Participant	Source	Examples
PST 11	Survey	My evaluation and feedback with the student teacher is formative. I try to help them discover where they are doing well and perhaps where they could improve. However, I do not share all the notes or evaluations I am making because I feel each visit/interaction is the latest “update” to a summative evaluation of the student teacher. Weekly, I update a rankings formula based on teaching performance, character, professionalism, and rapport. This allows me to always have a summative evaluation of where each student is relative to the standards and also to each other.
PST 12	Survey	I view my job as helping the student teachers become the best teachers they can be, and to help the students in their class have a good experience. I think it creates a better working relationship.
PST 7	Survey	I always give feedback in the present tense, such as, “What happened today in the lesson?” On occasion, we talk in “overall” terms of how the teaching is progressing, but that is generally more student-driven, based upon their desire to see how they are doing overall.
ST 19	Survey	It seems as though there is a time and place for both types. Though, even when I've been evaluated on what was certainly a summative evaluation, both trainers took time to provide feedback on things to improve and sustain. I think the majority of the evaluations should be formative and provide ways to help us be better. From those same evaluations, a summative evaluation can be garnered. This would help us be better teachers because we would feel more like the trainers were there to help us [become] better teachers, while understanding that they are also there to evaluate our hiring potential.
ST 33	Survey	I think it requires a beautiful blend of both. The ultimate goal is to be hired full-time, therefore, summative evaluation is required to see how everyone measures up. However, I believe it is equally important to make decisions based not only on where the instructor is currently, but [also] their ability and willingness to improve which requires formative evaluation.
ST 58	Survey	Both are helpful and necessary. Formative is useful because it is specific instruction that will improve ability, confidence, and overall satisfaction in teaching. As a student teacher, it is really difficult to gauge how you are doing, and a summative evaluation is beneficial in providing a more general overview of how you are perceived.
ST 24	Survey	Formative evaluations seem more helpful in helping me grow and improve because [they] focus on where I am headed, rather than where I am at. But, I don't hear enough about the summative evaluation. It would be nice to know where I am at in the big picture, so I can set goals and plan accordingly.
ST 28	Survey	I like it when they tell me what I'm doing well, and how I can improve (formative), but ultimately, I really want to be hired. When they tell me, “this needs to change in order to be hired,” I really appreciate their honesty and frankness in those moments.

*Note.* PST = Pre-Service Trainer; ST = Student Teacher

Conclusions from other research studies supported the findings from the survey and interview questions conducted in this study. The purpose of evaluation is to rate or rank one's performance against a set of standards, to align expectations, or to inform decision making. Stone and Heen (2014) explained the purpose that evaluation plays in the feedback process. Evaluation lets one know where one stands relative to the standards or expectations. Evaluation is an assessment, ranking, or rating. In some respects, evaluations are always comparisons, implicitly or explicitly, against others or against a particular set of standards. One of the more difficult parts of evaluation are the real or perceived concerns about the possible consequences.

Feedback can be both summative and formative. Hamilton (2009) described summative feedback as an evaluation of one's performance; a ranking or scoring of a performance against another's score or performance. Formative feedback is meant to develop new skills and improve performance. Appreciation feedback and coaching are more formative in nature, while evaluation is more summative in nature.

Copland (2012) conducted a study regarding the role supervisors' played in developing highly-qualified teachers. "In training programs in which teaching practice is assessed, the supervisor must fulfil a number of roles simultaneously, from offering support and advice, to formally assessing the quality of the teacher's work" (p. 4). The formative role of the supervisor involved coaching the student teacher with the objective of improving the student teacher's performance.

Stone and Heen (2014) addressed a primary challenge associated with a single individual providing both formative feedback and a summative judgment of performance. Stone and Heen expressed the concern that coaching and evaluation can get tangled. The

primary role of the pre-service trainer was to coach the student teachers through a process of continual and constructive formative feedback that helped the student teacher improve. The role of evaluation in a summative fashion was to rate the student teacher's capabilities according to an established hiring standard. Stone and Heen noted that coaching should focus significant attention on helping the student teacher improve their performance, skill, knowledge, and capability.

### **Needs of the Teacher**

Communication is an important part of feedback. The skill of articulating the teaching ability of a student teacher is a necessary skill of each of the pre-service trainers. The ability to communicate feedback effectively became more difficult because each student teacher is different, which dramatically influenced the way they communicated. The ability to accurately identify the needs of the student teacher was a theme that emerged from the responses to the survey questions and was further clarified in the subsequent interviews. Survey responses included statements from one student teacher that were the complete opposite of the statements from another student teacher. Survey responses indicated that customized feedback was more effective than standardized feedback. This corresponds with findings from other studies discouraging a standardized observation form or checklist of observable behaviors.

### **Language.**

Gary Chapman (1992) has written books about communication including the popular *The Five Love Languages* that described the ways different people communicate using different preferred languages. While the language that each student teacher preferred differed from the other student teachers, survey and interview responses

indicated that the concept shared by Chapman applied to delivering feedback to those student teachers. Therefore, one of the roles of the pre-service trainer was to determine which type of language best fit each student teacher.

Table 12

*Examples of Responses to Language*

Participant	Source	Examples
PST 5	Interview	[Student teachers] are so different, and their personalities are different; their confidence level is different—some struggle with confidence. I think maybe the way you do it is with experience [working] with them after giving feedback—seeing how they responded to feedback, and recognizing if they are responding better to positive feedback, or if they are accepting well the areas of correction. I guess it is hard to read it because it is an experiential thing as you work with them; you tend to try and get a feel for it. So, I don't know any other way than just getting to know the teacher.
PST 4	Interview	Well, you better get to know your teacher before you start doing a lot of correcting. It's pretty hard to give direction to someone that doesn't think you love them. So, if you are the trainer, and you have been around them a lot, and they have the feeling that you are there to help them become the very best teacher possible ... and your whole purpose is the help them improve, and you believe in them, [then] you can tell them about anything because they know that [you] believe in [them, and you are] not there to fire [them] ... that's huge.
PST 5	Interview	They all receive feedback differently, and speak those different languages referred to in <i>The Five Love Languages</i> . I would say that it is [through] experience with them. The first time you may learn that "Okay, this is not how you do it; this person does not respond well to this type of feedback." The next time you know that you should approach this one a little differently, or [you] can even read them on the spot, and adapt your feedback approach to the way they are receiving the feedback. Then, over a series of feedback sessions, you get a feel for the individual which show the importance of consistent observations with feedback opportunities on a regular basis.
PST 4	Interview	I think we [should] spend much more time and effort getting to know them before we ever put them in a classroom. We should interview the couple, [and] ... take them to lunch ... [with our] wife, who doesn't have any interest in them, [and] has not fallen in love with them as a student in the class, [to give you an] outside perspective.
ST 10	Interview	The thing that I really appreciate with my pre-service trainer is that he has taken time to get to know how we teach. He has been in the classroom enough to know where our strengths are and where our weaknesses are, and then play to whichever one we need. I feel like he knows what I need, and when he is giving feedback, he knows what I need to hear.
ST 1	Interview	I think it is that they are around us enough to know what kind of feedback we need. I think they must study us as they teach us and observe us teach, to know what kind of language will work best with each of us. In the feedback, he will pull out things that I need to hear to help me "be me" in the classroom.
ST 9	Interview	If the trainer is giving feedback to somebody and telling them what they did wrong, then he would have to see how they are taking that. Because, if they are not taking it well, then the trainer can decide maybe this is not the best way for them to receive feedback.
ST 8	Interview	I am able to take very candid feedback, but there might be other student teachers that take it more personally. So, if there is a cookie-cutter type trainer, who is giving very blunt feedback to someone who might be a little more sensitive and take things personally, then [it will] not only make them feel bad, [but] it will not even be effective at all. It might be more difficult at the beginning of the year to feel out ... this student teacher ... to be really heavy with the strengths, and just give them one thing to work on. And with this other student teacher, [to] say, 'This was good, but let me give you three things that I saw that you could work on.' I think there has to be some talent and awareness of the trainer to be aware of their [needed] form of feedback.

Note. PST = Pre-Service Trainer; ST = Student Teacher

Conclusions from other research studies supported the findings from the survey and interview questions completed in this study. The environment and setting of the post-observation conference was impacted by the approach the pre-service trainer used to deliver feedback and coaching. An evaluation form that used a checklist of items performed correctly or incorrectly has been found to create a feedback environment that was less effective than one that used the sandwich technique, pinpointing, or immediacy of feedback (Mahar & Strobert, 2010). Mahar and Strobert reported that, “the vast majority of teachers find the feedback from traditional observation checklists less than professionally meaningful. This method rarely helps teachers make a direct link with their professional growth and student learning needs” (p. 152).

### **Invested in Student Teacher**

Even though the pre-service program was like a long job interview, student teachers expressed a desire to have the pre-service trainer show interest and invest in the student teacher. Responses showed that student teachers felt the feedback was more effective when it came from a pre-service trainer who is invested in them, who thought they could be hired full-time, and was there to help them succeed. Observation and evaluation created an atmosphere in which those being evaluated were also being judged by those doing the evaluation. This situation left the observed feeling as though the two parties may not be on the same team and working toward the same objective. In the pre-service program, pre-service trainers and student teachers were working toward the same objective. The post-observation feedback sessions could be more effective when the student teachers felt invested in and that pre-service trainer was working toward the best interest of the student teacher.



Table 13

*Examples of Responses to Being Invested in the Student Teacher*

Participant	Source	Examples
PST 4	Interview	You have to love the teacher. I don't think you have any business giving any kind of feedback or advice if you don't love them. [With] some people, it's like trying to love a cactus. But if you do [love them anyway], then I think it will be okay. You are in their corner, so to speak.
PST 9	Survey	Of course, for feedback to work, the student teacher must know you care about them. I try to cultivate rapport with the student teachers collectively and individually. I take them on a retreat as part of [the] 473 [class]. This allows them to get comfortable knowing me, and I them, in a non-pressure atmosphere.
PST 13	Survey	Giving honest loving feedback is the most important thing that a trainer can do.
PST 6	Survey	My feedback needs to match the fundamentals that I train the teachers to do with their youth. There needs to be an environment of love, respect, and purpose. The Spirit needs to be invited; discovery needs to happen, etc. The student teacher does most [of] the talking, and I guide the conversation.
ST 47	Survey	One of my trainers took the time to meet with me one-on-one, outside of observations (upon my request). Sitting down with him and talking to him about my personal struggles as a teacher, and [my] hopes really helped me see a clearer vision of what I am here to do. When a trainer takes time to help you know that you aren't just another student teacher that is going through the process, [and] when they take time to find out about how you individually are doing as a teacher, it creates a lot of trust and faith in them and in [us]. This trainer [later] came and visited one of my classes (not to evaluate), but just to see how I was doing with my class and to provide support. That meant a lot to be able to see that and to feel more trust and confidence from him.
ST 61	Survey	I was having a really hard time in my personal life, and after the observation he talked maybe five minutes [about] my teaching, and then the rest of the time he talked to me about my life, how I could overcome these obstacles and get things in order, so that I could be a more successful teacher in the classroom.
ST 22	Survey	It took me a long time to realize that my trainer is actually my ally, and not the one who ultimately holds my fate in his hands. I think if trainers can make sure that the student teachers know that they really do want the student teachers to succeed, it makes the observations feel less judgmental and more helpful.

Note. PST = Pre-Service Trainer; ST = Student Teacher

Conclusions of other research studies supported the findings from the survey and interview question responses generated from this study. In discussing the feedback environment, Mahar and Strobert (2010) state that, “evaluation methods that promote collegiality between teachers and their administrators support a culture of learning and professional growth” (p. 157). Mahar and Strobert recommend that “school districts consider discontinuing the use of the word *evaluation*, which suggests a top down, non-collaborative approach” (p. 158). Using approaches that helped create an environment in which the student teachers felt that feedback and coaching was for their benefit,

ultimately helped them to make the improvements that impacted the effectiveness of their teaching.

Appreciation feedback was characterized by the provider acknowledging, connecting, motivating, or expressing gratitude to the receiver of the feedback. Appreciation feedback included acknowledging the accomplishments and strengths that were contributed by the receiver of the feedback. Appreciation fills a basic human desire to feel needed. “Appreciation is fundamentally about relationship and human connection. At a literal level it says, “Thanks.” But appreciation also conveys, “I see you,” “I know how hard you’ve been working,” and, “You matter to me” (Stone & Heen, 2014, p. 31).

Appreciation motivates us—it gives us a bounce in our step and the energy to redouble our efforts. When people complain that they don’t get enough feedback they often mean that they wonder whether anyone notices or cares how hard they’re working. They don’t want advice. They want appreciation. (Stone & Heen, 2014, p. 32)

### **Advice to Pre-Service Trainers**

Pre-service trainers were given the chance to give advice to fellow pre-service trainers via both survey responses and the follow-up interviews. Student teachers were also given the chance to share advice with their pre-service trainer or the pre-service trainers from other areas. While this advice ranged across many different topics, the following are examples of the multiple responses received.

Table 14

*Examples of Responses Regarding Advice to Pre-Service Trainers*

Participant	Source	Examples
PST 5	Interview	I would say make it [feedback] clear; it needs to be clear and it needs to be actionable; it needs to be something they can do instead of resorting to vague platitudes. Pay the price and study so that you can walk into the classroom and see what it is that they need to work on, and be able to articulate that clearly and in a way that is actionable. Study teaching—study the <i>Gospel Teaching and Learning Handbook</i> to understand the fundamentals ... clearly to have it all straight in our minds, so that we really have a firm grasp on the fundamentals of gospel teaching and learning, so when we walk into a classroom, we can see what is good, and what is not good based on the price we have paid to understand the fundamentals.
PST 2	Interview	You have got to love them. Love [and] listen; did I say love? And, then, serve them. You have got to serve them; you have got to find ways to find out about their interests, [and] hobbies, [and] talk about them. I think the more invested you can get in getting [into] their hearts and souls, the more mileage you [will] get out of them.
PST 7	Survey	Be honest, straightforward, and positive about their abilities. Loving [them] in administering feedback.
PST 8	Survey	Don't just provide what is wrong without providing solutions as well for improvement.
ST 55	Survey	I would say spend just a little more time pointing out the strengths. Elaborate and discuss those strengths a little more, rather than just mentioning them or letting me know that they are there. The confidence that comes with that discussion will transfer over into improving the areas that we had addressed that need changing.
ST 39	Survey	Trainers should be patient. I don't want to let my trainer down. My trainers [have] invested time, energy, thought, and love in me, and I really want to live up to their expectations, and I really want to be the kind of teacher they know I can be. Sometimes, I just want to know that my trainer knows [that] it is nerve-racking for me. I want my trainer to know that I am anxious, and that rarely is my best teaching ever fully displayed in an observed lesson.
ST 42	Survey	There is a lot of ambiguity when going through this process. I think I understand why with [trainers] not wanting to get up the hopes of potential hires, [and] temptations to compare, etc. Sometimes, frustration results from the ambiguity because you feel like you are ... taking a step in the dark. I may just have an issue of overanalyzing feedback, but I think the more transparent, the better. With that said, transparency needs to happen in a way that isn't harsh or definitive but encouraging. No matter what, the process of getting hired as a full-time teacher is stressful, difficult, and wonderful. Doing everything they can to help ease some of those fears can make a world of difference.
ST 68	Survey	My pre-service [trainer] has rarely spoken of the logistics of being hired, which one would assume is the focus of this program. Instead, he has focused on my teaching experiences. This has helped guide me to know where to put my focus. I still have questions and huge anxieties about the process, but aside from necessary details, it will do me no good to get bogged down by the process and logistics, because I have no control over these. What I can control is my teaching. What the students need is my teaching, not someone who is simply checking off a list to get hired. The thing is, my coordinator has never said these words to me, but his actions (and sometimes inactions) have led me to that interpretation.

Note. PST = Pre-Service Trainer; ST = Student Teacher

## Quantitative Results

The survey used for this study included some questions that required respondents to select from a menu of Likert-type options. Responses to these prompts informed the development of questions that required verbal responses. The Likert-type survey questions and associated quantitative data are displayed in Appendix I.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **Discussion**

#### **Summary of the Study**

This descriptive study used a qualitative design to determine the perceptions of Seminaries and Institutes (S&I) pre-service trainers and student teachers regarding the effectiveness of coaching and feedback techniques used in post-observation conferences, and determine the perceived level of improvement that resulted from the post-observation conference feedback. Results of this study produced eight major themes that emerged from an analysis of the responses provided by the initial survey and follow-up interviews. The study found that feedback was most effective when it is specific and direct, descriptive and principle-based, focused on discovery learning, considers the zone of proximal development of the learner, is balanced, designed to meet the needs of the student teacher, demonstrates an investment in the student teacher, and included meaningful advice to pre-service trainers.

This study determined how helpful student teachers perceived the feedback from their pre-service trainer's to be in enhancing their instructional effectiveness. This study also determined the perceptions of the pre-service trainers regarding the effectiveness of their feedback.

Both the pre-service trainer's and student teacher's perceptions of the effectiveness of the feedback and coaching provided was examined in order to gain a better understanding of the value of the post-observation conference; as well as to determine how that feedback and coaching could be improved. The student teacher's perceptions of feedback styles and coaching techniques that were most helpful to them

will be useful to pre-service trainers to help them provide more meaningful feedback and support to student teachers. Included in this section is an effective feedback model that pre-service trainers could use in determining how to make the feedback they give more effective. Similarly, the pre-service trainer's perceptions of effective feedback techniques and coaching strategies will be beneficial to other pre-service trainers in the system, helping to improve the feedback, coaching, and performance of other pre-service trainers, and thereby support the student teacher's development as effective instructors in Seminaries and Institutes.

### **Effective Feedback Model**

A model emerged from a descriptive process regarding the perceptions of pre-service trainers and student teachers of strategies and tactics that make feedback effective. This model, based on the themes that emerged from the analysis of data could be used by pre-service trainers to help them determine the effectiveness of the feedback they give during the post-observation conference. This model also addresses feedback techniques found to be less effective. The model in Table 15 identifies a feedback technique, labels the technique in terms of its level of effectiveness based upon the perceptions of pre-service trainers and student teachers in this study, and describes the technique used for feedback.

Table 15

*Effective Feedback Model*

<b>Effectiveness of Feedback</b>	<b>Feedback Technique</b>	<b>Description of the Feedback Technique</b>
More Effective	Customized	Feedback that is created and designed for a specific student teacher at given time and for a specific lesson. The feedback is customized in such a way to fulfill the needs of a particular student teacher in order to improve in specific areas.
Less Effective	Standardized	A checklist of observable behaviors or outcomes.
More Effective	Tailored	Feedback that matches the preferred language of a particular student teacher. Feedback is tailored to a student teacher's needs. Feedback is adjusted to the level of confidence and ability of the teacher in the zone that push the teacher to improve.
Less Effective	Generalized	Giving the same advice to all student teachers. Going into an observation with a pre-conceived plan of the feedback to be given regardless of the lesson observed.
More Effective	Immediate	The shorter the feedback loop the greater impact the feedback has because the student teacher is able to associate the feedback with an immediate experience and visualize ways to implement the feedback.
Less Effective	Delayed	The longer the feedback loop the less connected the feedback is to the experience of the student teacher. Behavioral psychology suggests that the more time between an action and a consequence the less effective the feedback becomes.
More Effective	Learned about the Teacher	When the pre-service trainer has done the research to know the principles of good teaching, the trainer can then identify the principles demonstrated by the student teacher and which principles are in need of improvement. When the pre-service trainer has made multiple observations of a student teacher and learned the preferred language, confidence level, and zone of proximal development of the teacher, the trainer is better able to customize and tailor the feedback.
Less Effective	Lack of Effort	When a pre-service trainer has learned the principles of good teaching or gotten to know the student teachers as an individual, then feedback becomes more general.
More Effective	Specific	Communicating the specific part of a lesson that went well and should be repeated and built upon; or identifying the part of the lesson that did not go well is more effective than general statement about the lesson as a whole.
Less Effective	General	Evaluating an entire lesson as either good or bad, or generalizing the student teacher as successful or failing is less effective. Even positive feedback that is general and lacks specificity does not help the student teacher improve significantly.
More Effective	Direct	Feedback that is to the point, direct, and transparent helps the student know exactly what needs to improve.
Less Effective	Roundabout	Pre-service trainers who worry about the nice way to share feedback or use a roundabout approach to a sensitive topic lose the directness needed to make feedback effective.

Table 16

*Effective Feedback Model continued*

<b>Effectiveness of Feedback</b>	<b>Feedback Technique</b>	<b>Description of the Feedback Technique</b>
More Effective	2-3 Feedback Items	Limiting feedback to just two or three areas for improvement was deemed to be most effective.
Less Effective	Large number of Feedback Items	Too many feedback items can overwhelm a student teacher and lead to discouragement. Student teachers can actually digress in effectiveness when they focused on too many feedback items.
More Effective	Descriptive	Articulating feedback in such a way that supports the student teacher's understanding of the level of improvement needed.
Less Effective	Vague	Vague feedback does not help the student teacher's understanding of the level of improvement needed.
More Effective	Principle-based	Feedback based on the principles of good and effective teaching identified in the <i>Gospel Teaching and Learning Handbook</i> .
Less Effective	Based on Personal Perceptions	Feedback based on a personal preference not aligned with the principles of good teaching identified in the <i>Gospel Teaching and Learning Handbook</i> .
Less Effective	Focuses just on Weaknesses	Focusing primarily on the weaknesses of a teachers lesson tends to restrict overall improvement.
More Effective	Balance of Formative vs Summative	Pre-service trainers should include a balance of formative feedback to guide improvement and summative feedback that informs the student teacher of where they stand in the hiring process.
Less Effective	Only an Evaluation	Student teachers become overwhelmed and discouraged if evaluation is the only form of feedback they receive.
More Effective	Matches the Teacher's Language	Feedback should be customized, tailored, and delivered in such a way that the student teacher personally understands what needs to be done.
Less Effective	Does Not Match the Teacher's Language	Feedback that works for one student teacher may not work for another student teacher. Feedback must fit a student teacher's zone of proximal development.
More Effective	Invested in Teacher	Student teachers that know the pre-service trainer wants them to succeed put more value on the feedback knowing it has been customized for their best improvement.
Less Effective	Indifferent	Student teachers that feel that the pre-service trainer is only observing them as a job obligation do not feel the feedback is really focused on their improvement.

**Themes Aligned with Feedback Research Studies**

Results from this study that aligned with the findings of other studies and correspond with the research literature included: specific and direct feedback, descriptive and principle-based feedback, and balanced feedback. A more detailed interpretation of

each of these themes was addressed as well as an interpretation of unanticipated themes that arose from this study.

### **Specific and direct feedback.**

One of the themes that emerged from survey responses was the desire of student teachers to receive feedback that was specific, direct, and limited to just two or three items. Specific feedback was feedback that pinpointed and clarified the parts of the lesson and/or the teaching techniques that needed attention. Direct feedback suggested that sugar-coating, beating-around-the bush, or generic statements were not as effective and useful as statements that got directly to the teaching issue and were truthful, even if the feedback was blunt or difficult for the student teacher to hear.

The survey and interview prompts did not ask respondents to provide a specific number of feedback items to be addressed. Most respondents, both student teachers and pre-service trainers, mentioned that two or three discussion items shared during the post-observation conference was within the optimal range to be most effective. Both student teachers and pre-service trainers reported that too many items could be overwhelming and impacted the confidence of the student teacher. Too many feedback items also led to confusion regarding which topic to focus on when preparing and teaching the next lesson. When only two or three areas were addressed during a post-observation conference, student teachers felt that they could use that feedback more effectively and focus on those areas immediately when preparing and teaching their next lesson.

### **Difference in perception of use of directness.**

An interesting difference in the perceptions of student teachers and pre-service trainers regarding the direct and straight-forward nature of feedback was noted in this



study. Many student teachers' responses were similar to this student teacher who wrote, "Don't be afraid to give us the truth, straight and clear. Beating around the bush can sometimes lead to a misunderstanding of what it is we need to work on, so for me at least I like hearing what I need to work on put pretty directly" (ST #23, 2015). Because of a strong desire to improve, student teachers wanted direct feedback; feeling they could handle the bluntness, as it provided the quickest way to improve.

Pre-service trainers, on the other hand, expressed that being too direct could be harmful to the student teacher's progress. Even though student teachers told them they wanted feedback to be direct and straight-forward; the experience of the pre-service trainers suggested it was better to be kind, supportive, and providing praise, while identifying just two or three areas that the student teacher should focus at a time. One pre-service trainer provided a valuable perspective that noted that feedback should include a discussion of the strengths of the lesson and not focus solely on the negative aspects of a lesson. The pre-service trainer explained that neglecting to address the strengths of the lesson may cause the student teacher to stop doing what went well in lesson because they were so focused on correcting the negative aspects of the lesson.

In giving feedback that was both specific and direct, pre-service trainers explained the need to be able to "*read the needs of the teacher*," meaning that each student teacher was different in the level of direct feedback they could receive. This finding represents one of the major outcomes of the study; that the better a pre-service trainer can assess the needs of the student teacher, as well as the best way to communicate that feedback to them, the more effective the feedback. This concept will be addressed further in other themes of this study.

Limiting feedback to just a few items was also found in the current literature. For example, Lemov, Woolway, and Yezzi (2012) stated:

Turns out, knowing what to do is a long way from doing it; in fact, knowledge can get in the way of learning when it isn't doled out in manageable pieces. Most people are inclined to give people too much feedback at once. When performers or employees or team members or children are trying to concentrate on more than one or two specific things at once, their attention becomes fractured and diluted. Ironically this can result in reduced performance. The challenge is to tame your inner expert. (p. 126-127)

### **Descriptive and principle-based feedback.**

The difference between specific feedback and descriptive feedback is that, specific feedback addressed a single aspect of the lesson or a single teaching technique. On the other hand descriptive feedback clearly described the aspect of the lesson or teaching technique that was addressed. The *Gospel Teaching and Learning Handbook* is available to pre-service trainers to provide them with a common language and approach to guide instructional feedback. This handbook helped pre-service trainers provide principle-based feedback rather than rely on the pre-service trainer's personal preference or opinion. The use of a common language and principle-centered feedback also created standardization between pre-service trainers at each of the ten pre-service centers.

Principle-based feedback gave student teachers some assurance that they were making the appropriate improvements to reach established standards. Principle-based feedback also provided the student teacher with some direction to research instructional

standards on their own and discover for themselves the best way to meet the standards.

One student teacher (ST # 33) commented,

Every comment is always tied back to the [*Gospel Teaching and Learning*] Handbook. It's helpful to see that it's not just [one person] coming up with [his] own opinion, but rather things directed from the Handbook itself. It helps me have more confidence in the Handbook and want to apply it more into my teaching. Principle-based feedback provides more creditable feedback and support to enhance the effectiveness of the pre-service trainer.

Principle-based feedback provided pre-service trainers and student teachers with a common vocabulary with which to discuss the student teacher's classroom strengths and teaching challenges. Lemov, Woolway, and Yezzi (2012) explained the value of a common vocabulary:

When [teachers] practice and master a new skill, it is important to give that skill a name so people know what it is they've learned. After building your common vocabulary, it allows [teachers] to be coached on what they have mastered in practice. Developing this shared vocabulary and using it post-practice allows [teachers] to discuss and develop their technique quickly with one another. If there weren't different names, the different methods and skills would ultimately blend into one. Naming skills, techniques, strategies, and approaches makes them come alive in the classroom. Use common language during practice to develop skills, and continue to use it post-practice to make those skills stick.

"Transaction cost" is the amount of resources that it takes to execute an exchange, be it economic, verbal, or something else. Developing a shared vocabulary

reduces the transaction cost for peer—peer discussion, as well as leader—peer discussion; it also builds culture, because you belong to something with a language of its own. (p. 183-184)

### **Balance.**

During a follow-up interview, one student teacher (ST # 6) shared a concept expressed by many other student teachers regarding the need for balance in feedback.

Most of the trainers have seen the wisdom of [a student teacher] hearing, “you are doing a very good job, you need to keep doing that.” Where-as the student teachers are so focused on, “I need to get better, I need to get better.” We don’t realize that sometimes the way you get better is by continuing to improve on what you are already doing well. Student teachers are constantly hungry for how to get better, but we need to have a little bit better perspective. I think weaknesses will naturally dissolve when you focus on those strengths. I think it is easy through this process to really feel down on yourself and to feel like you are not doing a good job. I think it is healthy and appropriate to hear sometimes that you are doing this well. So you are hungry to hear what you could do better, but you are desperate to hear [that] you are doing a good job. So I think the balance is key.

The balance between focusing on strengths during a post-observation feedback conference and focusing on weaknesses from the lesson just observed should lean more toward focusing on the strengths. Both the current literature in the field and the results of this study found that feedback was more effective when the focus was on strengths exhibited by a student teacher and the effectiveness of the lesson instead of the weaknesses of the lesson.

The results from this study and current literature in the field both confirmed that teaching weaknesses cannot be ignored and need to be addressed. Providing an appropriate balance between the effectiveness of the student teacher's practice and those areas in need of improvement was essential. However, the results of this study, along with the recommendations found in the existing literature, emphasize a greater focus on the strengths of the lesson's effectiveness. A pre-service trainer (PST # 7) explained, "I tell them what they did well, not to prepare them for negative feedback, but to encourage them to continue to do what they did that went well. If we don't help them see areas of improvement, then they won't be able to adjust and grow."

Both pre-service trainers and student teachers expressed an interest in the use of the sandwich technique. Watrous (2003) described the "compliment sandwich format" used to give teachers feedback began and ended with "what worked for [student teachers] in the class and what did not work for them—or worked less well—in the middle of their feedback" (p. 54). The first and last compliments surround a middle segment composed of constructive criticism.

Though some student teachers did use the term sandwich technique in their response, this student teacher (ST # 67) explained the effectiveness of the technique without actually labeling it.

Though I prefer a little of both, I find that I am sometimes hard on myself when all we discuss is what went wrong. If we can discuss some of the things that they thought I could do better and then finish on some of the things that they thought were well done, then I feel like I know what I need to improve and things I can keep doing. I know the pre-service trainers are all busy and sometimes have very

little or no time for feedback sessions, but a little positive feedback goes a long way.

The skill to accurately assess the needs of the student teacher, especially because all teachers are different and have different needs was an important skill that the student teachers reported informed effective instructional feedback. Providing balanced feedback based on the unique needs of each student teacher was essential to continual instructional improvement. An appropriate balance of feedback regarding the strengths of a lesson, as well as a discussion of the weaknesses that need to be improved upon was repeatedly emphasized by the respondents in this study. That balance may need to change depending on the unique needs of the student teacher. It was the pre-service trainer's role to establish the proper balance of formative and summative feedback to help the student teachers improve and decide which teachers should be hired as full-time seminary teachers.

One student teacher (ST # 55) explained that for feedback to be most effective the feedback should be tailored to the needs of the student teacher. The balance in feedback was a way to help pre-service trainers tailor those needs,

I lean more toward pointing out strengths, but that's what I need specifically. I'm the type of person that keys in on my mistakes and I beat myself up with them. However, the next student teacher might be very motivated to change by having his trainer point out his mistakes. I think it's up to the trainer to discover what each student teacher responds to better.

Finding the balance between the use of formative feedback and summative evaluation was an important finding of this study. The results of this study align with the

results of other studies regarding formative and summative feedback. Hamilton (2009) explained that summative feedback served as an evaluation of one's performance. Summative feedback required a ranking or scoring of one's performance against another's score or performance. Formative feedback on the other hand, is meant to identify areas for the development of new skills and to steadily improve performance. Appreciation feedback and coaching are a type of formative feedback, while evaluation is more summative in nature.

Copland (2012) conducted a study regarding the role supervisors' play in the development of highly-qualified teachers. "In training programs in which teaching practice is assessed, the supervisor must fulfil a number of roles simultaneously, from offering support and advice, to formally assessing the quality of the teacher's work" (p. 4). The formative role of the supervisor involved coaching the student teacher with the objective of improving the student teacher's performance.

### **Unanticipated Themes that Arose from this Study**

A summary of the significant results of this study include the concept of discovery learning and the way pre-service trainers used discovery learning in the post-observation conference. The zone of proximal development helped pre-service trainers to more effectively determine the type of feedback they should provide, including how that feedback would likely be best received by each individual student teacher. The impact of focusing on instructional strengths rather than solely addressing teaching weaknesses will be addressed to determine the overall effectiveness of feedback.

**Discovery learning.**

Feedback became more effective when a pre-service trainer guided the student teacher in such a way that the student teacher individually discovered the appropriate approach to conducting the lesson. Natural investment was created for the student teacher when the student teacher felt that they had figured out on their own the appropriate approach to conducting a lesson. Just as good teaching leads to student discovery, good observational feedback leads to teacher discovery. Discovery learning happened through a combination of good questioning, effective modeling, and thoughtful discussion of the lesson in such a way that the feedback guided the student teacher toward corrective action or confirmation of the use of appropriate practices.

This study found that the post-observation feedback conference was more effective when discovery learning was incorporated as part of the feedback process. Just as a pre-service trainer developed the skill in student teachers to ask questions in their seminary class that help the students discover for themselves important concepts; pre-service trainers ask questions during the post-observation conference that helped the student teachers discover for themselves the feedback that was most helpful to them. Effective questioning was identified as one of the best ways to involve the student teachers in the post-observation conference. Effective questioning activated the thinking process, causing student teachers to critically reflect on their teaching practice in order to identify the strengths and areas for improvement in their lesson.

Effective questioning helped student teachers discover for themselves those classroom practices that were more effective and fit the learning needs of their students best. Self-discovery within this context was considerably more valuable than specific



insights shared by the pre-service trainers. One pre-service trainer (PST # 1) explained his understanding of the discovery learning process in this way,

In a way, I am becoming the teacher in that setting of feedback in the same way we want the teacher to be doing with the youth. We want the teacher to see where the students are at and where they are coming from, and to be able to help them discover new things and to feel the truth of it and apply it. That same concept happens in the feedback session, at least it should. If I can get them to ask a question and seek feedback, that is better and more effective.

Multiple student teachers addressed the concept of discovery learning in their survey responses. Pre-service trainers also demonstrated their desire for the student teachers to discover for themselves approaches to improving their lessons. Developing the skills to help student teachers discover was one of the more effective feedback techniques. One student teacher (ST # 10) expressed discovery learning this way,

It's that discovery learning part; I feel like whenever I have been given feedback it's because I have said it. And, he has guided me by asking the right questions and helped me realize [that] whatever changes I need to make I have discover[ed] because he has coached me into me realizing that, not just him telling me. So, discovering what I need to do better is far more effective than him telling me, "you should work on this, or this is what you should do." He can definitely give me suggestions, like "what if you looked at it this way," but ultimately it is usually what I have discovered on my own that makes me improve my teaching.

An aspect that impacted the effectiveness of discovery learning with regard to feedback was the immediacy of the feedback. The importance of the post-observation

feedback conference being conducted as soon as possible after the teaching experience was expressed by student teachers and pre-service trainers alike. The concept of immediacy impacting discovery learning in the feedback setting aligned with other literature regarding feedback.

With feedback, it turns out, speed is critically important—maybe the single most important factor in determining its success. In behavioral change, it’s clear that speed of consequence beats strength of consequence pretty much every time. If you want to change behavior—then shorten the feedback loop. Give participants feedback *right away*. This will improve performance far faster than giving more extensive feedback later on, even, arguably, if the later feedback is better. Speed matters most. (Lemov, Woolway, & Yezzi, 2012, p. 117-118)

### **Zone of proximal development.**

Through the data analysis of the survey responses of the pre-service trainers, the importance of the zone of proximal development emerged. Pre-service trainers expressed a desire to push student teachers throughout the school year in order to generate the most improvement possible. Yet, pre-service trainers recognized that feedback that pushed student teachers too far created discouragement and lack of confidence.

The zone of proximal development was described as the “gap between the learner’s actual development, and learner’s potential development with assistance by a more able peer” (Vygotsky, 1986). The zone of proximal development helped to describe the role of the pre-service trainer during the post-observation conference. Using coaching techniques such as reflection, formative feedback, and pinpointing questions, the pre-

service trainer was able to help the student teachers discover areas for needed development.

Again, an important outcome of this study was the need for pre-service trainers to know their student teachers so well that they recognize each student teacher's zone of proximal development and were able to customize their feedback to fit within each teacher's zone of proximal development. The pre-service trainer must develop the skills needed to provide feedback that push each student teacher to make the most progress possible while staying within the student teacher's zone of proximal development. One student teacher (ST # 8) expressed an understanding of the goal of the pre-service trainer with regards to the zone of proximal development by explaining,

I think when he comes to observe me, he does always have something that I can improve on. So I never get comfortable. So, that helps me to get into a habit of checking back on myself and asking how that lesson went and how can it be improved. So, I never get to the point where I just think we are good now, I finally got it, because he will always have some feedback of something that I can improve upon. And, it is not discouraging to always have feedback. Sometimes it's bigger than others, most of the time it's something fairly small.

#### **Investment in / needs of the student teacher.**

Survey responses indicated that customized feedback was more effective than standardized feedback. This outcome aligned with the findings from other studies that discouraged the use of a standardized observation form or checklist of observable behaviors. While most educational leaders can observe a lesson in a classroom setting and gain a general feel for whether the lesson went well or poorly, the skill of an

educational leader to effectively provide feedback in the post-observation conference was based on the ability to communicate and articulate to the student teacher the specific tactics and teaching techniques that will help them improve the most. The ability to effectively communicate with the student teachers was complicated by the uniqueness and individual needs of each student teacher. One of the main outcomes of this study was the recommendation that the pre-service trainers develop and enhance their ability to customize and tailor their feedback to the specific needs of each student teacher.

Gary Chapman (1992) has written about communication, including the popular *The Five Love Languages* that described the different ways people communicate using a preferred language. While the language that each student teacher preferred to receive may differ from another student teacher, survey responses and interview feedback indicated that the concept shared by Chapman also applied to delivering feedback to student teachers. One of the roles of the pre-service trainer was to determine the best type of language to use when delivering feedback to each student teacher. One pre-service trainer (PST # 5) explained this during an interview. He stated,

They all receive feedback differently, and speak those different languages referred to in *The Five Love Languages*. Again, I would say that it is experience with them. The first time you may learn that, okay, this is not how you do it, this person does not respond well to this type of feedback. So, the next time you know that you should approach this one a little differently, or [you] can even read them on the spot and adapt your feedback approach to the way they are receiving the feedback. Then, over a series of feedback sessions, you get a feel for the

individual, which show the importance of consistent observations with feedback opportunities on a regular basis.

This study found that the more a pre-service trainer observed the lessons of student teachers, and the more time the pre-service trainer spent with the student teachers, the better the pre-service trainers were able to accurately determine the needs of the student teachers in order to customize and tailor the feedback in the language that worked best for the student teacher. One student teacher (ST # 10) expressed this sentiment when they explained,

The thing that I really appreciate with my pre-service trainer is that he has taken time to get to know how we teach. He has been in the classroom enough to know where our strengths are and where our weakness is and then play to which-ever one we need. I honestly don't know how they do it. But, I feel like he knows what I need and when he is giving feedback he knows what I need to hear. Because, there was a day when he just flat out said, "Uh, this wasn't great;" and I knew it, I knew it right off. And, another day he came in and said, "Solid lesson," and I felt like it was nothing, meaning that I didn't do a great job at all. I think he just knew what I needed to hear right at that moment. He knew me well enough to know this is where she is at.

Another student teacher (ST # 1) stated:

I think it is that they are just around us enough to know what kind of feedback we need. I think they must study us as they teach us. And, as they observe us teach to know what kind of language will work best with each of us. In the feedback he will pull out things that I need to hear to help me "be me" in the classroom.

The concept of customizing and tailoring feedback to best fulfill the needs of each student teacher aligned with the current research that addressed feedback approaches. An evaluation form that used a checklist of items performed correctly or incorrectly has been found to create a feedback environment that is less effective than one that uses the sandwich technique, pinpointing, or the immediacy of feedback (Mahar & Strobert, 2010). Mahar and Strobert report that, “the vast majority of teachers find the feedback from traditional observation checklists less than professionally meaningful. This method rarely helps teachers make a direct link with their professional growth and student learning needs” (p. 152).

#### **Advice to pre-service trainers.**

When given an opportunity to give advice to pre-service trainers, many respondents included common suggestions that emerged as the themes of this study; such as using the manual (*Gospel Teaching and Learning*) to help make feedback principle-based; sharing positive feedback before going into the areas that need to be improved; or using discovery learning to help the student teacher discover for themselves the feedback that would be most useful to them. If all the advice given to pre-service trainers by both student teachers and fellow trainers were summed up into a single main idea, that idea would be to put in the time and effort to get to know the student teachers well and to develop a relationship with them so that the pre-service trainer knows which type of feedback would be most useful for a specific student teacher and how to best communicate and articulate that feedback to them individually. The most important advice to pre-service trainers may be to get to know the student teachers they supervise

and invest the time to customize and tailor their feedback in a way that will help the student teacher.

### **Recommendations for Future Studies**

The survey for this study was purposefully distributed during the time of the school year when many observations had been conducted and the majority of the student teacher training was completed. The timing of the study was also planned so that data collected from the survey portion of the study could be analyzed in time to conduct follow-up interviews as late in the school year as possible to complete most of the training, yet before the meeting to determine which student teachers would be offered full-time positions. The timing fulfilled a goal of this study of not allowing the offer of a teaching contract to some of the student teachers to influence their responses to the survey items and interviews prompts.

Future studies could benefit from exploring the same topics addressed in this study with those student teachers who went through the entire pre-service training process from beginning to end and were not hired. An exit interview may reveal themes and responses that differ from those identified in this study. For example, participants of this study may have such a desire to please their pre-service trainer that their survey responses may have been skewed in a particular direction in order to influence a hiring decision. An exit interview study may reveal other ways to make the pre-service process a more productive and effective process for future student teachers.

Another study involving a sample of student teachers hired for full-time positions with S&I could be conducted as a follow-up to this study to validate the findings of this study. It is very much part of the culture of S&I for seminary teachers to have their

classroom lessons observed on a regular basis. Many of the educational leaders in S&I, such as principals, regional directors, area directors, and central office personnel could benefit from applying the findings of this study to guide the feedback given to the teachers they observe. A study specifically involving currently employed seminary teachers may reveal other information that could improve the feedback process used by educational leaders in Seminaries and Institutes.

## **Conclusion**

Many of the themes that emerged from the analysis of data collected in this study aligned with the existing literature related to effective feedback. The outcomes of this study may benefit educational leaders in many fields. The outcomes however, should mainly impact the effectiveness of pre-service trainers within the S&I pre-service program. The researcher in this study has benefitted from the interview experiences, the extensive analysis of survey responses, and the interaction with other personnel associated with the S&I pre-service program. New practices revealed from data collected and analyzed during this study have already been used by the researcher in providing feedback to both student teachers and full-time seminary teachers alike with favorable outcomes.

Feedback effectiveness increased when feedback was customized, tailored, immediate, specific, direct, and principle-based, focuses on individual strengths, pushes toward improvement, and was given with the best interest of the student teacher in mind. Pre-service trainers who put in the time and effort to gain a deeper understanding of the principles of effective teaching and learning, and who put in the time and effort to develop the type of relationship with student teachers to accurately interpret their



personal needs, will develop the skill set needed to make their feedback the most effective it can be.

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## Appendix A

### Questionnaire for Student Teachers

Evaluation of my teaching is of sufficient frequency to be helpful:

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

Please feel free to explain your response here

----- A new page on the electronic questionnaire / survey -----

The feedback I am receiving is helping me improve my teaching:

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

Please feel free to explain your response here

----- A new page on the electronic questionnaire / survey -----

Upon receiving feedback, I understand where improvement is needed:

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

Please feel free to explain your response here

----- A new page on the electronic questionnaire / survey -----

Feedback has been based upon the standards found in the *Gospel Teaching and Learning Handbook*:

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

Please feel free to explain your response here

----- A new page on the electronic questionnaire / survey -----

After teaching a seminary lesson that was observed by your Pre-Service Trainer and during the feedback and coaching session; what do you feel the Pre-Service Trainer does that helps you improve you're teaching?

Write your response here

----- A new page on the electronic questionnaire / survey -----

Are there specific feedback and coaching techniques that you feel help you more than others?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Describe the techniques you feel work best to help you improve your teaching. (The more specific and detailed your examples the better)

Write your response here

----- A new page on the electronic questionnaire / survey -----

What method of feedback do you think helps you improve more:

- ☐ Pointing out what went well in a lesson, and discussing strengths?
- ☐ Pointing out what went wrong in a lesson, and discussing how to fix weaknesses?
- ☐ A balance of both

Explain why you think this method of feedback is more helpful for you.

Write your response here

----- A new page on the electronic questionnaire / survey -----

Please give an example of something that your Pre-Service Trainer did with you that helped improve your teaching, and helped prepare you for a career as a seminary teacher?

Write your response here

----- A new page on the electronic questionnaire / survey -----

The two main types of teacher evaluation are formative and summative. The main intent of the educational leader doing FORMATIVE EVALUATION is to help the student teacher improve and grow in their teaching and make progress. The main intent of the educational leader doing SUMMATIVE EVALUATION is to judge the skill level and competence of a student teacher in order to make administrative decisions.

When your Pre-Service Trainer does an evaluation / observation of one of your classes what is your perception of the intent of the Pre-Service Trainer:

- ☐ Completely FORMATIVE
- ☐ Mostly FORMATIVE with some SUMMATIVE
- ☐ An equal amount of both FORMATIVE and SUMMATIVE
- ☐ Mostly SUMMATIVE with some FORMATIVE
- ☐ Completely SUMMATIVE

Explain why you think that formative evaluation, summative evaluation or both are helpful for you to become a better student teacher and get hired for a full-time teaching position?

Write your response here

----- A new page on the electronic questionnaire / survey -----

If you were given the opportunity to give feedback or helpful advice to your Pre-Service Trainer and the Pre-Service Trainer in other areas working with other student teachers, what would you recommend to the trainers that would help them be more effective in helping improve the teaching of future student teachers?

Write your response here

## Appendix B

### Questionnaire for Pre-Service Trainer

Evaluation of student teachers is of sufficient frequency to be helpful:

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

Please feel free to explain your response here

----- A new page on the electronic questionnaire / survey -----

The feedback I give student teachers is helping them improve their teaching:

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

Please feel free to explain your response here

----- A new page on the electronic questionnaire / survey -----

Upon giving feedback, student teachers understand where improvement is needed:

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

Please feel free to explain your response here

----- A new page on the electronic questionnaire / survey -----

Feedback has been based upon the standards found in the *Gospel Teaching and Learning Handbook*:

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree



Please feel free to explain your response here

----- A new page on the electronic questionnaire / survey -----

After observing a seminary lesson that was taught by your student teachers and during the feedback and coaching session; what feedback do you feel helps student teachers improve their teaching?

Write your response here

----- A new page on the electronic questionnaire / survey -----

Are there specific feedback and coaching techniques that you feel help your student teachers more than others?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Describe the techniques you feel work best to help improve student teacher performance.  
(The more specific and detailed your examples the better)

Write your response here

----- A new page on the electronic questionnaire / survey -----

What method of feedback do you think helps student teachers improve more:

- ☐ Pointing out what went well in a lesson, and discussing strengths?
- ☐ Pointing out what went wrong in a lesson, and discussing how to fix weaknesses?
- ☐ A balance of both

Explain why you think this method of feedback is more helpful.

Write your response here

----- A new page on the electronic questionnaire / survey -----

Please give an example of something that you as Pre-Service Trainer did with student teachers that helped improve their teaching, and helped prepare them for a career as a seminary teacher?

Write your response here

----- A new page on the electronic questionnaire / survey -----

The two main types of teacher evaluation are formative and summative. The main intent of the educational leader doing FORMATIVE EVALUATION is to help the student teacher improve in their teaching and make progress. The main intent of the educational leader doing SUMMATIVE EVALUATION is to judge the skill level and competence of a student teacher in order to make administrative decisions.

When you as Pre-Service Trainer do an evaluation / observation of one of your student teachers classes do you feel that your intent is:

- ☐ Completely FORMATIVE
- ☐ Mostly FORMATIVE with some SUMMATIVE
- ☐ An equal amount of both FORMATIVE and SUMMATIVE
- ☐ Mostly SUMMATIVE with some FORMATIVE
- ☐ Completely SUMMATIVE

Explain why you think that formative evaluation, summative evaluation or both are more helpful to help student teachers in their current teaching and get hired for a full-time teaching position?

Write your response here

----- A new page on the electronic questionnaire / survey -----

If you were given the opportunity to give feedback or helpful advice to fellow Pre-Service Trainer colleagues in other areas working with other student teachers, what would you recommend to the trainers that would help them be more effective in helping improve the teaching of future student teachers?

Write your response here

## Appendix C

### Questionnaire Cover Letter

Student Teachers / Pre-service Trainers,

This survey is being conducted through the S&I (Seminaries and Institutes) Office of Research to study the feedback process in the S&I pre-service program. We are asking for you to participate in this study by filling out a 5-10 minute questionnaire by 26 February 2015. Participation is optional, and all responses will remain anonymous. Your responses will be combined, in aggregate, with those received from other participants, and they will be used only to identify broad statistical trends and not any individual information.

By clicking on the hyperlink to the survey you consent to anonymously participate in this study. For additional information see: *Consent Form* below, and go to lds.org for *Rights and Use Information (Updated 2/21/2012)* and *Privacy Policy (Updated 3/18/2014)*. Thank you for your time and help.

Follow this link to the Survey:  
[Take the Survey]

Or copy and paste the URL below into your internet browser:  
[URL]

Follow the link to opt out of future emails:  
[Click here to unsubscribe]

If you have questions about this survey, please contact Kevin Dupree at 22 South Pine, Sugar City, ID 83448, or at 1(208) 356-6890, or by email at DupreeKM@ldschurch.org

### Consent Form

#### THE PERCEPTIONS OF PRE-SERVICE TRAINERS AND STUDENT TEACHERS IN SEMINARIES AND INSTITUTES REGARDING FEEDBACK AND COACHING TECHNIQUES.

**Why is this study being done?** We want to learn more about how student teachers and pre-service trainers perceive the feedback and coaching during a post-observation conference.

**How long will the study take?** About 5 to 10 minutes to take the questionnaire.

**Who will see my responses?** All responses are anonymous. Researchers involved in Graduate School dissertation, and pre-service program of Seminaries and Institutes.

**Will it cost me anything to be in the study?** No

**Will being in this study help me in any way?** Participation in this study may improve the effectiveness of the feedback and coaching in pre-service, therefore potentially improving your performance as a student teacher.

**Will I be paid for my time?** No

**Is there any way being in this study could be bad for me?** By clicking on the hyperlink to the questionnaire your responses can not be traced back to you in any way and will remain anonymous.

**What if I have questions?** Please call the head of the study Kevin Dupree (208) 356-6890 if you:

- Have questions about the study.
- Have questions about your rights.

**What should I do if I want to be in the study?** Click the hyperlink to the questionnaire.

## **Appendix D**

### **Pilot Study Email Invitation**

The Student Teacher Coordinator at your university has given me a graduate student researcher permission to invite you to participate in a study involving feedback and coaching you have received as part of your student teaching experience. This survey will take 5-10 minutes of your time, and all answers will remain anonymous.

Follow this link to the Survey:

[Take the Survey]

Or copy and paste the URL below into your internet browser:

[URL]

Thank you,  
Kevin Dupree

## Appendix E

### Pilot Study Cover Letter

We are asking for you to participate in this study by filling out a 5-10 minute questionnaire. Participation is optional, and all responses will remain anonymous. Your responses will be combined, in aggregate, with those received from other participants, and they will be used only to identify broad statistical trends and not any individual information.

By clicking on the hyperlink to the survey you consent to anonymously participate in this study. Thank you for your time and help.

Follow this link to the Survey:  
[Take the Survey]

Or copy and paste the URL below into your internet browser:  
[URL]

If you have questions about this survey, please contact Kevin Dupree at 22 South Pine, Sugar City, ID 83448, or at 1(208) 356-6890, or by email at DupreeKM@ldschurch.org

### Consent Form

#### THE PERCEPTIONS OF PRE-SERVICE TRAINERS AND STUDENT TEACHERS IN SEMINARIES AND INSTITUTES REGARDING FEEDBACK AND COACHING TECHNIQUES.

**Why is this study being done?** We want to learn more about how student teachers and pre-service trainers perceive the feedback and coaching during a post-observation conference.

**How long will the study take?** About 5 to 10 minutes to take the questionnaire.

**Who will see my responses?** All responses are anonymous. Researchers involved in Graduate School dissertation.

**Will it cost me anything to be in the study?** No

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**Will I be paid for my time?** No

**Is there any way being in this study could be bad for me?** By clicking on the hyperlink to the questionnaire your responses can not be traced back to you in any way and will remain anonymous.

**What if I have questions?** Please call the head of the study Kevin Dupree (208) 356-6890 if you:

- Have questions about the study.
- Have questions about your rights.

**What should I do if I want to be in the study?** Click the hyperlink to the questionnaire.

## Appendix F

### Interview Questions for Pre-Service Trainers

#### *Warm-up Questions*

- How long have you been a Pre-Service Trainer?
- How long did you teach seminary before you were assigned to be a Pre-Service Trainer?
- What do you enjoy most about being a Pre-Service Trainer?

#### *Interview Questions*

- The most common response from a survey sent to student teachers about the feedback that they receive from their Pre-Service Trainers is the desire to receive “Specific and Direct feedback,” combined with the idea to focus and work on only one or two items. Why do you think student teachers want / need such specific feedback?
- Survey responses indicated that the majority of Pre-Service Trainers selected discussing strengths to be more effective than discussing weaknesses. The majority of student teachers on the other hand selected discussing weaknesses to be more effective than strengths. Why do you think that was the case?
  - In their written comments most of the student teachers expressed their desire for discussing strengths even when they selected discussing weaknesses in the survey. Why do you think they would select one option but then express a desire for the other?
- Some of the student teachers reported that they “already know their strengths, but can’t see their weaknesses;” while other student teachers reported “I already know my weaknesses, but I don’t recognize my strengths.” How does a Pre-Service Trainer determine and choose which approach to take and / or which approach the student teachers would prefer?
  - What are some ways that a Pre-Service Trainer “reads the needs” of the student teacher?
  - Gary Chapman an author taught a principle in: *The 5 love languages of a Marriage / Children / Teenagers / Military / Workplace...* (explain principle if needed). Does this principle apply to how each student teacher speaks a different “language” and therefore needs feedback based upon the “language” they understand? How do you think Pre-Service Trainers do that?



- Many of the Pre-Service Trainers discussed the concept of “discovery learning” in their survey responses, how do you think they create discovery learning while giving feedback during a post-observation conference?
- The Zone of Proximal Development is when a student is “stretched” just beyond their current level of performance, without stretching so far as to create doubt / lack of confidence and giving up. How should Pre-Service Trainers keep student teachers in their Zone of Proximal Development?
- One of the most common themes of the survey responses was the need of student teachers to feel that the Pre-Service Trainers are “invested in them.” Why do you think this is important to student teachers in a feedback seeking process?
- Student teachers expressed a desire for transparency in the feedback process, do you feel it could negatively impact a student teacher’s teaching for a Pre-Service Trainer to be too transparent in the feedback balance? How should a Pre-Service Trainer find a good balance?

***Concluding Question*** – *To be asked at the 20 minute point in the interview*

- How would you respond if your close friend was just assigned to be a Pre-Service Trainer in another area and he came to you and asked what the most important principle of giving feedback to student teachers is?

***Additional Questions*** – *To be used if interview has not reached the 20 minute point*

- Anxiety was a common theme expressed in the survey results. How could Pre-Service Trainers reduce anxiety in student teachers?
- Why do you think student teachers reported that they feel they understand where improvement is needed much more than Pre-Service Trainers reported they feel student teachers understand feedback?
- Many student teachers mentioned in their responses how “busy” Pre-Service Trainers are. Such as they would desire \_\_\_\_\_ but realize the Pre-Service Trainers are “too busy” or “very busy.” Do you feel that this impression is a good or a bad thing that they feel this way?
  - How could Pre-Service Trainers help student teachers feel invested in, even with busy schedules and time constraints?

## Appendix G

### Interview Questions for Student Teachers

#### *Warm-up Questions*

- How long have you been student teaching seminary?
- Which schools have you student taught at?
- How many classes do you student teach?
- What do you enjoy most about being a student teacher in the S&I Pre-Service program?

#### *Interview Questions*

- The most common response from a survey sent to student teachers about the feedback that they receive from their Pre-Service Trainers is the desire to receive “Specific and Direct feedback,” combined with the idea to focus and work on only one or two items. Why do you think student teachers want / need such specific feedback?
- Survey responses indicated that the majority of Pre-Service Trainers selected discussing strengths to be more effective than discussing weaknesses. The majority of student teachers on the other hand selected discussing weaknesses to be more effective than strengths. Why do you think that was the case?
  - In their written comments most of the student teachers expressed their desire for discussing strengths even when they selected discussing weaknesses in the survey. Why do you think they would select one option but then express a desire for the other?
- Some of the student teachers reported that they “already know their strengths, but can’t see their weaknesses;” while other student teachers reported “I already know my weaknesses, but I don’t recognize my strengths.” How does a Pre-Service Trainer determine and choose which approach to take and / or which approach the student teachers would prefer?
  - What are some ways that a Pre-Service Trainer “reads the needs” of the student teacher?
  - Gary Chapman an author taught a principle in: *The 5 love languages of a Marriage / Children / Teenagers / Military / Workplace...*(explain principle if needed). Does this principle apply to how each student teacher speaks a different “language” and therefore needs feedback based upon the

“language” they understand? How do you think Pre-Service Trainers do that?

- Many of the Pre-Service Trainers discussed the concept of “discovery learning” in their survey responses, how do you think they create discovery learning while giving feedback during a post-observation conference?
- The Zone of Proximal Development is when a student is “stretched” just beyond their current level of performance, without stretching so far as to create doubt / lack of confidence and giving up. How should Pre-Service Trainers keep student teachers in their Zone of Proximal Development?
- One of the most common themes of the survey responses was the need of student teachers to feel that the Pre-Service Trainers are “invested in them.” Why do you think this is important to student teachers in a feedback seeking process?
- Student teachers expressed a desire for transparency in the feedback process, do you feel it could negatively impact a student teacher’s teaching for a Pre-Service Trainer to be too transparent in the feedback balance? How should a Pre-Service Trainer find a good balance?

***Concluding Question*** – *To be asked at the 20 minute point in the interview*

- How would you respond if your close friend was just assigned to be a Pre-Service Trainer in another area and he came to you and asked what the most important principle of giving feedback to student teachers is?

***Additional Questions*** – *To be used if interview has not reached the 20 minute point*

- Anxiety was a common theme expressed in the survey results. How could Pre-Service Trainers reduce anxiety in student teachers?
- Why do you think student teachers reported that they feel they understand where improvement is needed much more than Pre-Service Trainers reported they feel student teachers understand feedback?
- Many student teachers mentioned in their responses how “busy” Pre-Service Trainers are. Such as they would desire \_\_\_\_\_ but realize the Pre-Service Trainers are “too busy” or “very busy.” Do you feel that this impression is a good or a bad thing that they feel this way?
  - How could Pre-Service Trainers help student teachers feel invested in, even with busy schedules and time constraints?

## Appendix H

### Selections of Survey and Interview Responses

#### Results and Findings

#### Specific and Direct Feedback

##### Specific feedback.

Responses from pre-service trainers about the specific nature of feedback included:

- Don't just provide what is wrong [with the lesson], without providing solutions as well for improvement.
- I think they all want to improve. I think they know there are gaps and they need to get better and that they want to get better. I think sometimes they just don't know how, they just don't know where the gaps are. So, I think they are saying, I want to know specifically what I need to do to get better instead of vague ideas, but just, show me what it is so I can just do it.
- Connect feedback with *Gospel Teaching and Learning* (GTL) standards - specifically identifying the standard and page number where possible.
- Well, we hope it is a desire to change, and change seems to occur better the more specific it [feedback] is. There are general principles that apply to everyone, and then there are specific changes that are specific to the individual.
- It really depends on the lesson and on the teacher. If the teacher is pretty close to meeting expectations, then emphasizing strengths and recognizing what they are doing well so they [these practices] can be repeated is very effective while just fine tuning areas of weakness. If the teacher needs a lot of improvement then often there aren't enough strengths to effectively build upon. In this case, pin pointing specific and actionable areas of weakness that can be improved upon seems to be more helpful.

Responses from student teachers regarding specific feedback:

- I think having specific feedback allows you to pinpoint exact things that you need to improve on, and I know in my experience when I was observed, the most beneficial feedback I received was when specific areas were addressed, and specific things I can improve on.
- Well, the more specific [the feedback], the easier it is to improve. I feel like I do get specific and direct feedback. If there is a specific feedback suggestion, then I know exactly what I need to do to improve.
- So, I think the specific feedback really helps us go, and the next time we prepare a lesson we can think, that is what I didn't do very well the last time, so this is what

I can improve on this time. So, the more specific the feedback is, the easier it is to actually implement that in the classroom.

- What a blessing this has been in my life. I'm a public school teacher and the difference in evaluating is enormous. Every time I get evaluated I receive direct, specific feedback that helps me on my path to improvement.
- My pre-service coordinator is right on target, giving constructive feedback that is encouraging, while specifically targeting areas where I need to improve. He is truly a master teacher as he guides me to discover for myself what I need to change.
- The feedback given is correct; I never feel like they give me something not useful or I feel that is wrong. But sometimes, it is way too much to handle or remember. Also, it's frustrating to hear the same thing over and over again, understanding the principle of the feedback, but not understanding how to completely change or improve the teaching skills. How does that exactly apply to me?
- The feedback provided is specific and direct, nothing generic.
- I like the specific examples he gives of what I've done well and where I have missed opportunities to do what our handbook teaches.
- I very much appreciated the feedback based upon the GTL. When we can go through the manual, pull out specifics on what I did well and what I can improve upon! Thank you for all the positives and for showing me in the manual how it all fits into the lesson. I appreciated hearing that you could see your child in my classroom.
- It has helped most when we go back over a specific moment in the lesson that was just observed to think of a few alternative ways that I could have re-worded a question or followed up with another question to accomplish greater understanding.
- My trainer has always used specific examples from my lesson to illustrate the points he makes. That way, I can think back and see where the suggestion is specifically applicable and then use it in future teaching situations.
- Specific examples and specific ways in which I can apply the given technique and skill. Questions also help me express what I'm thinking and feeling. When they go off of my thoughts and feelings I am more invested in the feedback.
- I feel that the best feedback is to tell me specific things that I can do to improve. Telling me I am doing a good job does nothing. But looking for those things that I can improve on and addressing those specific topics really helps.
- A trainer helped me identify something I needed to improve on, then gave me specific actions and approaches I can take to improve in that area in the classroom. On one occasion I needed help in asking *apply questions* [emphasis added]. The trainer gave me examples of apply questions that I could have used in the lesson that day. Then, the trainer showed me how they created those

questions, how they developed the phrasing of the question, and how best to ask the question once you have formed it. The instructor could have left it at giving me examples of apply questions I should have used, but that only teaches me that they know how to develop apply questions. This trainer taught me *how* [emphasis added] to develop those apply question through specific actions.

### **Direct feedback.**

Sample responses from pre-service trainers about direct feedback included:

- Well, like the youth want it straight and undiluted, I think student teachers, they are serious about what they do, and they want to improve. You could say, you're doing fine just keep working, but that doesn't do them specifically a lot of good. What can I work on? What am I missing? Where am I falling short? I think they do want it direct so they can make improvements.
- It can be challenging; depending on the teacher. Some teachers are much more open to it and it is much easier to be direct and blunt. Some are a little more sensitive and maybe lack confidence a little bit, so it is a little more difficult with some. So that can be challenging to know how to say it right, so that it is productive instead of destructive to a teacher.
- It is the individual; it's like working with your own children, you can see things in working with them, how they accept counsel when you give it. Some children you have to approach differently. I have found that to be the case with my teachers. Sometimes my approach with one is not necessarily the same approach with the other. And, that is why I love the counsel by Brother Howell, we should be simple, direct to the level that we need to be, that understanding is at a high level, that after the feedback session they are lifted and motivated to implement some of those ideas. I think if a trainer is not careful, instead of lifting they could suppress.
- So, it is not only my goal with the student teachers to have an edifying experience as we meet together to help them prepare to teach, but also help me to see what I can do to help this teacher reach that objective with the students. Many times I have thought if I give them all the feedback they need right now it is just going to crush their confidence. They are going to have a hard time standing in front of this class. So it will be detrimental to the students and them. So I am going to share one or two things that they can do better, and uplift them and give them encouragement. I think you sense that, and you feel it.
- If we just go in there and hammer on the negative, I don't think that is what we ought to do. I will tell you why we ought to talk about the positive, is because you don't want them to quit doing it. You go in there and you nail the weakness, and you never tell them what is going right, they will just work on that and throw everything else out. That has been my experience, they just throw it out, and

you're going, umm, [ask] "why did you throw that out?" "Because I was working on that other deal." So you don't want them to give up on that at all. So, I think that is a practical application, you just need to train in one or two things and come back the next day.

- Well, you never want this job to be a personal evaluation. I think when you give weaknesses, sometimes a student teacher might take that so personal. For instance when you say, "I don't think that we are making a connection between the teacher and the students in this class very well." What you are afraid of as a pre-service trainer is that what the student teachers will interpret that as; I don't connect [with] teenagers, period. And, pretty soon they label themselves and you don't want them to do that; you don't want them to take it too far. And so you get nervous that you give them a little information and they take it ... you know President Packers fly and sledgehammer, when all you need is a fly swatter. You are afraid that they might take that as the Bible truth for everything for their life. So you are hesitant to give too much hard dose medicine. So, there is hesitancy with that. I think it was Brother Webb [who] talked about when you give feedback in in-service that it needs to be edifying. You need to be careful that you don't damage and that you don't hurt, and that you don't dump too much on. So we always want to error on the side of generosity and kindness. So that is kind of where we are coming from on that.
- I think as a pre-service trainer you have a relationship with each student teacher, and you know how far you can push each student teacher. I have one that says he wants feedback, but he can never handle it. So I am very delicate, because he said once, I gave him one suggestion and he said, did I do anything good today? Well yea, absolutely! I could list seven or eight different things that he did very well, and talking with his principal he said, "he won't ever receive feedback from me," I told him, "me either," he just wants to hear good things. Not just body language but expressions they can say. "Well ya, but." They might justify, when you give feedback and they give justification why they did certain things, then what they are really saying is, "that's enough; I'm done." So, you have to be careful. It's a balance each time you go out. So I have to be careful.

Sample responses from student teachers regarding direct feedback included the following:

- I think if you sugar-coat things that doesn't really help anybody. For me, I want to know exactly what I am doing wrong and maybe even what I am doing right. So, then, I can know what I need to adjust and what I am doing well so that I can continue doing. So having that direct feedback is really helpful.
- Sometime they are not as specific as I would like them to be.

- The feedback I receive does help me improve my teaching. However, I would like to see more follow up when addressing a specific issue or problem that I might be having. A more definite answer that acknowledges exactly what I am doing right or wrong is always helpful. I understand that this may be difficult for a trainer to do since there are so many different teaching styles.
- Giving me specific things I can improve. For example, giving me a specific example of what I could have done better during the class observed, and then helping me understand how I can improve. A good trainer is only as good as s/he can lead and coach you to improvement. Also, I've noticed that the more transparent feedback has been the more understandable and applicable it becomes.
- Direct, concise, things I need to work on and not too many at a time.
- I respond really well to direct feedback. The more direct, the better. I need to be able to see directly what it is I need to work on, so I can create goals to improve.
- Direct. Specific. I had a time where an instructor was very direct in my feedback, telling me he was sick of seeing me make the same mistakes and that it was time to see improvement. I appreciated it. I also like when they pull specific examples out of my lesson and show me exactly where I could've implemented something or where I could've taken something out.
- I like that my strengths are discussed. I need that, especially for my own confidence as a teacher. However, I learn most from specific examples of times I missed the mark. It is handled well. I don't feel degraded, but sure humbled, and it helps me see a lot of room for improvement.
- Don't be afraid to give us the truth straight and clear. Beating around the bush can sometimes lead to a misunderstanding of what it is we need to work on, so for me at least I like hearing what I need to work on put pretty directly.
- Maybe we would like to be a little comforted first before we begin. I think maybe it is easier to accept what our weaknesses are after they tell us about our strengths. But really we do want the weaknesses. I think we want it direct, but perhaps we feel more comfortable and less self-concise, and less self-critical, and that could lead to some self-confidence issues. Sometimes you can come out of a lesson feeling kind of bad about yourself because of the things you have to work on. So even though we want the areas to improve, it eases that process a little bit.
- I have an example of one of the post-observation feedback conferences with Brother blank. There was one time when he just went straight into the weaknesses with me, and it was a little bit discouraging; so I kind of felt bad and got down on myself a little bit. He kind of just left it at that by just focusing on the weaknesses and I really was discouraged, so I felt like at least at the end he could have pointed out a couple of strengths and built me back up.
- I would say just give straight forward feedback. That's how I would appreciate it. So if I did something wrong, tell me. If I do something well, I would like to know



as well. Brother blank told us that he had a son that went through this process, and he felt that there were things said to him that led him on a little bit, so during the whole process things were going extremely well and there was no doubt that he would be hired. There was no doubt in his mind. And, then he wasn't hired and it completely devastated him. So, he wishes that his son would have gotten some feedback from a different angle, and maybe had other things pointed out to him, instead of just things that he is doing well, because I think that could be misleading.

- I like it when they talk straight with me about both my strengths and my weaknesses. I like it that he doesn't beat around the bush with me. And, that he knows that I can take it. It's not like he is rude to me or anything, but he can be blunt and that is okay. He is not worried that I am going to take offense to what he says. And, what is nice is he allows me to give my comments back.
- He is blunt, honest, and transparent. Before I felt beat up every time I was observed. This time I feel constructive criticism and love.
- Don't mince words. Just tell it like it is and let them know how they're doing. I love it when I hear, "you need to change this," but I also love to hear, "you know what? You are doing really well. Keep up the good work." I think that transparency is key, and I have greatly appreciated that.
- He set up a time to discuss a lesson he evaluated with him. During that session he showed me some areas that I was not doing well, and proceeded to give me examples of how I could have done better (rather than just pointing out that there was error). He also made sure that I understood that he was giving the "harsher" critique at that time because he saw the potential and wanted to make sure that I reached it.

### **Narrow List of Specific Feedback Items**

Responses from pre-service trainers about a narrow list of specific feedback items included:

- Feedback needs be based out of the GTL and be very specific. Identifying one or two things specifically is very important and letting the teacher work on them is very important. Giving too much or too many things is not very helpful and will most likely overwhelm the teacher.
- I think with my interactions with them that it is hard to wrap their mind around seven or eight things that they need to do better. It's hard to plan a lesson with that much in mind for a class. I think having one or two things gives them a focus.
- I usually evaluate the student teachers every week to every week and a half. I think a consistent visit and feedback helps to re-enforce the good they are doing

and to give them one or two things to work on. Too much feedback I think will overwhelm them and not give them enough time to practice and implement feedback previously given.

- You don't want them confused, it's like going in and cutting everything away and say, ok, "I need you to work on these one or two things." If you do too many things they can't do all that. If you are going to train on something, no matter what it is I think there is a lot of truth in fixing the one little thing at a time.

Responses from student teachers regarding a narrow list of specific feedback items included:

- I know that I appreciate getting specific feedback; I feel that if I get a big list of things that becomes overwhelming and that turns me off pretty quick. I start feeling bad about myself, thinking maybe I can't do this; maybe I am not good enough. And, when it is very specific, those are things that I can do, I can focus on one or two things and change and hopefully adjust. And then, when they come in later and say, what about this and this, and then I can adjust that. Then, hopefully, I can become better that way.
- I find it helpful when I get specific feedback and just one or two things to work on, because I think that is a manageable goal. There have been times when I have gotten feedback and it felt like it was just so much and I have no idea where to start. So, I recognize that I have so much I need to do to improve, but, where do you start. So, it has to be direct. Sometimes there are things you need to hear, like if you did something really poorly; you need to hear that. But, if you do something really well, you want to hear that, too. It's also helpful to hear from another human being, you are doing this really well. Or, you need to change this or tweak this [in] this way.
- There is so much that we are trying to learn how to do and there is a lot going on, and for these veteran teachers, sometimes you just forget about everything there is going on, and so when you are getting feedback and they say, "fix this, and this, and this, and do this;" and all of a sudden you have this big list and you don't know where to start. So, if you can just focus on one or two things and you try to master those, and then ... okay give me some others next week and I will start working on those; it is easier to learn how to master those things.
- They always help. Sometimes they can overwhelm with too many suggestions that nothing is taken from it. Focus on just one or two.
- I feel I am helped most when I receive one or two specific things to work on. I occasionally receive a laundry list of things that need to change. While useful in helping me realize that I have a lot of work to do, it often becomes overwhelming and seemingly impossible to change everything at once. However, with one or

two specific things, I find that I can manage the changes and see real growth in my teaching.

- The instructor gives feedback on one or two areas, so I am not overwhelmed.
- I am asked to summarize what I am understanding and taking away from the feedback. Then, my pre-service leader helps me focus on one or two things to implement not everything all at once.
- I always have one to three specific things I can improve upon. It's never too much to take in, but it's always a stretch.
- He lists three or so things that I did well, and then gives me a few suggestions. Very helpful, because I get positive reinforcement as well as areas to improve.
- My instructor helps me feel the spirit and gives me hope that I can improve. He simplifies the critique so I can focus on one or two things. He is always positive and constructive in his advice. He sandwiches his constructive advice with positive things I am already doing.
- I like when my instructors point out the things they want me to improve on. I also like when they only select two or three things to improve on, so that I can focus on those things, and so I do not get discouraged.
- Giving me a couple things to focus on and improve is very helpful. Bombarding me with the many things I did wrong overwhelms me, so there needs to be moderation in the feedback.
- Sometimes too much feedback can be detrimental. Trying to fix everything at once causes overload and poorer performance. I know trainers are excited to watch us improve, but focusing on one or two things would be more helpful. Then, the next time I'll be ready for more.
- Simple, simple, simple. Your huge laundry lists of tweaks are great and all, but the ones that teach and help me the most are the ones who give me simple and clear feedback.

## **Descriptive and Principle-Based**

### **Descriptive feedback.**

Responses from pre-service trainers about descriptive feedback included:

- I think I would say make it clear. It needs to be clear and it needs to be actionable. It needs to be something they can do instead of resorting to vague platitudes. To pay the price and study so that you can walk into the classroom and see what it is that they need to work on and be able to articulate that clearly and in a way with feedback that is actionable, so that they can leave thinking, “ok this is what I need to do,” so they can do it instead of leaving with a foggy idea of what I need to do.

So, just to study teaching, to study the Gospel Teaching and Learning Handbook, to understand the fundamentals really clearly; to have it all straight in our mind so that we really, really have a firm grasp on the fundamentals of gospel teaching and learning, so when we walk into a classroom we can see what is good, and what is not good based on the price we have paid to understand the fundamentals.

- I think you have to tame the inner expert as a trainer; meaning that we have a lot of experience so we see a lot of things. We see all kinds of things that they can improve on. And, there is just tons of things because there is just a whole universe to teaching. So, I think you have to select instead of just dumping the whole list on them all at once. You have to select what will make the most difference for them at this time. And just focus on a few things that will make the most difference rather than giving them way too much. Because, then, I think they get into that panic zone where they think that they have way too much to do; because there is just way too much to think about. So, I think just keeping it simple by selecting just a few things that will make the biggest impact will keep them in that learning zone.
- And, it seems that if they will articulate their strengths of their teaching, at least that one day. Because the other thing that you have to remember is this, that watching teachers is like [the way that] certain medical scanners work when they just take slices. It's just a snapshot of what you see in one section. And, you better not judge their whole life on this one thing. I wouldn't want to be graded on one thirty-minute deal. But, you better have seen them enough so that you see the big picture, and you have seen a pattern. Another thing that works well after a lesson, is when you say these are things that went well, and point out all that went well, but then point out one thing that they can improve on.
- Those type[s] of questions are healthy for my feedback sessions; it focuses on what they are thinking, and it really helps crystalize my thinking. I could come into a feedback session knowing, this is what I need to say, that is not really wise. I think you need to really assess what they are thinking and where they are at. In a way, I am becoming the teacher in that setting of feedback in the same way we want the teacher to be doing with the youth. We want the teacher to see where the students are at and where they are coming from, and to be able to help them discover new things and to feel the truth of it and apply it. That same concept happens in the feedback session, at least it should. If I can get them to ask a question and seek feedback that is better and more effective.
- There are times when it is glaring what feedback needs to be given and then there are other times where we almost explore it together.
- Coaching or mentoring without time to practice briefly is least effective. Having students formulate their own take away principles is also most effective. Beginning with prayer is also effective. Illustrations, modeling, and analogies

seem to help the students retain the feedback longer. Kind, but candid feedback is only fair.

- Giving feedback like I would teach a lesson. Helping teachers discover correct principles of teaching and then understand, feel, and apply those principles. This is most effectively done through good questioning that leads to student teacher discovery instead of telling them how to improve. Once the principles are identified then it is most helpful to give examples of how to implement the principles and if time [allows] model and practice them.
- Providing feedback in the same way I would teach a lesson. That is in helping student teachers identify areas of strengths and weakness by asking good questions that leads them to discovery instead of just telling them what was right or wrong. Coaching by modeling how to incorporate a skill or fundamental is an effective way to improve teacher performance. Also, giving them time to practice doing it themselves after I have modeled it helps to solidify understanding.
- Modeling, in class, how to incorporate the fundamentals of gospel teaching and learning. Student teachers seem to learn best when they see the principles, skills, and practices demonstrated in actual teaching rather than just having them defined in general. I take as many opportunities as I can to model what it would look like; as if they were teaching their students. This seems to help them improve their teaching. Also, allowing them time to practice incorporating skills in class is effective.

Responses from student teachers regarding descriptive feedback included:

- He not only explains what I could work on, but he explains how it would be done correctly, or better, when I get into that situation the next time. It really gets in my mind the right way to do things. It's really helpful to have it shown, or at least explained, how to do the thing that I need to improve on.
- Sometimes they look at a lesson and notice a lot of ways it could improve, so they have to decide, what is the most important thing that will help the students improve the most? Some things are little tweaks and some things are big, just deciding what is going to help the most.
- By getting an understanding of what I understand, by letting me talk. He listens to me first to get an understanding of what I need to work on, then he goes into teaching mode where he explains to me what I should do. Most of the time I bring up what he has taken notes on. He notices the same things I do.
- So, he will see something, and he will throw out a scenario or give an analogy and you know right where he is going already, but then he will ask you the question, "What do you think about this?" Or "How would you approach this?" And, in answering that question you realized that you create your own feedback for how you could have fixed or improved that lesson.

- The thing that I really appreciate with my pre-service trainer is that he has taken time to get to know how we teach. He has been in the classroom enough to know where our strengths are and where our weakness are and then play to which ever one we need. I honestly don't know how they do it, but I feel like he knows what I need and when he is giving feedback he knows what I needed to hear. Because there was a day when he just flat out said, "Uh, this wasn't great." And I knew it. I knew it right off. And, another day he came in and said, "Solid lesson," and I felt like it was nothing, meaning that I didn't do a great job at all. I think he just knew what I needed to hear right at that moment. And knew me well enough to know this is where she is at.
- He explains very simply - and doesn't seem to concern himself too much about fluff. He's focused on fundamentals of gospel teaching.
- It's always lovingly correcting. I always feel like I'm being told what I do well and what I can improve on all at once. And the feedback I receive is on aspects of my teaching style that would be difficult for me to improve without having another person observing me.
- I understand where I need to improve, but could maybe use a little more help understanding HOW to get there. I think it would be helpful to use examples from the lesson I taught on what or where I could have improved.
- My pre-service trainer usually coaches on the basics, "What principle did you identify when you were reading through the section?" "Did the students learn the same principle?" "Was this a topical lesson or sequential scripture study?" "Did they appropriately understand the principle before you tried to move into feel?" Basic questions like these help me really see from an outsider's perspective how my lesson flowed and where I need clarification or improvement.
- Taking what I did wrong, and showing me how I could have done it right. Examples of them teaching are awesome; but having them come into my world of where I think and do and correcting it there is really effective. For example, I did a game in class and the Trainer took the game and the scripture block I was in and showed me how to use it way more effectively using the scriptures.
- I already know what did not go well in my lesson and will probably be beating myself up about it for the rest of the day anyway. It is more helpful for me to have someone else come in and show me what I did well and what I should keep doing because I typically don't see that myself.
- Knowing what not to do doesn't help unless you know what "to" do in order to replace it.
- The most helpful feedback comes when the Pre-Service Trainer tells me things that I have improved on and shows me how I have improved on them. Sometimes the focus of the feedback session is only a snapshot of my teaching on one lesson and only on the things I need to improve. By reaching back to previous lessons

and showing me how I have improved, the feedback becomes much larger than a single lesson and helps me continue to improve.

- The feedback that I feel works best to help me improve my teaching has been the feedback expressed with examples from the trainers experience.
- My pre-service director is very good at using analogies to explain why I can change some things which is very helpful for me to be able to implement them.
- They give specific examples and doctrines from my lesson that day to show things I did well and areas of improvement--they model it for me.
- First, asking me what went well and why and what did not go well and why. Second, after identifying the overarching principle to improve on, we look what the GTL handbook teaches. Lastly, we practice or role play.
- Discussion followed by enactment. Some sort of practice. You don't go to baseball practice and listen to the coach teach how to swing a bat without being given a bat to imitate his teachings... I think sometimes we discuss it without practicing it resulting in good theory and low effectiveness.
- My pre-service instructor usually takes me up to the white board and opens up the scriptures to discuss how I could have taught a principle that would have been more impactful. In another instance, I was having trouble with a class that was just quiet and sometimes disconnected. My pre-service instructor held me up in another classroom five minutes into my next class until the students started the devotional on their own. He was showing me that even though I'm having some trouble with them, they are good kids. I feel like that was a turning point in how I viewed those students. Could that same principle have been taught by him just saying they're good kids? Sure. But it wouldn't have had as great of an impact as it did for me that day.
- Taking time to walk me through the process helps me. It is hard for me to hear or read theory; I need a hands on approach to learn.
- I also feel I improve when they give me examples of what they are suggesting might look like in practice.
- Demonstration is THE BEST way for me to understand how to improve. Instead of telling me how to be better, they almost always SHOW me how to be better. They model the lesson in a way that helps me SEE how it should work, and then they let me try. I often fail at the first attempt, but it helps me grow SO MUCH!
- A Trainer helped me identify something I needed to improve on, then gave me specific actions and approaches I can take to improve in that area in the classroom. On one occasion I needed help in asking "apply questions." The Trainer gave me examples of apply questions that I could have used in the lesson that day. THEN the Trainer showed me how they created those questions, how they developed the phrasing of the question, and how best to ask the question once you have formed it.

- The instructor could have left it at giving me examples of apply questions I should have used, but that only teaches me that they know how to develop apply questions. This Trainer taught me HOW to develop those apply question through specific actions.
- It has helped most when we go back over a specific moment in the lesson that was just observed to think of a few alternative ways that I could have re-worded a question, or followed up with another question to accomplish greater understanding.
- My trainer first helped me to feel good about my teaching. He then showed me where in my lesson I could have gone just a little bit further to help bring the doctrine home and have the students apply it in their lives. He took me to that moment and helped me to see what question(s) I could have asked to make the moment more powerful.
- One time He came with a list of all the different evaluations that he and the other instructor had done. He marked areas of strength and areas of weakness. I could see over a period of time where my strengths were and where I needed work. I know it took him a lot of time to gather all that information and put it together. - He gives me examples of how to teach.
- One time one of my Pre-Service Trainers came in and helped me prepare for my next lesson the coming day. Though I still prepared my own lesson it was very helpful for when I might have had a question that just needed a little more tweaking in order to ask it maybe a little better or an idea that could be more clearly explained. It allowed me to see how most of what I was struggling at when I was teaching actually had to do more with how I was preparing for the lesson. It allowed me to see what to look for when preparing for a lesson and how to strategically prepare for more inspiring discussions.

### **Principle-based Feedback**

Responses from pre-service trainers about principle-based feedback included:

- Using the *GT&L Handbook* as a standard for feedback is an absolute. The principles and skills outlined in the *Handbook* do not change from seminary to seminary or from area to area or from pre-service trainer to another trainer. The constant [use] of the *Handbook* will bless every teacher in S&I.
- [Trainers] give [student teachers] feedback from the *GT&L Handbook* that is pertinent to where it applied in the lesson. We refer to a part of the lesson and read the applicable principle from the *Handbook*. We then discuss, model, and then often have them practice: Define – Model – Practice –Feedback.
- [I] give *Handbook*-based feedback and have them mark the *Handbook*, model, let



them practice, give feedback, have them make a goal to use what they have learned in their teaching, and then report back to me about a week later with successes, challenges, and other questions.

- Feedback needs be based out of the *GT&L Handbook* and be very specific. Identifying one or two things specifically is very important, and letting the teacher work on them is very important. Giving too much or too many things [to work on] is not very helpful and will most likely overwhelm the teacher.
- [Trainers] connect feedback with *GT&L [Handbook]* standards—specifically identifying the standard and page number, when possible. [We] have teachers record themselves teaching and evaluate themselves to see if they can recognize strengths and weaknesses, when they aren't in the heat of the moment. [We] base in-service on what [we] are observing, not [on] a set schedule created in advance.
- [We] KNOW the *GT&L Handbook*! [We] teach and train from it, making it the standard for all [we] do as a trainer. The shelf-life of the *Handbook* will long outlast the shelf-life and impact of a trainer!

Responses from student teachers regarding principle-based feedback included:

- I think one thing that would help is to really study the *Handbook* to really know what the Church expects from seminary teachers, and then when [trainers] talk to [us], rather than [tell] what we did wrong, necessarily, [we] can compare with the *Handbook*. And [we] look at those teaching fundamentals, and [we] can say, “Are we reaching these?” And then it can be a standard for the student teachers. By comparing it [this] way, we keep [our] vision in the right place of ... what we are trying to become, as well as not attacking the student teacher, necessarily.
- Before [the trainer] ever tells me anything, he always asks how I felt the lesson went, and how the lesson for the day fit into the fundamentals of gospel teaching. We have gone through the checklist of what was accomplished that day with regards to the fundamentals in the *Handbook*. It has been impressive to me how he has got me to step back and look at the bigger picture, even on days he doesn't observe, he has trained me to step back and look at the big picture of how the lesson worked.
- [Feedback] always comes from the *Gospel Teaching and Learning Handbook*, which is extremely useful. Sometimes it may be more beneficial if the information were presented with a place I could go in the *Handbook* to study more and prepare more for that topic, including possible role-plays [that] I could do to improve that teaching skill, but I understand that this may be difficult for pre-service trainers to do.
- Every comment is always tied back to the *Handbook*. It's helpful to see that it's not just pre-service coming up with their own opinions, but rather things [are]

directed from the *Handbook* itself. It helps me have more confidence in the *Handbook* and want to apply it more into my teaching.

- I don't think my pre-service trainer has ever given me feedback that was not directly from the *GT&L Handbook*. He is so amazing!
- I think my pre-service trainer has the *Gospel Teaching and Learning Handbook* memorized paragraph by paragraph. He has a mini version that he carries around with him all the time. He probably doesn't need it because he can almost quote the whole thing word for word. This is something that both my wife and I have noticed that almost 100% of the feedback he gives, he references it with a page or paragraph from the *GT&L Handbook*.
- The verbal feedback seemed more based upon personal preference. With two [trainers], I got two different opinions. For instance, I had asked "Bro. A" if I could have a "Tender Mercy" moment in the beginning of class—just an opportunity for a couple [of] students to share their testimonies. He said it sounded great. Our principal and two other teachers were doing it, and I loved the spirit it created. When "Bro. B" came in, and three students had shared their testimonies as part of a lesson, he asked if I had made it a habit to have them do that. I said, "No, this was the first time." He then told me that we don't have "testimony meetings" in our lessons and to steer away from that. I can name several other times when I was very confused on what was "right" and what was "wrong," based upon contradictory counsel given verbally by the [trainers].
- I very much appreciated the feedback based upon the *GT&L Handbook* when we can go through the [*Handbook*, and] pull out specifics on what I did well and what I can improve upon! Thank you for all the positives and for showing me in the [*Handbook*] how it all fits into the lesson. I appreciated hearing that [my trainer] could see [his] child in my classroom.
- [My trainers] always direct me back to the *Handbook* and the five fundamentals of student learning.
- I like when the [trainers] take me to the *GT&L Handbook* to identify areas that went well in my lesson, and things I can improve. By using the *Handbook*, I am also given a resource along with the coaching. I also need to hear positive feedback. When my pre-service trainer tells me what I am doing right, I make an effort to continue doing those things. I am also more motivated when I know that my pre-service trainer sees me using things [that] I have learned and identifies them.
- When I have specific sections from the *GT&L Handbook*, I can go back and study what it is I need to work on. I also like when I can see examples of what it is [that] I need to be doing.

- [It helps] when the [trainer] gives me examples of moments in the lesson where I could have asked a better question, or something that I could have done differently. I also enjoy it when we go right to the *GT&L Handbook*.

## Discovery Learning

Responses from pre-service trainers about discovery learning included:

- It is just like teaching; ... the same principles of teaching a lesson apply to giving good feedback. In fact, my student teachers are my students, and the feedback process is how I get to teach them. Asking good questions is at the heart of it, just like asking good questions is at the [heart of] discovery learning of a teaching lesson. Asking good questions is at the heart of them discovering at the feedback session. Instead of [me] telling [them, I ask] good questions; so it is very much a teaching setting.
- In a way, I am becoming the teacher in that setting of [giving] feedback in the same way we want the teacher to be doing with the youth. We want the teacher to see where the students are at, where they are coming from, and to be able to help them discover new things, and to feel truth of it, and apply it. That same concept happens in the feedback session, at least it should. If I can get the them to ask a question and seek feedback that is better and more effective.
- [I] give feedback like I would teach a lesson—helping teachers discover correct principles of teaching, and then understand, feel, and apply those principles. This is most effectively done through good questions that lead to student teacher discovery, instead of telling them how to improve. Once the principles are identified, then it is most helpful to give examples of how to implement the principles, and if [there is] time, [we] model and practice them.
- Again, discovery [happens] for the student teacher through good questions. This allows them to discover and own it themselves, but also allows the pre-service trainer to see if the student teacher understands where he or she is doing well, and where he or she needs to improve. When they discover needs, or if I need to point them out, I use the *Gospel Teaching and Learning [Handbook]*, as well as the scriptures, particularly the scripture block just taught.
- My feedback needs to match the fundamentals that I train the teachers to do with their youth. There needs to be an environment of love, respect, and purpose. The Spirit needs to be invited; discovery needs to happen etc. The student teacher does most [of] the talking, and I guide the conversation.
- Coaching or mentoring without time to practice briefly is least effective. Having student [teachers] formulate their own “take away principles” is also most effective. Beginning with prayer is very effective. Illustrations, modeling, and

analogies seem to help the student [teachers] retain the feedback longer. Kind but candid feedback is only fair.

- Positive, encouraging feedback helps student teachers improve. The most important technique is asking a few questions to help the student teachers discover, and [then I] articulate the feedback I would normally offer.
- I choose to ask them discovery questions about their lessons. [I then use] follow-up questions allowing me to explore more [about] what they saw. Often times this is sufficient because they can see where they need to improve. As they discover it for themselves, rather than me pointing it out, they comprehend better, own the feedback, and are more willing to try to implement it.
- Reserving time for the teacher to figure out for themselves what they could improve [is vital]. Discussions from the handbook are most fruitful. Never give what to change [feedback] without giving the how to change it.
- [I] provide feedback in the same way I would teach a lesson. That is in helping student teachers identify areas of strengths and weakness by asking good questions that lead them to discovery instead of just telling them what is right or wrong. Coaching by modeling how to incorporate a skill or fundamental is an effective way to improve teacher performance. Also, giving them time to practice doing it themselves, after I have modeled it, helps to solidify understanding.
- For me, most teachers do a good job. They instantly want to focus on what they feel they did wrong, or what we think they could do better. I prefer to help them discover great moments in class, and then backtrack to discover what the roots were that helped bring about those fruits. If they discover that, they can replicate it as well [with] confidence.

Responses from student teachers on discovery learning included:

- My trainer is really good at that; he will take me back through the lesson and point out what I did well, and then ask how [I] could have done this differently to achieve this outcome which causes me to think about it, and realize what I could have done. So through [asking] questions, the trainer gets me to try to discover on my own what I should do to make improvements in the lesson, so I end up giving myself the feedback that I need.
- It's that discovery learning part [where] I feel like whenever I have been given feedback, it's because I have said it. And he has guided me by asking the right questions and helping me realize what changes I need to make. I have discovered because he has coached me into realizing [it], not just [by] him telling me. So [my] discovering what I need to do better is far more effective than him telling me [that] I should work on this, or this is what I should do. He can definitely give me

suggestions like: “what if you looked at it this way,” but ultimately, it is usually what I have discovered on my own that makes me improve my teaching.

- Before he ever tells me anything, he always asks how I felt the lesson went, and how the lesson for the day fit into the fundamentals of gospel teaching. We have gone through the checklist of what was accomplished that day with regards to the fundamentals in the *Handbook*. It has been impressive to me how he has got me to step back and look at the bigger picture; even on days [that] he does not observe [me teaching], he has trained me to step back and look at the big picture of how the lesson worked.
- [Trainers teach] the same way we do with the kids, [by] asking good questions. For example, they ask questions about my lesson to help me realize what I should do to improve, [and] then I think it is my idea, and I want to do it. They then ask me to give examples of some questions I could have asked. So it’s an exchange of questions to help me think through the lesson, and what I can do to improve.
- .... Part of that discovery learning is listening. The pre-service trainer is listening to find out where the holes are in [our] understanding, and then [we] go fill in those holes, and [this] helps [us] discover what [we] should do on our own.
- I think we can really discover on our own what they would like us to do in the classroom. I think it sticks in our minds and in our hearts a lot more. I can remember [thinking], “Ok, now I really understand what the *Handbook* is teaching, and what [they] would like us to do, because I went through this rigorous process of trying to figure it out.”
- [A trainer] will see something, and he will throw out a scenario or give an analogy, and [I] know right where he is going already, but then he will ask the question, “What do you think about this, or how would you approach this?” And in answering that question, [I] realize that you create your own feedback for how you could have fixed or improved that lesson.
- . . . [My trainer] does a good job of this.... It seems like the first questions he always asks when we sit down is what I feel like went well in the lesson, and what areas could improve, and that opens up my mind to self-reflection and thinking about where the lesson could have gone better.
- So, it was helpful that he pointed me in the right direction, and then let me go, so, I could go discover on my own.
- My pre-service [trainer] is right on target giving [me] constructive feedback that is encouraging, while specifically targeting areas where I need to improve. He is truly a master teacher as he guides me to discover for myself what I need to change.
- When I am coached, he will ask me how I felt, and where I think I need to improve. Then he will teach me why something didn't work and help me [see]

why other things did work. Then we will discuss the issue back and forth, [with me] asking questions and making sure I understand ... what I can do about it to change or improve the specific skill.

- He never tells me that I did wrong, nor where I need to improve. He asks me questions so that I comprehend it at my understanding, and so it is ingrained in my thoughts, instead of him just telling [me].
- [By] helping me to discover for myself areas of strength and areas needing improvement, by [his] simply sharing an outside perspective of what my teaching looked like, I am usually able to work through [the] GT&L [principles] and [his] observations to make specific goals and plans.
- One thing that stands out is that he teaches as he wants us to teach the students. He doesn't always just give the question straight out, if asked. He encourages us to look it up, discuss it, and come to a solid understanding of it. Then he will state it on the board.
- One time one of my pre-service trainers came in and helped me prepare for my next lesson the coming day. Though I still prepared my own lesson, it was very helpful ... when I ... had a question that just needed a little more tweaking in order to ask it maybe a little better, or [I had] an idea that could be more clearly explained. It allowed me to see how most of what I was struggling [with] when I was teaching actually had to do more with how I was preparing for the lesson. It allowed me to see what to look for when preparing for a lesson and how to strategically prepare for more inspiring discussions.

## **Zone of Proximal Development**

Responses from student pre-service trainers about the zone of proximal development include:

- I think one of the most essential things we are looking for in student teachers is someone that has the desire to continue to grow. If I have a super talented teacher with a limited zone of proximal development, sometimes there is an attitude that limits [him or her] as well. They want to be praised and [told] they are good, and anything you tell them beyond that, if there is resistance there, that throws up a huge red flag for me. Because I have seen those guys ten years into their career, and they [think they] are good enough. So I don't know how to determine the zone of proximal development exactly, but ... I have major concerns ... if [at] this stage in their career we are giving them feedback, and they are already showing that they just want you to build them up. I don't know if ... revealing itself at this stage bodes well for a really successful career in S&I. To me, sometimes [this] is more important than what [else] is happening ... If there [are] teachers teaching at

a level between 1 and 10, [and] you know a teacher teaching at seven who is just anxious not only to receive, but you came back and you really saw that [he or she] is really trying to develop, verses a teacher that is at a nine, over here, and they are pretty good, but every time you go to give them feedback, there is a little resistance there, I would hire the seven guy every time, if it were my call.

- I think ... one of the main battles of pre-service is how far do I push where there is growth rather than [create] a panic zone or discouraging zone ... and I think everyone has a different level. And then I think you have to come back and see [by] checking your old notes over the feedback previously, [and ask]: “Are we making progress on that?”
- Some of that depends on their heart [because] we can’t work with a student teacher very well, if their heart isn’t in the right place. Therefore, there needs to be an amount of discernment by the trainer to know where the heart of the individual is. Sometimes the ... amount of information that a student teacher can get that will really help them shrinks, depending on where their heart is [at].... [We] have teachers that crave feedback, and it’s not fake—it is with real intent, they really want to get better ... (I have a teacher like that.) Some try to fake that; they say they want feedback because it is what is expected now, but they really don’t mean it. Therefore, [the first teacher’s] range on his zone of proximal development is bigger than other student teacher’s. Therefore, you can do more things with that teacher with the bigger range, and more progression can happen faster.
- Sometimes a student teacher will feel like they have really bombed it, and they are not ready to receive feedback right then, and I think that is okay to just let that happen; there is more than one type of feedback from more than one source. That type of feedback after that type of lesson may do a lot for their improvement in the future.
- I think [we] have to tame the inner expert, as a trainer. Meaning that we have a lot of experience, so we see a lot of things—we see all kinds of things that they can improve on, and there are just tons of things because there is just a whole universe to teaching. So I think [we] have to select, instead of just dumping the whole list on them all at once. [We] have to select what will make the most difference for them at this time, and just focus on a few things that will make the most difference, rather than giving them way too much. Because then I think they get into that panic zone where they think that they have way too much to do because there is just way too much to think about, so I think just keeping it simple by selecting just a few things that will make the biggest impact will keep them in that learning zone.
- I think a lot of it is that you have to know [each] teacher. You will know when you have pushed them too far, but fighting that I think is critical, I think that is a

key thing: you want to invite them to do things that you are comfortable and confident that they can pick it up.

Responses from student teachers regarding the zone of proximal development include:

- I don't know how they do it, but I do feel pushed. When I walk out of a classroom that he observed, I wish I would have recorded what he said because it was such good information. I think what it does is it inspires me to see things that I wouldn't have seen before. It causes me to look at things in a different way than I have before. I think he tries to push me right to that edge where I do want to get better, but not push so far that I want to call it quits and say I'm done.
- It seems that he knows me well enough that he knows where my zone of proximal development might be, and aside from the one time that I mentioned earlier when I was discouraged, I feel like our conferences have been good [because] he has pushed me just enough, and I think that is because he does do a blend of strengths and weaknesses. Sometimes I have to dig the weaknesses out of him.
- I think when he comes to observe me; he does always have something that I can improve on, so I never get comfortable. So that helps me to get into a habit of checking back on myself and asking, "how ... [did] that lesson [go], and how can it be improved?" So I never get to the point where I just think we are good now—I finally got it—because he will always have some feedback of something that I can improve [on]. And it is not discouraging to always have feedback; sometimes it's bigger than other [times, but] most of the time, it's something fairly small. He will say: this and this and this were great, but what do you think about if you would have done it like this? ... The next time that situation comes, I try that out.
- Sometimes they look at a lesson and notice a lot of ways it could improve, so they have to decide [on] what is the most important thing [to say] that will help the [teachers] improve the most. Some things are little tweaks, and some things are big ... [They] just decide what is going to help the most.
- I don't know how, but I know they are great at it; I can say that. I never feel like I can sit down after a lesson when they observe me [because] I always feel hungry for more. And they really do well on ... giving me advice on the lesson today, but something that I have appreciated is when they tell me how I can improve for the next lesson, and help me progress in that way. So, that keeps me on edge [to] keep me wanting to improve, when they show me what I can do tomorrow to improve the next lesson.
- I think they have done pretty well at just seeing where I am at [and] kind of testing the waters a little bit. Because they can tell if [when I] get done with a class, and my head is down ... I know they are not going to say much, but I know already what they would say. So [I] think they get a good sense of knowing where you are at personally.



## Balance

### Strengths vs weaknesses.

Responses from pre-service trainers about addressing strengths versus weaknesses while giving feedback included:

- I believe they are both important, but as we build on their strengths, and the things they are doing well, they are more open to corrective feedback. If we help them see the things that are working well and continue to build upon them, gospel teaching is enhanced.
- Positive, encouraging feedback helps student teachers improve. The most important technique is asking a few questions to help the student teachers discover and articulate the feedback I would normally offer.
- Sometimes I think we can destroy their confidence with too much negative feedback.
- You are making this black and white. It isn't that way. Some student teachers respond better with more positive comments and one suggestion. Some student teachers respond better with straight talk and less compliments.
- I don't think [either] is more important. I tell them what they did well, not to prepare them for negative feedback, but to encourage them to continue to do what they did well. If we don't help them see areas of improvement then they won't be able to adjust and grow.
- [I] begin by focusing on the things that are going well. This motivates and encourages them to accept clear, candid feedback on things that are not going as well.
- It really depends on the lesson and on the teacher. If the teacher is pretty close to meeting expectations then emphasizing strengths, and recognizing what they are doing well so they can be repeated, is very effective while just fine tuning areas of weakness. If the teacher needs a lot of improvement, then often there aren't enough strengths to effectively build upon. In this case, pinpointing specific and actionable areas of weakness that can be improved upon seems to be more helpful.
- Be kind, uplift them and build their confidence and don't worry about 'planting seeds' of doubt, so ... they are not too surprised, if they are not hired. ... [Do not] destroy their confidence and make them less effective in the classroom.
- I think that in a student teacher's mind they are thinking, if it is a strength then I have already got it; I know how to do it; I don't need to improve there. And they see their weaknesses as things that are keeping them back, so they just want you to tell them what they are, so they can go fix them. I would think that is probably

what a student teacher is seeing. As a trainer, I think emphasizing strengths is important ... [but] it depends on where the teacher is at. If you have a strong teacher that is doing really well then I think helping them see what they are doing well, so they can replicate it, is very, very valuable. But if you have a teacher that is really struggling, and he or she doesn't have many strengths, then it doesn't do [much] good just to focus on strengths; you have got to go in and focus on some of the challenges and weaknesses.

- I would say that is why they want to hear their strengths, because they want to feel some hope; they want to feel some encouragement; they want to know that [they are] on the right track, but show [them] some ways that [they] can clearly improve [on].
- Here is part of the trick, [find out] if the student teacher has the aptitude ... For example, you can't train height; [if] you know [he or she] is a long, tall basketball player right, we can't put a guy in there that is 4'7" as a center [instead]. So, if we have got a guy with natural relation[ship ability] with students, and with natural ability to help student understand the scriptures, and ... they understand the block themselves, you can probably train them ... [well], if you take it a little bit at a time. So, you can take a natural teacher and give them one thing, and they want to do it; they like the feedback.
- Because there are the "un-train-ables;" there are those attributes that we just don't train. We do train on skills and methods to reach desired outcomes. It's basically Brother Webb's ten-ten teacher idea. Having said that, one of the "un-train-ables" is ... personality or ability to connect to the youth, and [how] to create a pleasant atmosphere for the students. Can you train that? Well, we try; we talk about the atmosphere that is one of the desired outcomes of our fundamentals. That is why we survey the students before we ever hire a teacher; we ask the youth, "What are your thoughts about this teacher?" We try to perceive how the connectivity is happening.

Responses from student teachers regarding addressing strengths versus weaknesses while receiving feedback included:

- Most of the trainers have seen the wisdom of someone hearing [that they] are doing a very good job; you need to keep doing that. Whereas, the student teachers are so focused on "I need to get better, I need to get better," [that] we don't realize that sometimes the way [we] get better is by continuing to improve on what [we] are already doing well. Student teachers are constantly hungry for how to get better, but we need to have a little bit better perspective, probably. I think weaknesses will naturally dissolve when you focus on those strengths. I think it is easy through this process to really feel down on yourself, and to feel like you are

not doing a good job. I think it is healthy and appropriate to hear sometimes that you are doing this well. So, you are hungry to hear what you could do better, but you are desperate to hear [that] you are doing a good job. So, I think the balance is key.

- Because when we focus on the good, we understand what the bad is, and when we improve more and more with . . . [strengths], that will automatically flow over to the bad and raise that level.
- Most of us want to do this for a job, and a lengthy career, so I think the way I like to receive feedback is that I like to know what I am doing well first—kind of like a feedback sandwich. I like to hear what I am doing well, and then [hear] some things that I can work on. But honestly, if I don't know what my weaknesses are then . . . that is why [they] need to observe me. There is stuff that I will not think about or pick up. So, if I don't have someone perhaps with a lot of teaching experience that has been in the classroom with students, if I can't hear things from them, then it will be hard to know what to work on from their perspective.
- Though I prefer a little of both, I find that I am sometimes hard on myself when all we discuss is what went wrong. If we can discuss some of the things that they thought I could do better, and then finish on some of the things that they thought were well done, then I feel like I know what I need to improve, and things I can keep doing. I know the pre-service trainers are all busy and sometimes have very little or no time for feedback sessions, but a little positive feedback goes a long way.
- I lean more toward [trainers] pointing out strengths, but that's what I need, specifically. I'm the type of person that keys in on my mistakes, and I beat myself up with them. However, the next student teacher might be very motivated to change by having his trainer point out his mistakes. I think it's up to the trainer to discover what each student teacher responds to better.
- Maybe we would like to be a little comforted first before we begin. I think maybe it is easier to accept what our weaknesses are after they tell us about our strengths. I think we want it direct, but perhaps we feel more comfortable and less self-conscious, and less self-critical, and that could lead to some self-confidence issues. Sometimes you can come out of a lesson feeling kind of bad about yourself because of the things you have to work on. So, even though we want [to know] the areas to improve, it eases that process a little bit.
- Not only does hearing what you are doing well help you realize that you should continue doing those things, but also it is good to have positive feedback and encouragement that does make you feel good, so maybe it gives that student teacher confidence to continue doing those things.
- Because I feel like they want to take our strengths and build on them, [so we can] just tweak some things and build on the strengths . . . [they] help us as teachers

realize that it is not a cookie cutter profession. Not all teachers are going to be the same; [we] can teach how [we] are and how [we] teach, and then build on those strengths that each of us has and fine tune and tweak some other things. But then sometimes I want to know what was in tune, and why things were out of tune.

- If [we] already feel like [we] are doing a bad job, and [we] get nothing but negative feedback that can be hard to take. I think it's hard finding that balance for student teachers. I guess [we] want to feel good about [ourselves]; [we] want to feel like [we] are making a lot of progress. [We] want the positive, but at the same time, [we] need to improve as well.
- Just as important as it is to know our weaknesses, [we] have to know our strengths.
- But for me, I do enjoy hearing [what my weaknesses are] because it is a gage; it is someone from the outside looking in on me, and I am able to say, "That was a weakness a month ago, and I am glad that he is saying that it is strength now." So that is good ... if I never hear where I am weak then I don't know where to improve, so that is why I also enjoy hearing about areas where I am weak.
- I agree that the feedback helps me improve, but primarily it focuses on weak areas of a lesson/classroom setting. I think some reinforcement of what was done well would be beneficial too, so we don't scrap everything.
- Letting me know what I do well also really helps because I then know what I should keep doing.
- The most helpful feedback comes when the pre-service trainer tells me things that I have improved on, and shows me how I have improved on them. Sometimes the focus of the feedback session is only a snapshot of my teaching on one lesson, and only on the things I need to improve. By reaching back to previous lessons and showing me how I have improved, the feedback becomes much larger than a single lesson and helps me continue to improve.
- [My trainer] is always positive and constructive in his advice. He sandwiches his constructive advice with positive things [that] I am already doing.
- I do appreciate the positive feedback as well as the constructive criticisms because it is easy to walk away from a coaching session believing [that] you are a failure [as] a teacher.
- For me, it helps [if my trainer] goes over the strengths first, and then [my] weaknesses. He does that.
- I do want to know what my strengths are; I really don't know what they are. Knowing what they are could help me transfer the technique and approach I have used to [transfer] them over to the areas that need building and work.
- [It is] simple psychology—if you point out all of a person's weaknesses, they are more likely to stop trying rather than try to improve.

- [Training] is like tuning a piano. You should play the keys that are tuned well at least once to make sure of their quality. But the ones that aren't quite right, you want to play a few times as you adjust until you get the right pitch. [Trainers need to] let [us] know something is right, but then spend the bulk [of the training] on tuning out [our] weaknesses.
- I actually selected strengths simply because that is what I like to hear first. I personally spend way too much time focusing on the weaknesses of a lesson. I need to learn how to see the strengths, and enjoy those moments for the successes that they are, and that is difficult for me. However, I think that feedback should provide both strengths and weaknesses.
- I like to know what I'm doing right, so that I can keep doing it, but I need to know what to focus on for the next couple [of] weeks to improve. Giving me a couple [of] things to focus on and improve is very helpful. Bombarding me with the many things [that] I did wrong overwhelms me, so there needs to be moderation in the feedback.
- I'm usually pretty aware of where I am failing, but often [I] don't see what is going well. Discussing those things helps me stay more motivated. However, I very much appreciate hearing what I need to work on as well.
- I already know what did not go well in my lesson and will probably be beating myself up about it for the rest of the day anyway. It is more helpful for me to have someone else come in and show me what I did well, and what I should keep doing because I typically don't see that myself.
- I'm not saying that I don't want to hear what went wrong, because I do, [but] I just prefer to hear what went right first.
- I believe that when strengths are looked at, they can be magnified, and weaknesses will improve as a direct result of strengths being improved.
- I think I need to hear where my strengths are because sometimes when you are up there [teaching], you're not certain if something is working or not. An observer has a different perspective, and if I'm doing something right, that would be good to know. Especially [when] starting out, because it's tempting to feel like I'm doing it all wrong.
- We do need to hear that positive feedback, and when done first, I think it really helps improve the loving atmosphere that is conducive to a student teacher seeking correction, and acting with faith to learn as a teacher, rather than just being told what not to do.
- I would say [to trainers], "Spend just a little more time pointing out the strengths. Elaborate and discuss those strengths a little more, rather than just mentioning them, or letting me know that they are there." The confidence that comes with that discussion will transfer over into improving the areas that we had addressed ... needed changing.

### **Formative vs summative.**

Responses from pre-service trainers about the balance between formative feedback and summative feedback included:

- My evaluation and feedback with the student teacher is formative. As mentioned previously, I try to help them discover where they are doing well and perhaps where they could improve. However, I do not share all the notes or evaluations I am making because I feel each visit/interaction is the latest update to a summative evaluation of the student teacher. Weekly, I update a rankings formula based on teaching performance, character, professionalism, and rapport. This allows me to always have a summative evaluation of where each student is relative to the standards and also to each other.
- I view my job as helping the student teachers become the best teachers they can be, and to help the students in their class have a good experience. I think it creates a better working relationship. I think Brother Howell is more of the summative evaluator.
- [As a trainer], I view my job as helping the student teachers become the best teacher they can be, and to help the students in their class have a good experience. I think it creates a better working relationship [being a formative evaluator]. I think Brother Howell is more of the summative evaluator.
- I always give feedback in the present tense, such as: “What happened today in the lesson?” On occasion, we talk in overall terms of how the teaching is progressing, but that is generally more student driven based upon their desire to see how they are doing overall.

Responses from student teachers regarding the balance between formative feedback and summative feedback included:

- It seems as though there is a time and place for both types. Though even when I've been evaluated on what was certainly a summative evaluation, both trainers took time to provide feedback on things to improve and sustain. I think the majority of the evaluations should be formative and provide ways to help us be better. From those same evaluations, a summative evaluation can be garnered. This would help us be better teachers because we would feel more like the trainers were there to help us [become] better teachers, while understanding that they are also there to evaluate our hiring potential.
- I think it requires a beautiful blend of both. The ultimate goal is to be hired full-time, therefore, summative evaluation is required to see how everyone measures up. However, I believe it is equally important to make decisions based not only on

where the instructor is currently, but [also] their ability and willingness to improve which requires formative evaluation.

- Both are helpful and necessary. Formative is useful because it is specific instruction that will improve ability, confidence, and overall satisfaction in teaching. As a student teacher, it is really difficult to gauge how you are doing, and a summative evaluation is beneficial in providing a more general overview of how you are perceived.
- Formative evaluations seem more helpful in helping me grow and improve because [they] focus on where I am headed, rather than where I am at. But I don't hear enough about the summative evaluation. It would be nice to know where I am at in the big picture, so I can set goals and plan accordingly.
- I think both are very important. Formative helps me grow and become a better teacher which helps the students and prepares me for full time employment. The summative evaluation is also good because my trainer is straight up with me, and I know he won't lead me along to get hired, if I am not good enough to qualify or have a shot at a fulltime teaching position.
- It's the big picture versus the everyday grind. Formative evaluations help you see what you need to do on a daily basis to grow into a good teacher. The summative evaluations give you an idea of where you are in the forest, and if you're moving in the right direction. If my trainer told me today that "if it were hiring day, you wouldn't be hired... but you could make it there," I would be greatly motivated to work harder. It tells me where the bar is, and that I'm close enough to reach it. Then I can focus on incorporating the things he tells me in my formative evaluations.
- I like it when they tell me what I'm doing well, and how I can improve (formative), but ultimately, I really want to be hired. When they tell me, "this needs to change in order to be hired," I really appreciate their honesty and frankness in those moments.
- In order to improve and become more competitive to hire, formative is necessary, but I would like to have a better understanding of where I stand overall in the [hiring] process. So I think summative could be helpful, though [it is] rarely mentioned in my reviews.
- I'm sure there might be some summative evaluation going on for administrative purposes, and to know if they still want to keep me on for the coming semesters, and/or submit my name [for] hiring, but for the most part, I feel like they are there to help me improve.
- For me I need formative in order to grow as a teacher and individual. Summative is needed for the trainer as well as me to see what I can change now to keep going forward in this process. I feel the key is to make formative come across as the most important to the teacher, while the trainer has the summative in the back of

his mind. If the summative takes over then you feel hopeless when you aren't growing.

- I always feel way more pressure about them assessing me as a teacher than them actually trying to help [me]. In their minds, though they may think of themselves more as formative. I wish formative was the goal of their visits. It makes the situation a lot less stressful for the teachers. I always feel like I have to please them when they come . . . [instead] of just teaching.
- Although I appreciate the mostly formative information, it would be nice to know how I'm doing overall a little more often.
- I feel both are more helpful than just having one or the other. I would feel robbed if I had an evaluation from a pre-service instructor, and he could see some technique or skill that would benefit me, but doesn't give me the feedback. It is, however, I feel at least important to understand where you might stand as a teacher, as well. Not so you can try . . . harder or less at striving to be a good teacher, but to be able to point your efforts in the right direction.
- My pre-service coordinator has rarely spoken of the logistics of being hired which one would assume is the focus of this program. Instead, he has focused on my teaching experiences. This has helped guide me to know where to put my focus. I still have questions and huge anxieties about the process, but aside from [the] necessary details, it will do me no good to get bogged down by the process and logistics, because I have no control over these. What I can control is my teaching. What the students need is [a good teacher], not someone who is simply checking off a list [how] to get hired. The thing is, my coordinator has never said these words to me, but his actions (and sometimes inactions) have led me to that interpretation.

## **Needs of the Teacher**

### **Language.**

Responses from pre-service trainers about language included:

- They are so different, and their personalities are different; their confidence level is different—some struggle with confidence. I think maybe the way you do it is with experience [working] with them after giving feedback—seeing how they responded to feedback, and recognizing if they are responding better to positive feedback, or if they are accepting well the areas of correction. I guess it is hard to read it because it is an experiential thing as you work with them; you tend to try and get a feel for it. So, I don't know any other way than just getting to know the teacher.



- That is true; they all receive feedback differently, and speak those different languages referred to in *The Five Love Languages*. Again, I would say that it is [through] experience with them. The first time you may learn that ‘Ok, this is not how you do it; this person does not respond well to this type of feedback.’ So, the next time you know that you should approach this one a little differently, or can even read them on the spot, and adapt your feedback approach to the way they are receiving the feedback. Then over a series of feedback sessions, you get a feel for the individual which show the importance of consistent observations with feedback opportunities on a regular basis.
- One of the most important things is that they do feel that we are invested in them. We really are there because we want them to get better. We are not there just to criticize or just to find fault. I think ... they [need to] ... just see us as somebody that really is on their team, that really is on their side and ... trying to help them be better, and help them see [that] we are one of [their] very best resources to get to where [they] need to be in order to be hired. So, if we can get them to see that number one—we do love them, and number two—we do want them to succeed, and that we are ... one of their best resources to ... help them get better; [we are] not to criticize and not necessarily to even evaluate, but just to build them. . . Maybe we could alleviate [their fears] just a little bit. Because it is frustrating when you walk in, and they shut down because we are ... there to help them get better.
- Well, you better get to know your teacher before you start doing a lot of that correcting. It’s pretty hard to give direction to someone that doesn’t think you love them. So, if you are the trainer, and you have been around them a lot, and they have the feeling that you are there to help them become the very best teacher possible ... and your whole purpose is the help them improve, and you believe in them, [then] you can tell them about anything because they know that [you] believe in [them, and you are] not there to fire [them] ... That’s huge.
- I think if we were going to improve this, I think we [should] spend much more time and effort getting to know them before we ever put them in a classroom. We should interview the couple, [and] .... take them to lunch ... [with our] wife, who doesn’t have any interest in them, [and] has not fallen in love with them as a student in the class, [to give you an] outside perspective.
- It is not only my goal with the student teachers to have an edifying experience, as we meet together to help them prepare to teach, but also [to] help me to see what I can do to help this teacher reach that objective with the students. Many times I have thought if I give them all the feedback [that] they need right now, it is just going to crush their confidence. They are going to have a hard time standing in front of this class, so it will be detrimental to the students and [to] them. So, I ... share one or two things that they can do better [to] uplift them and give them

encouragement. I think [we] sense that and ... feel it. I think it is important to follow the Spirit ... to know ... [that] what they need is maybe not what you had in mind right now.

- I think sometimes you learn by trial and error, quite frankly. And hopefully, you are doing enough observations that you [can] walk away, and you kind of see that [the lesson] didn't go as well as it could have, and you get to know personalities. I think really getting to know them, [because] my students are student teachers, [is like when] ... you are a seminary teacher, you get to know your class.
- We taught them in [the 471 class], we have observed them, we [had] a week-long training, and one of our objectives ... [was] to get to know those student teachers. [We] spend a lot of time, after ... observing them, especially at the beginning, just getting to know them and talking to them. We have [the teacher] and wife come in and meet with us for an hour before they start student teaching. We ask them how they met, where they are from, ... about [their] missions, [and] ... about [their] family. We make an effort to really get to know them before they ever step into a classroom, and before we give them the assignment. We have a focused effort to get to know who they are, [and] what their interests are. I could go through and tell you about each of the student teachers right now. As we are giving feedback, we also ask, "How is your wife, [and] how is she feeling?"
- It's a feel; when the teaching is over, the countenance of the teacher, more than not, dictates the approach I'll take. Meaning, if a teacher looks down, like they just got beat up by thirty students, I don't want to be [number] thirty-one coming at them with even more issues. If they come [to me] open, and say, "That's great," [or] "What do you [have] today [to] help me out?" with humility and sincerity, then I am more apt to give them a few things. And sometimes the body language will say, "Give me some feedback; give me something." And then [afterwards], you can see them just sink, and then you have ... to stop, and that's hard because once you go down that road, it's hard to stop.
- I think as a pre-service trainer, you have a relationship with each student teacher, and you know how far you can push each student teacher. I have one that says he wants feedback, but he can never handle it. So, I am very delicate because he said once, [after] I gave him one suggestion ... "Did I do anything good today?" ... I could list seven or eight different things that he did very well. [I] talked with his principal who said, "He won't ever receive feedback from me," [so], I told him, "Me either, he just wants to hear good things." Not just [through] body language, but [through] expressions they can ... justify [themselves], when you give feedback, and they give justification why they did certain things. What they are really saying is: "That's enough; I'm done." So, you have to be careful. It's a balance each time you go out, so I have to be careful.

- I think by [using] multiple observations and multiple feedback sessions, through time ... you just learn ... what each person needs through trial and error. And that takes time, and that doesn't just happen on one visit; it happens [after] multiple months of observations.
- I have found that I don't always know which language works best for each student teacher, but I have found when I use the same medium with each of them, then that message comes across better, and that medium is love. Interaction with them over time helps me to know their language, but consistently, if I express my words with love and love in my eyes that seems to smooth out my inadequacies. That is probably true in the seminary classroom as well as in giving feedback.

Responses from student teachers regarding language included:

- The thing that I really appreciate with my pre-service trainer is that he has taken time to get to know how we teach. He has been in the classroom enough to know where our strengths are, and where our weaknesses are, and then play to whichever one we need. I honestly don't know how [he] does it. But I feel like he knows what I need, and when he is giving feedback, he knows what I need to hear. Because there was a day when he just flat out said, "This wasn't great." And I knew it, I knew it right off, and another day, he came in and said, "Solid lesson," and I felt like it was nothing, meaning that I didn't do a great job at all. I think he just knew what I needed to hear right at that moment. [He] knew me well enough to know this is where [I was] at.
- I think it is that they are around us enough to know what kind of feedback we need. I think they must study us as they teach us, and observe us teach, to know what kind of language will work best with each of us. In the feedback, he will pull out things that I need to hear to help me 'be me' in the classroom.
- If the trainer is giving feedback to somebody, and telling them what they did wrong, then he would have to see how they are taking that. Because if they are not taking it well then the trainer can decide maybe this is not the best way for them to receive feedback. But in my case, I would ask him for direct feedback, wanting to know what ... I need to do to improve on. So, I feel that my trainer has got to know that he can give me direct criticism, and I would be okay with that.
- You would just have to get to know them. They can probably assess how the student teachers respond to how they receive feedback, while the trainers are giving them feedback, and develop a feel for that over time.
- With me, I am able to take very candid feedback, and I am fine, but there might be other student teachers that take it more personally. So, if there is a cookie-cutter type trainer, who is giving very blunt feedback to someone who might be a little more sensitive and take things personally, then [it will] not only make them feel bad, [but] it will not even be effective at all. It might be more difficult at the

beginning of the year to feel out ... this student teacher ... to be really heavy with the strengths, and just give them one thing to work on. And with this other student teacher, [to] say, "This was good, but let me give you three things that I saw that you could work on." I think there has to be some talent and awareness of the trainer to be aware of their [needed] form of feedback.

- There are about ten student teachers, and we are all very different, so that would be tough for him to juggle. I guess maybe if he started off in kind of a cookie-cutter approach, and as he got to know us better and saw our specific needs, [he could] ... adjust to that and tailor his feedback to our needs.
- They have made the effort to get to know me, to know my situation, where I am coming from. Just from interacting with each other, I think from the beginning maybe there was some feedback that I felt like ... was not really helpful for me, but as they have gotten to know me, they know what I need to hear.
- I guess there is no replacement for interaction. They have to know[us] on different levels. It has been helpful for me when they sit in [during] my lesson and observe me there and talk to me afterwards, and then it is helpful if there is a lunch period after that, and they stick around for lunch, and they get to know me on a different level where [we] metaphorically, "take off the tie," and just get to know each other, and that is helpful, so [we] just have to have interaction.
- [To get] an understanding of what I understand, ... [he lets] me talk; he listens to me first, to get an understanding of what I need to work on, then he goes into teaching mode where he explains to me what I should do. Most of the time, I bring up what he has taken notes on; he notices the same things I do.
- I think that is one part where you have to know your student teacher. We are all different, and we all learn differently. Some of us work better when we are being told what we are doing [through] positive [feedback] and reviewing strengths. Because we can identify usually what we messed up on, I definitely see both sides of that too.
- You need to recognize what their needs are, because we ... feed off of different things. They usually start out with telling me something like, "Great class" or "You did great on this," [which] automatically ... gets me feeling [more receptive] because I didn't feel that I did that great on this part or [that] part. And when they do that, I am more open to them giving feedback. In fact, usually I will ask after that, "What can I do better?" and when it is coming from me, [and I] say, "Tell me what I can do," usually I am ready for it. If they start out saying, "Man that was rough," then automatically I start [thinking], "I know."

### **Invested in Student Teacher**

Responses from pre-service trainers about being invested in the student teacher:

- You have to love the teacher. I don't think you have any business giving any kind of feedback or advice if you don't love them. [With] some people, it's like trying to love a cactus. But if you do [love anyway] then I think it will be okay. You are in their corner, so to speak. They need to know that the one you represent is . . . the face of Salt Lake—the hiring committee. Don't go into the hiring meeting thinking you are going to sell something. They just want the facts [in] a way they [can] see them. So you better go in there with everything that they do well and their weaknesses. You can say that they are weak in this area, but I think they will work their way out of it. But you need to know exactly what you are buying, when you go into that meeting. That is not easy, I mean, you have worked all year . . . you have this interest. So it's hard, but it's a great job; it's the best job in [the] Seminaries and Institutes, but you are going to get ulcers, and you're going to go gray, but when good teachers get hired, and they just keep getting better and better, those are fun relationships to have.
- Of course, for feedback to work, the student teacher must know you care about them. I try to cultivate rapport with the student teachers collectively and individually. I take them on a retreat as part of [the] 473 [class]. This allows them to get comfortable knowing me, and I them, in a non-pressure atmosphere.
- Giving honest loving feedback is the most important thing that a trainer can do.
- My feedback needs to match the fundamentals that I train the teachers to do with their youth. There needs to be an environment of love, respect, and purpose. The Spirit needs to be invited; discovery needs to happen, etc. The student teacher does most [of] the talking, and I guide the conversation.

Responses from student teachers regarding being invested in the student teacher:

- One thing that I find especially helpful is . . . similar to what they ask us to do with our students: love us. There are times when the needed criticism stings a bit, but it stings a bit less when we know that they love us and are looking to find ways to help us be better teachers. It is also helpful when they include some of the things they thought were effective during the class, instead of focusing solely on the negative during the counseling session.
- I appreciate (although it can be hard to take at times) fully honest and practical critiques of what I am doing. Clearly pointing out what I am doing wrong gives me a clear goal of what I can and should change. In that same respect, it is really helpful to also discuss in that same conversation what I am doing really well. That keeps me from changing what should stay the same. [They need to] keep my confidence up, and also provides motivation that I can in fact change what I am doing poorly. Without the reassurance that I am doing things well, it is easy to feel like everything (including the good) is all a train wreck.

- One of my trainers took the time to meet with me one-on-one, outside of observations (upon my request). Sitting down with him and talking to him about my personal struggles as a teacher, and [my] hopes really helped me see a clearer vision of what I am here to do. When a trainer takes time to help you know that you aren't just another student teacher that is going through the process, [and] when they take time to find out about how you individually are doing as a teacher, it creates a lot of trust and faith in them and in [us]. This trainer [later] came and visited one of my classes (not to evaluate), but just to see how I was doing with my class and to provide support. That meant a lot to be able to see that and to feel more trust and confidence from him.
- Even after all the feedback, he encouraged me and told me that I was doing really well, and that they were going to push me. That gave me confidence that I was at a good place, but [with] an expectation that I can continue to get better.
- I just feel how much he cares about me and my students. He is a great coach and always wants the very best for me. I feel that care through the way he talks to me.
- He helps me to believe that I can be successful in this assignment. He gives me constructive feedback that helps me to grow. He is not afraid to come down hard on me when I need to hear difficult things, but then [he] does as the scriptures instruct, and he shows love afterwards.
- He first told me the things [that] I did well at, and then followed it with things I need to improve on. He was very honest with me about the things I need to work on, but did it in a loving manner that showed me he was telling me these things because he cares about me and wants to help me be better. He also explained to me ways ... I can improve instead of just simply stating the suggestions.
- He set up a time to discuss a lesson he evaluated with [me]. During that session, he showed me some areas that I was not doing well, and proceeded to give me examples of how I could have done better (rather than just pointing out that there was error). He also made sure that I understood that he was giving the "harsher" critique at that time because he saw the potential and wanted to make sure that I reached it.
- One time He came with a list of all the different evaluations that he and the other instructor had done. He marked areas of strength and areas of weakness. I could see over a period of time where my strengths were and where I needed work. I know it took him a lot of time to gather all that information and put it together. He gives me examples of how to teach.
- I was having a really hard time in my personal life, and after the observation he talked maybe five minutes [about] my teaching, and then the rest of the time he talked to me about my life, how I could overcome these obstacles and get things in order, so that I could be a more successful teacher in the classroom.

- I feel like my pre-service trainer is my coach. He is on my team and trying to help me be better. So, I feel like he is observing me and helping me see how I can be better. That is mostly what he does for me. At the same time, I know that he is judging whether or not I am doing well enough to be hired.
- This is round two for me; this time with a different pre-service director. I can tell he actually wants me to be hired instead of just fulfilling a job requirement. I appreciate his spontaneity and useful feedback. The key is that I feel he wants me to succeed.
- I'm always lovingly corrected. I always feel like I'm being told what I do well and what I can improve on ... The feedback I receive is on aspects of my teaching style that would be difficult for me to improve without having another person observing me.
- I am now teaching my second semester. It took me a long time to realize that my trainer is actually my ally, and not the one who ultimately holds my fate in his hands. I think if trainers can make sure that the student teachers know that they really do want the student teachers to succeed, it makes the observations feel less judgmental and more helpful. I have gotten to that point with my trainer this last semester, and it is much better than the previous semester when I felt like he was there interviewing me for employment.

### **Advice to Pre-Service Trainers**

Advice from pre-service trainers to other pre-service trainers included:

- I think I would say make it clear; it needs to be clear and it needs to be actionable; it needs to be something they can do instead of resorting to vague platitudes. Pay the price and study so that you can walk into the classroom and see what it is that they need to work on, and be able to articulate that clearly and in a way with feedback that is actionable, so that they can leave thinking, "Okay, this is what I need to do," so they can do it instead of leaving with a foggy idea of what [they] need to do.... Study teaching—study the *Gospel Teaching and Learning Handbook* to understand the fundamentals ... clearly to have it all straight in our minds, so that we really have a firm grasp on the fundamentals of gospel teaching and learning, so when we walk into a classroom, we can see what is good, and what is not good based on the price we have paid to understand the fundamentals.
- You have to love the teacher. I don't think you have any business giving any kind of feedback or advice if you don't love them. [With] some people, it's like trying to love a cactus. But if you do [love anyway] then I think it will be okay. You are in their corner, so to speak. They need to know that the one you represent is ... the face of Salt Lake—the hiring committee. Don't go into the hiring meeting thinking you are going to sell something. They just want the facts [in] a way they

[can] see them. So you better go in there with everything that they do well and their weaknesses. You can say that they are weak in this area, but I think they will work their way out of it. But you need to know exactly what you are buying, when you go into that meeting. That is not easy, I mean, you have worked all year ... so you have this interest. So it's hard, but it's a great job; it's the best job in [the] Seminaries and Institutes, but you are going to get ulcers, and you're going to go gray, but when good teachers get hired, and they just keep getting better and better, those are fun relationships to have.

- To ... [give feedback] from the *Handbook* and according to the standards in the *Handbook*, not a personal preference, [is] the way I would do it ... Have it be based upon a standard.
- You have got to love them. Love [and] listen; did I say love? And then serve them. You have got to serve them; you have got to find ways to find out about their interests, [and] hobbies, [and] talk about them. I think the more invested you can get in getting [into] their hearts and souls, the more mileage you [will] get out of them.
- Be honest, straightforward, and positive about their abilities. Loving [them] in administering feedback.
- Be kind, uplift them, and build their confidence, and don't worry about planting seeds of doubt, so that they are not too surprised if they are not hired. [Don't] destroy their confidence and make them less effective in the classroom.
- Don't just provide what is wrong without providing solutions as well for improvement.
- Connect feedback with GT&L standards—specifically identifying the standard and page number where possible. Have teachers record themselves teaching and evaluate themselves to see if they can recognize strengths and weaknesses when they aren't in the heat of the moment. Base in-service on what you are observing, not [on] a set schedule created in advance.
- KNOW the *GT&L Handbook*! Teach and train from it. Make it the standard for all you do as a trainer. The shelf-life of the *Handbook* will long outlast the shelf-life and impact of a trainer!

Advice from student teachers to pre-service trainers included:

- I would say spend just a little more time pointing out the strengths. Elaborate and discuss those strengths a little more, rather than just mentioning them or letting me know that they are there. The confidence that comes with that discussion will transfer over into improving the areas that we had addressed that need changing.
- Probably that idea of discovery learning. Part of that discovery learning is listening; the pre-service trainer is listening to find out where the holes are in their



understanding. And then, you go fill in those holes ... [which] helps you discover what you should do on your own.

- You have got to love them. I think you are doing the same thing you would be doing as a teacher. Those student teachers are your students, if you don't show them [that] you love them, they are not going to do anything; they won't change.
- I would say just give straightforward feedback. That's how I would appreciate it, so if I did something wrong, tell me; if I do something well, I would like to know as well... [One trainer] told us that he had a son that went through this [hiring] process, and he felt that there were things said to him that lead him on a little bit, so during the whole process things were going extremely well, and there was no doubt that he would be hired—there was no doubt in his mind. And then, he wasn't hired, and it completely devastated him. He wishes that his son would have gotten some feedback from a different angle, and maybe had other things pointed out to him, instead of just [hearing] things that he was doing well ... I think that could be misleading.
- I would tell him to make sure to give at least one positive thing he saw in the lesson before giving some instruction. I think that saying one of those strengths before going into the list of things to improve on [is needed].
- I think one thing that would help is to really study the *Handbook*. To really know what the Church expects for seminary teachers, and then when you talk to [us], rather than [focus on] what we did wrong necessarily, you can compare with the *Handbook*. You [can] look at those teaching fundamentals, and you can say, "Are we reaching these?" And then, it can be a standard for the student teachers. By comparing it that way, you keep our vision in the right place of ... what we are trying to become, as well as not attacking the student teacher ...
- It's that discover learning part; I feel like whenever I have been given feedback, it's because I have said it. [My trainer] has guided me by asking the right questions, and [he] helped me realize [that] whatever changes I need to make, I have discovered because he has coached me into ... realizing that, not just him telling me. So, me discovering what I need to do better is far more effective than him telling me, "You should work on this," or "This is what you should do." He can definitely give me suggestions like, "What if you looked at it this way," but ultimately, it is usually what I have discovered on my own that makes me improve my teaching.
- I would probably go back to transparency because I don't think that it helps anybody to sugar-coat things, so to give direct criticism is important. It is important to build ... people up, and tell them the things they did good.
- I am now teaching my second semester. It took me a long time to realize that my trainer is actually my ally, and not the one who ultimately holds my fate in his hands. I think if trainers can make sure that the student teachers know that they

really do want the student teachers to succeed, it makes the observations feel less judgmental and more helpful. I have gotten to that point with my trainer this last semester, and it is much better than the previous semester when I felt like he was there interviewing me for employment.

- Know that it is terrifying—it is terrifying to be observed and evaluated. It is terrifying to have a class of teenagers act in unpredictable ways; meanwhile, everything you do is being measured.
- Trainers should be patient. I don't want to let my trainer down. My trainers [have] invested time, energy, thought, and love in me, and I really want to live up to their expectations, and I really want to be the kind of teacher they know I can be. Sometimes, I just want to know that my trainer knows [that] it is nerve-racking for me. I want my trainer to know that I am anxious, and that rarely is my best teaching ever fully displayed in an observed lesson.
- It can be discouraging to put your heart into a lesson, to reach out with love, and to have things not go as planned or expected. It can be discouraging when you don't even know if you reached a single student in a lesson. Tell me I can reach them, tell me the things I am doing to bless their lives, and most of all, tell me the things I am doing, and will do, to draw them closer to their Savior.
- Always focus on the positives of the lessons. I think my pre-service trainer is excellent at training me on how to teach using the fundamentals, but also helping me to understand that I am improving as a teacher of gospel truths.
- Don't be afraid to give us the truth straight and clear. Beating around the bush can sometimes lead to a misunderstanding of what it is we need to work on, so for me at least, I like hearing what I need to work on put pretty directly.
- Love us. Help us understand that though you are there to determine our hiring potential, you are also there to help us become better teachers of God's children, whether or not we get hired. Reprove us with sharpness, if needed, but also include some love, and some ways that you think that we are doing well. Looking back on my feedback sessions, those I found most helpful, both immediately and in the long-term, were those which criticized me as needed, but also helped me see that I was doing some good things at the same time. Thanks for all you do and for showing us love and sincere concern.
- There is a lot of ambiguity when going through this process. I think I understand why with [trainers] not wanting to get up the hopes of potential hires, [and] temptations to compare, etc. Sometimes, frustration results from the ambiguity because you feel like you are ... taking a step in the dark. I may just have an issue of overanalyzing feedback, but I think the more transparent, the better. With that said, transparency needs to happen in a way that isn't harsh or definitive but encouraging. No matter what, the process of getting hired as a full-time teacher is

stressful, difficult, and wonderful. Doing everything they can to help ease some of those fears can make a world of difference.

- I like specific goals— something to work on. During the next observation, a review of the previous goals and an evaluation of improvement would be great.
- My pre-service [trainer] has rarely spoken of the logistics of being hired which one would assume is the focus of this program. Instead, he has focused on my teaching experiences. This has helped guide me to know where to put my focus. I still have questions and huge anxieties about the process, but aside from necessary details, it will do me no good to get bogged down by the process and logistics, because I have no control over these. What I can control is my teaching. What the students need is my teaching, not someone who is simply checking off a list to get hired. The thing is my coordinator has never said these words to me, but his actions (and sometimes inactions) have led me to that interpretation.
- The only thing I can think of is [that] I do not know if I am close, or not even being considered, for being hired. It's hard for me because I am older with a job and family and trying to plan out [my] life, and I just have no clue where I stand. Maybe that is not in my best interest to know, or even feasible to tell me, but that's all I can think of.
- Don't mince words—just tell it like it is, and let them know how they're doing. I love it when I hear, “You need to change this,” but I also love to hear, “You know what? You are doing really well. Keep up the good work.” I think that transparency is [the] key, and I have greatly appreciated that.
- Sometimes too much feedback can be detrimental. Trying to fix everything at once causes overload and poorer performance. I know trainers are excited to watch us improve, but focusing on one or two things would be more helpful; then the next time, I'll be ready for more.
- Student teachers need to feel that you're on our side; we need to know that you want us to be hired. It is obvious that the opportunity levels are low; however, if we don't feel that you have hope for us, the chance of success plummets.
- Acknowledge the positive attributes, and with love focus on things that need improvement. When we feel that our pre-service [trainer] believes in us, maybe there really will be a chance at becoming a full-time teacher.
- I think my [trainers] do a great job. I feel just being straightforward and to the point is best. I know [feedback] is out of love, and to help me learn and grow as a teacher. I can take it; just tell me how it is.
- I know this may be too much to ask, but I think it would have been helpful to know where my standing was when it came to being hired. The ambiguity was overwhelming at times.
- There should be a minimum number of observation hours required before teaching, and it should be a lot. I [wasn't] observed nearly enough.

- Precede the constructive criticism with an explanation of love and concern as to why you're sharing the constructive feedback, instead of just ripping into the student teacher.
- Practice with [us]. Let [us] practice. Lecture less. [Trainers] preach that we should use a variety of lessons when teaching students, but [they] don't do that with us.
- Being honest with the student teacher is valuable to me. Understandably, some discretion is needed in letting the student teacher know what their ranking is among pre-service trainers and regional directors, but it is still helpful to know where we stand. If there is very little chance we have for hire, due to lack of abilities or opinions of the trainers, then it would be helpful to know.
- [Keep it] simple, simple, simple. Your huge laundry lists of tweaks are great and all, but the [trainers] that teach and help me the most are the ones who give me simple and clear feedback.
- It might have been more helpful for me to have my trainer evaluate me on specific fundamentals of teaching; like have four categories of teaching (four being just a random number). After every observation, the trainer might suggest which area to improve on for the next lesson. I receive lots of great qualitative feedback, but might benefit from more quantitative.
- Look more pleasant in the classroom. A frowning face does not help with the already intimidating nature of having a well-established and experienced teacher sitting in the back of the class observing everything. I've even had multiple students ask why that older man in the back of the class always looks so angry. While it may not be true that the pre-service trainer is angry, he certainly does appear that way, most of the time. Look happy in the classroom!
- I like getting constructive feedback, but for me, it sticks more if you are able to show me, at least in part, what you are trying to say. If you can give me some examples, or show me in the scriptures what you mean, that really helps.

## Appendix I

### Quantitative Data Results from Questionnaire

Response rate:

- Trainers 13 out of 13 responses (100% response rate)
- Student teachers 72 out of 119 (60.5% response rate)

#### Pre-Service Trainers

#### Student Teachers

1. How frequently does evaluation of your student teachers occur?

How frequent does evaluation of your teaching occur?

Answer	Response	%
More than once a week	1	8%
Once a week	4	31%
Once every two weeks	8	62%
Once a month	0	0%
Less than once a month	0	0%

Response	%
2	3%
14	19%
43	60%
12	17%
1	1%

2. Evaluation of student teachers is often enough to be helpful:

Evaluation of my teaching is of sufficient frequency to be helpful:

Answer	Response	%
Strongly Disagree	1	8%
Disagree	1	8%
Neither Agree or Disagree	0	0%
Agree	7	54%
Strongly Agree	4	31%

Response	%
1	1%
2	3%
2	3%
42	58%
25	35%

3. The feedback I give student teachers helps them improve their teaching:

The feedback I am given is helping me improve my teaching:

Answer	Response	%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%
Neither Agree or Disagree	0	0%
Agree	11	85%
Strongly Agree	2	15%

Response	%
3	4%
0	0%
2	3%
26	36%
41	57%

5. Upon giving feedback, student teachers understand where improvement is needed:

Upon receiving feedback, I understand where improvement is needed:

Answer	Response	%	Response	%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%	2	3%
Disagree	0	0%	0	0%
Neither Agree or Disagree	1	8%	1	1%
Agree	10	77%	32	44%
Strongly Agree	2	15%	37	51%

6. Feedback has been based upon the standards found in the Gospel Teaching and Learning Handbook:

Feedback has been based upon the standards found in the Gospel Teaching and Learning Handbook:

Answer	Response	%	Response	%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%	3	4%
Disagree	0	0%	0	0%
Neither Agree or Disagree	0	0%	1	1%
Agree	3	23%	13	18%
Strongly Agree	10	77%	55	76%

7. What method of feedback do you think helps student teachers improve more:

What method of feedback do you think helps you improve more:

Answer	Response	%	Response	%
Pointing out what went well in a lesson and discussing strengths?	7	58%	20	28%
Pointing out what went wrong in a lesson and discussing how to address weaknesses?	5	42%	51	72%

The two primary types of teacher evaluation are formative and summative. The main intent of the educational leader providing formative evaluation is to help the student teacher improve and grow in their teaching and make progress. The main intent of the educational leader providing summative evaluation is to judge the skill level and competence of a student teacher in order to make administrative decisions.

When your Pre-Service Trainer does an evaluation / observation of one of your classes what is your perception of the intent of the Pre-Service Trainer:

When you as Pre-Service Trainer do an evaluation / observation of one of your student teachers classes do you feel that your intent is:

Answer	Response	%	Response	%
Completely FORMATIVE	0	0%	10	14%
Mostly FORMATIVE with some SUMMATIVE	9	69%	33	47%
An equal amount of both FORMATIVE and SUMMATIVE	2	15%	19	27%
Mostly SUMMATIVE with some FORMATIVE	2	15%	8	11%
Completely SUMMATIVE	0	0%	0	0%