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The Journal of the Texas Association of Teacher Educators

# THE TEXAS FORUM OF TEACHER EDUCATION

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# THE TEXAS FORUM OF TEACHER EDUCATION

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The Texas Forum of Teacher Education, a publication of the Texas Association of Teacher Educators (TxATE), is a refereed journal published once annually. Articles in the journal are directed to both campus-based and field-based Texas teacher educators. TxATE members, including graduate students, are encouraged to submit manuscripts. Authors must be active members as a condition for publication.

Views expressed in the articles are not necessarily those of the Texas Association of Teacher Educators.

# THE TEXAS FORUM OF TEACHER EDUCATION

Volume 1 ❖ December 2011

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## EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Jerrie Smith Jackson

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What a privilege it is to introduce the first online version of the Texas Forum of Teacher Education, formerly known as The Texas Association of Teacher Educators' Forum. The Forum had previously been published in hard copy and was made available to members of the Texas Association of Teacher Education, but through the efforts of the current board, the journal has moved to an online format that will be viewed by a much larger audience. We would also like to recognize the efforts of President Elda Martinez who worked behind the scenes and assisted with the many steps involved in moving to an online journal. We would also like to thank Kay Guenther for her webmaster skills.

The articles in the first edition of the Texas Forum of Teacher Education are of interest and relevant into today's era of increased accountability and effectiveness of teacher preparation programs. This edition includes articles that focus on program effectiveness and first year teachers (Bledsoe and Pilgrim); programs evaluation and student learner outcomes to see if students with different amount of hours in teacher preparation programs impacted their performance on state certification exams (Rudolph and Seaman); the use of portfolios to see if there is a difference between native and transfer students (Isbell and Harris); a study on the perceptions of cooperating teachers regarding their preparation to serve as supervisors for student teachers (Colvin, Pilgrim, Rose and Berry); a five year university and school district partnership to support teachers of English Language Learners and professional development for these ESL teachers (Beal, Niño, Alford, Armstrong, Dillard, Gresham, Griffin, Steward, Tareilo and Welsh); a thirty year longitudinal study on moonlighting, teacher salaries and the impact on instructional practices from the teachers' perspective (Maninger, Edgington, Johnson, Sullivan and Rice); and a study on undergraduate students and the attributes that impact why they choose teaching as a career (Capps, Burger and Holt). Our journal starts off with the importance of preparing culturally responsive teachers and how teacher preparation programs have either designated a specific course or embedded content into multiple courses (Fike and Fike).

The 2012 Call for Papers is at the end of the journal. Dr. Sharon Woodall will assume the leadership for the 2012 edition and will be supported by her editorial team. On behalf of the editorial team and the board of Texas Association of Teacher Education, we would also like to acknowledge all of the authors who submitted articles and their time and attention to the many details involved in a publication. I welcome your feedback and constructive criticism and can be reached via email at [jjackson@ollusa.edu](mailto:jjackson@ollusa.edu).



Jerrie Smith Jackson

## THE IMPORTANCE OF PREPARING CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHERS IN TEXAS

Renea Fike and David S. Fike

*University of the Incarnate Word*

### Abstract

Today's classrooms are more diverse than ever. Current practicing teachers as well as preservice educators may not be adequately trained to teach in such a diverse classroom. Students who are taught by culturally aware teachers will have better learning outcomes. This study found that students had significant learning gains during the semester of enrollment in the Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) course in their awareness and knowledge related to diversity. The students reported that "I am prepared to teach in a classroom comprised of diverse students" at the completion of the course. This was a very important finding as teacher education programs attempt to prepare their preservice teachers for today's diverse classroom. Providing a CRT course within the curriculum is an effective intervention targeted at preparing preservice teachers for their future assignments.

### Statement of the Problem

Today's classrooms are more diverse than ever. In order to reach this array of students, educators must be aware of the issues facing their various cultural, racial, ethnic, and language groups. According to Gay (2000, p. vii), "The nation's deepening ethnic texture, interracial tension and conflict, and the increasing percentage of students who speak a first language other than English make multicultural education imperative." The U.S. Census Bureau (2000) estimated that people of color made up 28% of the nation's population in 2000. By the year 2050, the white non-Hispanic population will comprise only 50% of the population. Hispanic/Latinos will make up 25% of the U.S. population, followed by African Americans with 14.5%, Asian Americans 8%, and all other races at 5%. In addition, according to the most recent census (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010), there was an increase of 27.3 million people, or

9.7%, between 2000 and 2010. The vast majority of the growth in the total population came from increases in those who reported their race(s) as something other than white alone resulting in over one-third of the population being something other than white. About 55% of Texas' population was minority in 2010, up from 45% in 2000. Over the decade, the minority population in Texas grew by 39%.

Current practicing educators as well as preservice educators have not been adequately trained to teach in such a diverse classroom. Educators need to be knowledgeable about research, theory, and practice related to the behaviors and learning characteristics of ethnic, racial, cultural, and language groups in the United States. "In light of the value of culturally responsive instructional practices, schools and districts need to support teachers in their quest to learn about the use of these strategies" (Montgomery, 2001, p. 4). Despite acknowledgment of important differences among learners, uniformity continues to dominate school practices. According to Guild (2001) too little has changed in the past 50 years; preservice teachers are not being adequately prepared to teach in today's diverse classrooms.

In summary, the problem centers on the need for cultural awareness in classroom instruction. Therefore, the purpose of this study was two-fold: first, the researcher developed an instrument to measure learning gains of students enrolled in a Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) class; second, the researcher surveyed all public and private universities in Texas to gauge the implementation of multicultural training in teacher education programs.

### **Background and Significance**

At the researcher's institution, all future teachers, both elementary and secondary, must take Culturally Responsive Teaching during their last semester before student teaching. This class is a requirement of their professional development coursework. A recent Teacher Education Association (TEA) site visit commended the institution's School of Education for having a required course that prepares future teachers to face the challenges associated with a diverse classroom. TEA commented that many higher education institutions do not have such a

course in place. From the amount of current literature dealing with the challenges of teaching a diverse classroom (Baron, 2007; Brown, 2007; Luther, 2009; Owen, 2010; Taylor, 2010) and TEA's emphasis on training preservice teachers, it became evident that this is a prominent issue in higher education.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Sociocultural theorists emphasize that the social, cultural, and historical contexts in which children grow up have profound influences on thinking, learning, and effective instructional practice. In social interactions within their communities, young learners encounter culturally appropriate ways of thinking about and interpreting objects and events. With time and practice, these ways of thinking, which are first used in a social context, are gradually internalized into non-spoken, mental processes that learners use on their own. Because of their varying environments, historical circumstances, and needs, different cultures have developed somewhat different ways of thinking, learning, and teaching (Ormrod, 2009).

However, there are many other theories that apply to culturally responsive teaching such as constructivism, behaviorism and social learning theory. These theories suggest that teachers need to be taught cultural awareness in the classroom. Teachers often teach as they were taught. "Too often educators continue to treat all learners alike while paying lip service to the principle of diversity" (Guild, 2001, p. 1).

Students who are taught by culturally aware teachers are likely to have better learning outcomes. According to Fish (2002), a CRT curriculum must be designed so that future educators will become teachers who address differences and add them to the curriculum and succeed in creating a multicultural classroom that advances the educational goals of all students. Scholars specializing in multicultural education agree that at its most fundamental level, multicultural education represents an orientation to schooling and the teaching-learning process that is grounded in the democratic ideals of justice and quality (Banks, 1995; Gay, 1994; Sleeter, 1995).

## Methods

The study had two components. One assessed the learning gains of students enrolled in a culturally responsive teaching class and the other gauged the implementation of multicultural training in teacher education programs in all public and private universities in Texas. A pre/post-test (Appendix A) and a survey instrument (Appendix B) were utilized for data collection. Before creating the instruments, a research proposal was formally developed and granted IRB approval.

### Student Pre/Post Test

For the inferential study, the research question, objective, and hypothesis were:

- Research Question 1: Does the intervention (Culturally Responsive Teaching course) increase students' cultural awareness with regard to classroom instruction?
- Objective 1: To improve student success by increasing cultural awareness.
- Hypotheses: The intervention will produce learning gains in regards to the importance of cultural awareness and student success.

The researcher developed an instrument (Appendix A) that was used to assess the students' cultural awareness in teaching and to measure their learning gains. Diversity Pedagogy Theory (Sheets, 2005), which points out the natural and inseparable connection between culture and cognition, served as the basis to establish construct validity. According to this theory, one must understand the role culture plays in student learning in order to be an effective teacher. To further establish construct validity, convergent validity of the items within the scale were assessed using Cronbach's alpha. Intraclass correlation coefficients for pre-test and post-test measures were statistically significant ( $p < .001$  for both). The instrument was given as a pre- and post-test in two sections of the Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) course during Spring, 2011. Paired-samples t tests were used to evaluate pre-to-post learning gains. All students ( $N = 26$ ) in the two course sections completed the pre/post test.

## University Survey

For the inferential study, the research question and objective were:

- Research Question 2: What are the characteristics of Culturally Responsive Teaching courses in teacher education programs in public and private universities in Texas?
- Objective 2: To describe the characteristics of Culturally Responsive Teaching courses in public and private universities in Texas.

The researcher developed an instrument (Appendix B) to survey all teacher education programs at public and private universities in Texas to gather data such as: how many institutions have a course in culturally responsive teaching, is the course mandatory, is the course credit or non-credit, how many semester hours is the course, and is it normally taught by full-time faculty or adjunct? The researcher surveyed the entire population of public and private universities in Texas. Validity of the instrument was assessed by expert review. Five academicians, consisting of professors, authors, and leaders in the education field, provided input. The experts suggested several changes which were incorporated. The revised instrument was then distributed on Survey Monkey and emailed to all teacher education program administrators. A second hard copy mail-out was sent to non-responders. Forty-two (42) universities responded resulting in a 62% response rate.

Completed surveys were collected, and responses were electronically coded in an Excel spreadsheet. For quality assurance, the data were reviewed for possible transcription errors and for reasonableness of responses. Once the data were cleaned, they were imported into SPSS 16.0 for analysis. Basic descriptive statistics including means, standard deviations and percentages were generated. For inferential analyses, Chi square was used with categorical data to assess differences in population distributions. For all analyses, the level of significance was .05.

## Results

Twenty-six students in two sections of a Culturally Responsive Teaching course completed pre- and post-assessments using the instrument noted in Appendix A. The reliability of the instrument was measured at pre- and post-assessments using Cronbach's alpha (pre  $\alpha = .72$ , post  $\alpha = .85$ ), indicating acceptable internal consistency reliability. Table 1 depicts the results of the mean change in student scores (pre to post) for each question on the instrument. For all questions except question 8, mean changes were positive and statistically significant. On question 8, the students had high scores on the pre-assessment, introducing a ceiling effect. Thus, it was not surprising that the positive change on question 8 was not statistically significant. The results displayed in Table 1 support the assertion that students achieved positive learning gains with regards to cultural awareness through participation in the CRT course.

Table 1  
*Learning Gains for Students in Culturally Responsive Teaching Course (N = 26)*

| Variable  | Mean (Pre)  | Mean (Post) | Mean (Gain)  | SD            | Sig. <sup>a</sup> |
|-----------|-------------|-------------|--------------|---------------|-------------------|
| <b>Q1</b> | <b>3.69</b> | <b>4.46</b> | <b>.7692</b> | <b>.86291</b> | <b>&lt;.001</b>   |
| Q2        | 3.73        | 4.19        | .4615        | .94787        | .020              |
| Q3        | 3.81        | 4.31        | .5000        | 1.06771       | .025              |
| Q4        | 3.38        | 4.23        | .8462        | 1.00766       | <.001             |
| Q5        | 4.27        | 4.77        | .5000        | .86023        | .007              |
| Q6        | 3.73        | 4.42        | .6923        | .83758        | <.001             |
| Q7        | 3.92        | 4.50        | .5769        | .80861        | .001              |
| Q8        | 4.46        | 4.65        | .1923        | .69393        | NS <sup>b</sup>   |
| Q9        | 4.15        | 4.46        | .3077        | .67937        | .029              |
| Q10       | 3.23        | 4.08        | .8462        | .88056        | <.001             |
| Q11       | 3.77        | 4.15        | .3846        | .85215        | .030              |
| Q12       | 3.81        | 4.54        | .7308        | .87442        | .000              |
| Q13       | 3.35        | 4.00        | .6538        | .84580        | .001              |

<sup>a</sup> Paired-samples t test

<sup>b</sup> Non-significant

Table 2 provides a description of the responses to the survey of teacher education programs at Texas universities. An acceptable response rate of 62% was achieved. About 60% of the universities offer a CRT course. Eighty-one percent of the public universities offered

a CRT course compared to only 40% of the private universities; this difference was significant (Fisher's Exact,  $p = .019$ ). Of the institutions that offered a CRT course, the courses generally were 3 semester hours, required, for credit, junior level and taught by full-time faculty. Of the institutions not offering a CRT course, most did not have plans to implement a course in the future.

Table 2  
*Description of Texas Teacher Education Program Survey Responses (N = 42)*

| Variable                                   | N  | Percent |
|--|----|---------|
| Private                                    | 20 | 47.6    |
| Public                                     | 16 | 38.1    |
| Unknown                                    | 6  | 14.3    |
| Designated Minority Serving (HSI, HBCU)    | 13 | 31.0    |
| Not Designated Minority Serving            | 28 | 66.7    |
| Unknown                                    | 1  | 2.4     |
| Offers Diversity Class                     | 25 | 59.5    |
| Does Not Offer Diversity Class             | 17 | 40.5    |
| Plans to Offer Diversity Class             | 1  | 2.4     |
| Does Not Plan to Offer Diversity Class     | 13 | 31.0    |
| Undecided                                  | 3  | 7.1     |
| Diversity Class is For Credit              | 24 | 57.1    |
| Diversity Class is 3 Semester Hrs          | 24 | 57.1    |
| Diversity Class is Required                | 22 | 52.4    |
| Diversity Class is Elective                | 1  | 2.4     |
| Diversity Class is Both                    | 1  | 2.4     |
| Diversity Class Taught by FT Faculty       | 18 | 42.9    |
| Diversity Class Taught by PT Faculty       | 1  | 2.4     |
| Diversity Class Taught by Both             | 5  | 11.9    |
| Required for All Teacher Candidates        | 17 | 40.5    |
| Required for Elementary Teacher Candidates | 6  | 14.3    |
| Diversity Class is Freshman Level          | 1  | 2.4     |
| Diversity Class is Sophomore Level         | 2  | 4.8     |
| Diversity Class is Junior Level            | 17 | 40.5    |
| Diversity Class is Senior Level            | 3  | 7.1     |

## Discussion

### Student Pre/Post Test

The study hypothesized that the CRT course would serve as an intervention that would produce learning gains in regards to the importance of cultural awareness and student success. Students enrolled in the CRT course were given the opportunity to evaluate, utilizing a pre/post test, the value of this multicultural education class to their preparation to teach in a diverse classroom.

In all but one question to the student pre/post test (Appendix A), students had significant gains in their self-assessment of learning during the semester while enrolled in the Culturally Responsive Teaching course. Five of the 13 questions reported a mean change greater than .6 as shown below.

|             |     |     |     |     |     |     |
|-------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Question    | 4   | 10  | 1   | 12  | 6   | 13  |
| Mean Change | .85 | .85 | .77 | .73 | .69 | .65 |

These questions address the students' comfort level discussing, speaking, and writing about diversity. It is important to note that students were able to apply the knowledge they had gained in this class to solving everyday problems and issues. Very important in assessing the value of the Culturally Responsive Teaching course are the students' gains (.73) in their assessment of their preparedness to teach in a diverse classroom. The goal of any teacher education program is to provide curriculum that strengthens preservice teachers' confidence and preparation to enter the classroom. Through the pre/post assessment, students indicated that they are better prepared to teach in a diverse classroom after completing the CRT course.

Though still significant, six questions reported a mean change less than .6. Questions 9 (.30) and 11 (.38) had the smallest change. These questions had to do with involvement in projects and cultural and diversity-related events. It appears that students were fairly comfortable with their involvement even at the beginning of the semester.

## **University Survey**

Of the 42 responders to the university survey (Appendix B), 16 were public universities, 20 were private universities, and 6 were unknown. Only 13 universities were designated Hispanic Serving Institutions and Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Twenty-five of all the responding institutions offer a diversity class for their undergraduate preservice teachers. Of the 17 universities who do not offer a diversity course, only one is planning to add such a course. Most of these institutions (13) have the information embedded in other coursework. In addition, the student pre/post test found that students had a significant gain (.73) in their assessment of their preparedness to teach in a diverse classroom which supports the need for a stand-alone diversity class. Finally, the research found that public universities are more likely than private universities to require a diversity class for their future educators. This could be because most public institutions are larger than the private institutions and their enrollments may warrant this class. Further research is needed to identify reasons for this difference.

## **Limitations**

The students who completed the pre/post test were enrolled in two sections of a Culturally Responsive Teaching class at a small private university in Texas. In addition, the university survey was administered only in Texas. The findings may not be readily generalized to other universities and regions. To overcome these limitations, expanding the study population to students in other universities with a required culturally responsive teaching class would be beneficial. Also, a university survey could be developed and administered at the national level. Data from the survey were self-reported, these data were not validated. This was a descriptive study; causality was not established.

## **Conclusion**

This study was comprised of two components: 1) an inferential study to assess the learning gains of students enrolled in a culturally responsive teaching class and 2) a descriptive

study to gauge the implementation of multicultural training in teacher education programs in all public and private universities in Texas.

The students had significant learning gains during the semester of enrollment in the Culturally Responsive Teaching course in their awareness and knowledge related to diversity. The students reported that “I am prepared to teach in a classroom comprised of diverse students” at the completion of the course. This was a very important finding as teacher education programs attempt to prepare their preservice teachers for today’s diverse classroom. Providing a CRT course within the curriculum is an effective intervention targeted at preparing preservice teachers for their future assignments.

Only one university is planning to implement a culturally responsive teaching course out of the 17 who do not have such a course. The results of the student pre/post test attest to the need for a class that prepares them to teach students from diverse backgrounds. The changing demographics of this country support the need for culturally aware teachers as well.

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## Appendix A

### CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING SURVEY

1. I feel comfortable articulating the meaning of “diversity”.  
1 Strongly Disagree      2 Disagree      3 Neutral      4 Agree      5 Strongly Agree
2. Awareness of diversity is essential to my personal identity.  
1 Strongly Disagree      2 Disagree      3 Neutral      4 Agree      5 Strongly Agree
3. I can explain the importance of diversity to others.  
1 Strongly Disagree      2 Disagree      3 Neutral      4 Agree      5 Strongly Agree
4. I apply knowledge about diversity to address everyday problems or issues.  
1 Strongly Disagree      2 Disagree      3 Neutral      4 Agree      5 Strongly Agree
5. I have an awareness of how knowledge of diversity affects my future teaching.  
1 Strongly Disagree      2 Disagree      3 Neutral      4 Agree      5 Strongly Agree
6. I am comfortable demonstrating my understanding of diversity through writing and/or speaking.  
1 Strongly Disagree      2 Disagree      3 Neutral      4 Agree      5 Strongly Agree
7. I understand others in regard to cultural differences.  
1 Strongly Disagree      2 Disagree      3 Neutral      4 Agree      5 Strongly Agree
8. In general, I think people should learn more about diversity.  
1 Strongly Disagree      2 Disagree      3 Neutral      4 Agree      5 Strongly Agree
9. I am comfortable engaging in projects that emphasize diversity.  
1 Strongly Disagree      2 Disagree      3 Neutral      4 Agree      5 Strongly Agree
10. I discuss diversity with other students outside this course.  
1 Strongly Disagree      2 Disagree      3 Neutral      4 Agree      5 Strongly Agree
11. I am interested in attending cultural and diversity-related events.  
1 Strongly Disagree      2 Disagree      3 Neutral      4 Agree      5 Strongly Agree
12. I am prepared to teach a classroom comprised of diverse students.  
1 Strongly Disagree      2 Disagree      3 Neutral      4 Agree      5 Strongly Agree

13. Because I am a minority, I feel more knowledgeable about diversity.

1  
Strongly Disagree

2  
Disagree

3  
Neutral

4  
Agree

5  
Strongly Agree

Additional comments:

## Appendix B

### HIGHER EDUCATION ADMINISTRATOR SURVEY

Research Question: What are the characteristics of culturally responsive teaching courses in Teacher Education Programs in public and private universities in Texas?

#### *Characteristics of the **Institution**:*

1. Name of your institution: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Is your institution designated as a:
  - a. Hispanic Serving Institution
  - b. Historically Black Colleges and University
  - c. Both
  - d. Neither
3. Is your institution:
  - a. Rural (<2,500 city population)
  - b. Urban (2,500+ city population)
4. Does your School/Department of Education offer an undergraduate, stand-alone course that prepares future educators with knowledge and skills to address **cultural diversity** in the classroom?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Do not know
5. If your answer to #4 is no, are you planning to create such a course?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Undecided
6. If your answer to #4 is no, why? (select all that apply)
  - a. Too many hours in the degree program
  - b. Not a relevant topic
  - c. It is taught at the graduate level
  - d. It is embedded in other coursework
  - e. It is offered as an institutional general education course
  - d. Other: \_\_\_\_\_
7. How many full-time faculty does your School/Department of Education have? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Estimate the number of students enrolled in the Teacher Education Program at your institution. \_\_\_\_\_

#### *Characteristics of the **Dean (or the person representing the Teacher Education Program)** :*

9. Age: \_\_\_\_\_
10. Gender :
  - a. Male
  - b. Female

11. Race (select one):
  - a. Anglo
  - b. Hispanic
  - c. African-American
  - d. Asian
  - e. Native-American
  - f. Other
12. Years experience in teacher education leadership:
  - a. <10
  - b. 11-20
  - c. 21-30
  - d. 31-40
  - e. >40

*Characteristics of the **Course**:*

If you answered question #4 no, you are finished.

If you answered question #4 yes, please answer the following questions:

13. What is the title of the course? \_\_\_\_\_
14. What is the name of the textbook used in the course?
  - a. Do not know
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
15. Is the class offered for?
  - a. Credit
  - b. Noncredit
  - c. Both credit and noncredit
16. If the class is offered for credit, how many credit hours is it worth? \_\_\_\_\_
17. Is the course:
  - a. Required
  - b. Elective
  - c. Both
18. Is the course taught by a:
  - a. Full-time faculty member
  - b. Part-time faculty member
  - c. Both
19. If required, is the course required for:
  - a. Elementary teacher candidates
  - b. Secondary/All Level teacher candidates
  - c. All teacher candidates
  - d. All students at the university
  - e. Other \_\_\_\_\_
20. What level is the course: (select all that apply)
  - a. Freshman
  - b. Sophomore
  - c. Junior
  - d. Senior

Additional comments:

## TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS AND FIRST YEAR TEACHERS

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### Abstract

Teacher preparation programs, including university-based programs and alternative programs, have been scrutinized because first year teachers are often perceived as inadequately prepared for the challenge of teaching. In a report of the Education Schools Project, Levine (2006) indicated the nation's teacher education programs are not adequately preparing students in competencies that principals value. Furthermore, the Alliance for Excellent Education (2010) reported one third of new teachers are leaving the profession within the first few years, and half are leaving the profession within five years. Such statistics have led to national and state efforts to improve teacher education programs.

### National Accountability Efforts

The United States is witnessing an unprecedented emphasis on teacher preparation, and teacher quality has been high on the education policy agenda for more than a decade (National Academy of Education, 2009). Preparation programs across the United States must provide evidence of effective teacher preparation. Through promoting "highly qualified" teachers, No Child Left Behind (NCLB) raised questions about ways in which teacher quality can best be achieved (Feuerstein, 2011). "Over the last two decades, teacher educators have witnessed increased use of teacher competency testing as well as efforts to more tightly define the types of curriculum and field experience required of teacher candidates" (Feuerstein, 2011, p. 9).

National trends include statewide data systems linking teachers, students, and preparation (Cochran-Smith & Power, 2010). The basic premise was the effectiveness of preparation programs should be assessed in terms of student and other outcomes rather than

inputs, such as curriculum or resources. “Federal funding is now available as an incentive for states to develop these systems, and efforts are underway or already in existence in Texas, Florida, and Ohio” (Cochran-Smith & Power, 2010, p. 8-9). Recent changes in Texas policy are defined in this article and form the focus of the study described in this article.

### **Texas Legislation**

In 2009, the Texas Senate approved a bill requiring higher accountability for all teacher preparation programs. Texas Senate Bill 174 (2009) required increased accountability for entities offering teacher certification programs. Approximately 17,000 new teachers and principals piloted the process during 2010-2011, and the bill will be implemented in 2011.

In accordance with the SB 174 (2009), teacher preparation providers in Texas must submit copious amounts of data describing their program and the number of teacher candidates who apply and complete certification through their system. Furthermore, preparation programs will be accountable for tracking the number of candidates entering the teaching profession and remaining in the profession for three years after graduation. Teacher preparation programs will be accountable for the extent to which general education and special education teachers are prepared to teach students with disabilities and students with limited English proficiency. Other areas of accountability are related to implementing technology and working with data. Survey data will be collected from first year teachers and their principals at the end of the first year. The teacher preparation programs will be accountable for the effectiveness and retention of teachers during the first three years.

The principal survey can provide insight into areas of teacher success that are linked to teacher preparation. According to the Texas Education Agency (TEA), the purpose of the principal survey is to measure the performance of beginning teachers and the preparation program’s effectiveness in preparing teachers to succeed in the classroom. The survey measures performance in the following areas: classroom environment, students with disabilities, integrating technology, English Language Learners, and using technology with data (SB 174,

2009). Data will be collected as principals throughout Texas rate novice teachers on a four point Likert-type scale ranging from *Well Prepared* to *Not Prepared at All* in each area. Initial results from the pilot were posted on TEA's website (2010).

It is anticipated that the results of the principal survey will affect teacher preparation programs as results are publicized. In this study, we sought to gather information from first year teachers from our institution to pre-assess teacher preparation in the areas evaluated by TEA. The purpose of this mixed methods study is to examine teacher perceptions of their preparation in the areas of classroom environment, students with disabilities, English Language Learners, integrating technology, and using technology with data. Qualitative and quantitative data were collected from first year teachers and student teachers based on the principal survey. Results may be used for classroom improvement and/or program assessment.

### **Teacher Perceptions**

In an educational context, self-efficacy is the teacher's personal belief in his or her ability to plan and accomplish instructional objectives, and it applies to the teacher's perception about the ability to teach pupils efficiently and effectively (Gavora, 2010). Teacher self-efficacy is a concept that was derived within the context of Bandura's (1997) social-cognitive theory. According to Bandura, self-efficacy is a belief about one's own capabilities to organize and execute a certain task. Whenever teachers engage in teaching activities, they interpret their results and develop beliefs about their ability to engage in similar activities. If these activities are consistently successful, self-efficacy is likely to increase. If these activities consistently produce failure, self-efficacy is likely to diminish. Therefore, low efficacy may bring doubt about a teacher's abilities and will likely result in failure in teaching and reinforce low self-efficacy (Gavora, 2010).

Research on teachers' perceptions of preparedness has implications for teacher education programs. Delineating strengths and weaknesses in professional areas of classroom instruction is critical. First year teachers in the study described below assessed their beliefs

about their ability to succeed in the classroom based on their perceptions of preparedness in the five areas mentioned above.

### **Methods**

State legislators have acknowledged a problem with inadequately prepared teachers. Texas SB 174 increases accountability for all teacher preparation programs. Texas universities and colleges have successfully prepared teachers for many years; however, there may be some areas in which new teachers feel inadequately prepared.

Qualitative and quantitative data were collected based on the survey drafted by the Texas Education Agency in response to Texas Senate Bill 174 to assess teacher preparation. This project represented applied research, as we intended to use the feedback for classroom improvement and program assessment. The following research questions guided the study.

1. How well prepared do new teachers feel to address the classroom environment, the needs of students with disabilities, and the needs of limited English proficient (LEP-ELL) students?
2. How well prepared do new teachers feel to effectively integrate technology into curricula and instruction and to use technology with data?

### **Population**

The data represent feedback from 27 first year teachers or teacher candidates. Fourteen first year teachers, obtaining the bachelor degree with EC-6 Generalist certifications, completed online surveys. From these participants, a sample of 10 first year teachers who were employed within a 60 mile radius of the university was selected for observations and interviews. All participants provided consent and received a \$125 stipend, which was funded through an internal grant. Additionally, 13 recent graduates with no teaching experience completed the survey to provide a sample to compare perceptions to those of first year teachers. All participants were graduates of a traditional university based teacher preparation program in Central Texas which included a 17 week student teaching experience.

## **Instrument**

The survey instrument used in this study was developed by the Texas Education Agency in response to SB 174. However, the draft released in 2010 may be modified before implementation of the Bill. In 2011, principals of first year teachers will complete this survey to evaluate aspects of teacher preparation programs related to classroom environment, English Language Learners, students with disabilities, integrating technology, and using technology with data. Each category included Likert-type responses (*Well Prepared*, *Sufficiently Prepared*, *Not Sufficiently Prepared*, and *Not at all Prepared*) and an open-ended question. More qualitative data was collected through participant interviews based on the questions in the survey.

## **Data Collection and Analysis**

December 2009 and May 2010 graduates accessed the survey link via email. Participants replied to express interest in the interview phase of data collection. Personal email messages were used as a follow up to encourage participation. During the spring of the teacher's first full year, we visited the classroom of each participating teacher to observe a lesson and conduct an interview. The interview questions were based on the draft copy of the survey instrument developed by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) in response to Texas Senate Bill 174. Interviews were recorded and data were transcribed.

Quantitative data were collected from the surveys using Likert-type responses. Each category included five to seven questions, and an average was computed to report a score between one and four for each participant in each category. Responses of first year teachers were compared to responses of recent graduates with no experience. Two of the first year teachers were not employed as teachers, so their responses were omitted from the data set. Qualitative data from the open-ended responses provided insight to new teacher's perceptions of preparedness.

The ten interviews provided rich qualitative data. Both researchers served as co-raters and collaborated during coding. Emerging themes were used to describe areas in which new

teachers felt prepared or unprepared. The data was also used to identify strengths and recommendations for the teacher preparation program. The results of this study will also be used for program assessment in conjunction with the accreditation process.

### Findings

The quantitative data suggested recent graduates felt more prepared after student teaching than the first year teachers did during the first year. Table 1 shows the average score (with 4 indicating *well prepared* and 1 *indicating not prepared at all*) in each survey category. Independent samples t-tests were conducted to determine if mean differences were statistically significant ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ). Statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) differences existed in every category except English Language Learners ( $p = 0.07$ ).

Table 1  
*Mean Scores of Teacher Preparedness*

|                            | First Year Teachers | Recent Graduates |
|----------------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| Classroom Environment      | 3.11                | 3.70             |
| Students with Disabilities | 2.78                | 3.26             |
| English Language Learners  | 2.88                | 3.29             |
| Integrating Technology     | 3.11                | 3.75             |
| Using Technology with Data | 2.58                | 3.41             |

### Classroom Environment

Six survey questions related to classroom environment measured the preparedness to implement discipline-management procedures, communicate clear expectations, and build rapport with students and families. Twelve of the fourteen first year teachers reported an average rating of *Sufficiently Prepared* or *Well Prepared*. In addition, the participants provided support for their preparedness examples from the classroom. They felt prepared because they had developed management plans in coursework and had participated in field experiences. Those that felt prepared had a realistic expectation of how hard the first year could be.

However, communicating with parents was the criterion first year teachers felt least prepared. Five of the interviewees recommended mock parent conferences or examples of parent interaction. Participants' interview comments supported lack of feeling prepared in communicating with families:

- *With families, that has been hard for me. That's probably the hardest part, communicating with the families....*
- *...you come into school and you don't you've never even had a parent conference, not like a mock parent conference or anything like that. So you get thrown into your first one.....*
- *Maybe just...like a list of positive, you know, of how a phone conversation would have to go or a conference would have to go i...um...or maybe even practicing that.....*

### **Students with Disabilities**

The survey included seven prompts to measure preparedness in working with students with disabilities. Criteria included using research-based instructional strategies, differentiating instruction, understanding state and federal laws, implementing Individualized Education Plans (IEP), and collaborating with colleagues. Almost all student teachers felt prepared in these areas, but only half of the first year teachers reported feeling prepared to work with students with disabilities. First year teachers described experiences with students identified with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), Emotional Disturbed (ED), Mentally Retarded (MR), autism, dyslexia, and speech. Participants felt least prepared in using research based strategies, demonstrating learning, and tracking student progress.

First year teachers felt knowledgeable about terminology including modifications, accommodation, and differentiation. They recalled learning these topics in coursework and provided examples of implementation. However, for several participants, applying these concepts to real world situations was a struggle, and they thought they would have benefited from more examples of IEPs or from taking a special education course. Participant's comments were:

*The thing that I felt least prepared for was the um, changing and modifying for different students . . . differentiating between all of the different kids, that's my biggest struggle on a daily basis.*

*We were told about, just told about, the different disabilities, but not how to really... deal with it.*

The first year teachers also related their ability to teach students with disabilities to issues with classroom environment and feeling unprepared. Participants expressed struggles managing students of different abilities and with special needs on their own in the classroom. They also recognized that using technology with data applies to students with disabilities in relation to tracking student progress.

### **English Language Learners**

Six survey questions measured preparedness to work with ELL students by using research based strategies, understanding laws, complying with policies, integrating Texas Essentials Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS), and teaching academic English in the content areas. Half of the first year teachers did not feel sufficiently prepared to work with ELL students. Recently the preparation program changed to require two ELL courses in the EC-6 Generalist program. In the interviews, those who felt more prepared suggested the ELL courses provided useful strategies, but several reported that they did not obtain the ELL certificate and did not work with ELL students. Many of the first year teachers did not work with ELL students in their current role.

### **Integrating Technology**

Five survey questions measured preparation in integrating technology, including implementing Technology Applications (TA) TEKS, using multimedia to extend student learning and engage students, and teaching students technology skills. Both first year teachers and new graduates rated integrating technology as a category in which they were well prepared. Some participants isolated technology preparation to a specific technology course while others recognized technology integrated throughout coursework. First year teachers provided

examples such as using projectors, internet sites, content specific programs, iPods, and clickers. Few participants provided examples of students using technology.

### **Technology with Data**

Five survey questions measure preparation to use technology with data, demonstrated through using electronic grade books and collecting and analyzing data for groups or individuals to guide instruction. Again, both groups felt well prepared to use technology with data, but many participants expressed new learning with using a grade book program. They recognized the difficulty in preparing teachers in one software program because each district has different programs. Their struggles related to the use of data for differentiating instruction and implementing interventions. They were familiar with terminology, such as Response to Intervention, but they struggled with the implementation of the process.

### **Prepared**

Because we were examining strengths and weaknesses of our teacher preparation program, we analyzed data to determine areas in which participants felt prepared and unprepared. When asked about overall preparedness, the candidates all felt they had sufficient teacher preparation. The participants felt most prepared in integrating technology, developing a management plan, and developing lesson plans. Interview responses suggested education courses prepared teachers. Eight of the ten participants referred to field-based components of their preparation as providing strong experiences that prepared them for teaching.

*I just feel like um...I had been in the classroom so much (on being prepared)*

*Yeah (prepared), I had had so much experience already working with the kids.*

*...and it was a very gradual entrance into the classroom*

*They put us in classrooms and they let us interact with the children and we get to see a teacher interact with the students, so we're getting to see it and do it a little bit.*

Participants remembered learning about diversity, but they were still surprised by ranges among ability levels. They recognized each child is different, and most participants mentioned working with children differently.

*I think that I thought there was going to be a really wide variety of students, but then when you actually get in here the different levels that students are on is amazing to me.*

## **Unprepared**

The areas participants felt least prepared were working with students with disabilities, understanding Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 Section 504, conducting parent conferences, differentiating instruction, and behavioral issues (i.e. bickering, noise levels). First year struggles were events participants recognized could not have been covered through coursework.

*(The program) does a lot of hands-on, but until you're in the shoes....*

*But until you're here in the classroom, you just have to see what kind of children you have.*

*...not one day is the same and so kind of learning to roll with the punches and see what comes along...*

*....when you get into a classroom and the teachers says something... and it doesn't happen.*

*I don't know if you can really prepare for that (family issues) in the classroom*

*Every child is different in how you communicate to them. ....I think it's based on each child and I think I am going to have to learn that every year.*

## **Discussion**

Findings suggested student teachers from the teacher preparation program felt more confident in the five assessed categories than first year teachers. Other researchers have demonstrated similar results. Cunningham et al. (2004) measured teachers' perceived knowledge in several areas related to certification status and teaching experience. They reported an inverse relationship between self-perceptions and experience, finding teachers with

less experience viewed themselves as more knowledgeable than more experienced, fully credentialed teachers (Cunningham et al., 2004).

Student teaching is a critical element of traditional preparation programs, and student teachers receive support from classroom teachers and university supervisors. First year teachers assume a new level of responsibility, and perhaps this realization is somewhat overwhelming. Qualitative data supported this claim. One participant reported feeling excited upon starting a new teaching job, but she was quickly *disillusioned* as she felt overwhelmed by the workload of a new teacher. Another participant reported a *shocking* experience during the first weeks of school but felt she was as well prepared as possible. The *real world* was a shock for many first year teachers even with the benefit of the student teaching experience. Most participants indicated some aspects of teaching must be learned through experience.

While we presented findings where students felt prepared and unprepared, we found there was an element of the first year teaching experience that cannot be easily addressed in a university course. There were instances where first year teachers mentioned being overwhelmed or surprised with their classroom experiences:

*Sometimes I feel like I got it and sometimes I feel like, whew, what am I thinking?*

*Another thing that really surprised me is the lack of respect that kids have for adults now.*

*It is just a rough school. The kids have lots of issues. And they are almost all below grade level in reading.*

*It was so, so hard.*

Some recommendations from first year teachers encouraged professors to be very direct about how hard teaching is:

*I believe that no matter how much a professor attempts to prepare us, tell us, include in the syllabus, or send us to a number of field experiences, nothing could truly give us an idea of what teaching is like. I believe I was prepared to plan a well developed lesson for my students, but I was not prepared for the amount of time and energy teaching actually takes. For future teachers, I recommend being completely honest with them about how hard it is the first 1/2 of the first year. Tell them to keep their spirits up. At*

*times all I wanted to do was go home and not go back to school the next morning. Tell them to expect this.*

The statement from this first year teacher reflects problems resulting from unrealistic perceptions of a teacher's role. In a qualitative study on attrition, Berry (2009) reported that teachers with realistic expectations about teaching jobs continued teaching, while those who did not expect the rigor often left the teaching profession. Realistic expectations were developed in new teachers who had family members who were also teachers. Participants in this study appreciated the real world stories from professor's experiences in the classroom. Even after coursework with field experiences and a full semester of student teaching, participants were still surprised by the workload.

While participants reported feeling overwhelmed, one area of support for first year teachers was mentors. Two participants from the same district appreciated support from mentors, which even included the mandatory use of mentor lesson plans during the first year of teaching. According to the Alliance for Education (2005), "sixty-six percent of teachers who were formally mentored by another teacher reported that it 'improved their classroom teaching a lot'" (p. 2).

We found areas of program strengths and weaknesses based on data analysis. Of greatest concern were areas where first year teachers felt unprepared. Working with students with disabilities was a prominent struggle. The demographics of general classrooms have become increasingly diverse in terms of students' cultural, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds (Cochran-Smith & Power, 2010). Participants felt least prepared to work with student with disabilities. Participants of this study did not take special education courses, as such courses were not a part of degree requirements, and teachers seemed to view this as a cause of unpreparedness, even though special education strategies are integrated into our coursework. Strategy courses for English Language Learners seemed effective in fostering a feeling of preparedness in first year teachers.

According to Cochran-Smith and Power (2010), many teacher preparation programs focus on preparing teachers to meet the needs of diverse learners. For example, California requires all teachers to complete advanced coursework in teaching English Language Learners and students with special needs to obtain full licensure (Cochran-Smith & Power, 2010). We concluded that although courses in our teacher preparation program address the needs of special populations, graduates needed additional support in this area.

Based on interview data, participants valued the field-based experiences in the program. In addition, they asserted that additional courses, such as special education courses may have helped them feel more prepared. In 2005, the 79th Regular Session of the Texas Legislature enacted a statute that placed a 120 hour limit on the number of semester credit hours public universities may require for any bachelor's degree (Higher Education Coordinating Act, 2005). Universities have since reduced coursework required for education degrees, and in many cases such as ours, had to eliminate or combine courses. While participants mentioned courses that may have helped, it would be difficult to require all of the courses that would be beneficial for education majors.

Recommendations from participant interviews will be considered in efforts to improve teacher preparation. For example, parent conference simulations could be emphasized more. More simulations and real-world examples could be integrated to develop realistic expectations. Sample Individual Education Plans and 504 accommodations could be analyzed and incorporated in lesson planning to prepare teacher to modify for students with disabilities.

### **Conclusion**

Growing consensus among researchers and educators asserts the single most important factor in determining student performance is the quality of his or her teachers (Alliance for Education, 2005). An emphasis on preparing well qualified teacher has led to accountability measures such as the principal survey used in this study. As accountability for teacher preparation programs increases, data will be collected for program assessment. This

feedback should be welcomed and used for program improvement. In this study, we analyzed teacher perceptions of preparedness using data from surveys and interviews. Overall, the first year teachers felt well prepared, but they provided insight to the struggles of first year teachers. By addressing these struggles, teacher educators can improve teacher preparation.

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## PORTFOLIO PERFORMANCE OF NATIVE AND TRANSFER EC-6 CANDIDATES

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### Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine whether there are differences between the performance of native and transfer EC-6 teacher candidates on the Checkpoint 1 Portfolio, a key assessment completed in an introductory course in a large teacher education program. Information is presented about 93 EC-6 teacher candidates, 50 of whom had transferred from other institutions and 43 of whom were native students who had attended the sponsoring university in all years. Although not statistically significant, the greatest difference observed between the portfolio scores of the two groups was in “quality of reflection.” Differences in instructor feedback and portfolio narrative provided by the native and transfer groups are discussed.

### Purpose

The institution at which the study was conducted offers one of the largest undergraduate teacher education programs in Texas and is also among the top ten nationally for transfer-student graduates. A majority of EC-6 teacher education candidates are transfer students, who have typically completed two prior years of work at a community college. Possible differences in early preparation for the teacher education program between transfer students and native students, those who have completed all coursework at the home university, is of interest for program improvement and for collaboration with neighboring community colleges in course articulation and development.

Enrollment in the introductory course in the EC-6 program requires formal admission to Teacher Education, which requires that the candidate must be a junior; pass the Texas Higher Education Assessment (THEA) with minimum scores of 240 in reading, 230 in math and 220 in writing; have a 2.75 overall GPA or 2.75 GPA in the completed core; and have a degree plan

completed or in process in the Student Advising Office. Most candidates take the introductory EC-6 course immediately after admission to the Teacher Education Program, which is typically the first semester of the junior year. The introductory course is the first of three in which completion of a program portfolio is a key assignment. The portfolios are organized in alignment with the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) Standards (Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium, 1992), and require presentation of artifacts from past or concurrent coursework to document understanding of each of the ten standards. Candidates typically present between one and three artifacts with narrative to justify how the selected artifacts demonstrate their understanding of knowledge, skills, and dispositions associated with each of the ten that particular standards. Transfer students must draw their portfolio artifacts, at least in part, from assignments made and completed in courses at institutions other than the sponsor of the teacher education program. The research question for this study was "Are there differences in Checkpoint 1 portfolio performance between EC-6 candidates who transferred from a two-year or four-year college and those enrolled only at the sponsoring university?"

### **Perspective(s) or Theoretical Framework**

Research on the performance of transfer students is beginning to appear. Long and Kurlaender (2009) reported, based on a longitudinal study of baccalaureate students, that community college transfers were 14.5% less likely to complete their degrees. In 2003, Townsend, Carr, and Scholes reported no significant differences in the performance of transfer students in teacher education compared to native students based on a sample from one university. Kates (2010), interviewed transfer and native students in elementary education and found that the transfer students faced obstacles in completion of their programs and that community college courses in teacher education were often less rigorous than those offered at the university.

Roksa and Keith (2010) examined the role of articulation policies in the transition of students from a two-year community college to a four-year institution. With approximately 50% of students in public higher education attending community colleges, facilitating transfer from community colleges to four-year institutions has become a critical issue in higher education (Roksa and Keith, 2010). The authors reviewed state historical statutes and found that articulation policies do not improve transfer rates because of lost credit hours and extended time to complete a bachelor's degree. They suggested that articulation policies be carefully evaluated to prevent a loss of credit hours from a community college to a four-year institution.

The academic experience of community college transfer students at the senior institution has been well documented by studies characterizing their adjustment process as “transfer shock” (Cejda, 1994). The studies found that transfer students experience a temporary decrease in grades during the first year at a senior institution. A majority of the research in this area focuses on the differences between native and transfer students' academic achievement as measured by traditional GPA (Best & Gehring, 1993). To investigate this phenomenon of “transfer shock” Laanan (2007) examined the adjustment process of 727 students who transferred to the University of California from a community college. Results indicated that transfer students had significantly higher GPA's at both the community college and four-year institution.

As with work comparing the experience and performance of native and transfer students, this study takes a positivist approach based on identification of participants from candidates enrolled in an introductory course, determining their transfer status from self-report and verified by transcript examination. We expected to find that transfer students might earn lower portfolio scores than native students and that, even if scores were not significantly different, there would be a greater variance in the scores of the transfer students supported by a greater variety of artifacts selected from work previously completed at a variety of community colleges.

## Methods

This study employed empirical methods using both quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data employed was portfolio scores and sub-scores assigned by 3 raters who used a common rubric. Although raters were trained in the use of the rubric, their perceptions may not have been uniform. The rubric used to score the portfolios completed by the candidates yielded five sub-scores, four based on rater perception of candidate understanding of four key concepts in teaching based on the INTASC standards, and the fifth based on the perceived quality of candidate reflection. The four key concepts were a) Curriculum and Instruction (INTASC Standards 1, 4, 7, 8); b) Development and Diversity (INTASC Standards 2, 3); c) Classroom Environment and Relationships (INTASC Standards 5, 6); and d) Professional Leadership (INTASC Standards 9, 10). Each candidate was scored for the quality of demonstration of the four key concepts and for the quality of reflection for their descriptive commentary across the four sections of the portfolio. Quantitative analysis of data involved comparison of the means of the two groups on portfolio overall and on sub-scores using t-tests.

Examination of the candidates' reflections on their artifacts and portfolio reviewer comments was used to study these relatively open-ended portfolios. The readers of the portfolios were not involved with the research and did not know whether students were native or transfer unless informed by the candidates. Secondary analysis involved examination of statements about their artifacts made by candidates in cases where there were significant quantitative differences between native and transfer students. Study of statements by the two groups of candidates could provide evidence of group differences in their understandings of the related INTASC standards and on the arguments used by them to make a case for their understanding of key concepts in teaching and learning. Candidates who agreed to participate in the study made candidate portfolios and rubrics available to the researchers as guest users in a TK20 database. TK20 is an electronic assessment system used in the teacher education program.

The portfolio performance score was based on a 4-point scale, from 1 unacceptable to 4 distinguished. To receive a 4, the artifacts were expected to reflect depth and complexity as related to the INTASC Standards and Association of Childhood Education International (ACEI) Standards. Also, high scoring portfolio entries were expected to be well organized and free from mechanical, grammatical, and technological errors. The reflection score indicates the candidate's ability to represent an insightful reflective commentary that presents continuous and in depth comprehension of the relationship between standards. The candidate provides artifacts that clearly convey self-perception in the role of a teacher who is a positive role model and who values life-long learning. Candidates also convey their personal philosophy of education and the commitment to maintain high ethical behavior and professional competence.

All of the participants were enrolled in one of six sections of the introductory courses offered each semester at a large university in the south in fall 2009 or spring 2010. All course enrollees were contacted and invited to participate in this study using procedures approved by the IRB. The 93 participants represent 29.62% of the 314 possible participants. Participants completed a questionnaire that asked their transfer status and told the participant how to admit the researcher as a guest user of their portfolios for review for this and other related research purposes. Data presented here were collected from 93 EC-6 teacher candidates, 59.8% of whom were transfer students.

## **Results**

Mean (M) of portfolio performance scores and their standard deviations (SD) scores were calculated based on the overall scores and sub-scores of native and transfer candidates and compared using t-tests. Results showed minimal differences in overall portfolio scores between native and transfer students. The mean of the total portfolio score for transfer was 16.46 (SD=4.35). For native students, the mean for the portfolio was slightly higher, 16.81 with a lower SD of 3.71. Table 1 shows the results of independent samples T-test which was used to compare means between native and transfer across the five sub-scores of the portfolio. As

shown in Table 1, an analysis of the sub-scores associated with the components described above for the portfolios of native and transfer students, showed that none of the differences between means of these groups were statistically significant, where  $p > .05$ .

Table 1  
*Group Statistics for Native and Transfer Portfolio Performance*

|               | Transfer | N  | Mean  | Std. Dev. | Std. Err. Mean |
|---------------|----------|----|-------|-----------|----------------|
| Content       | Transfer | 50 | 3.34  | .94       | .13            |
| Development   | Native   | 42 | 3.42  | .63       | .10            |
|               | Transfer | 50 | 3.38  | .88       | .12            |
| Relationships | Native   | 42 | 3.48  | .63       | .11            |
|               | Transfer | 50 | 3.32  | .89       | .13            |
| Advocacy      | Native   | 42 | 3.40  | .70       | .11            |
|               | Transfer | 50 | 3.30  | .95       | .13            |
| Reflection    | Native   | 42 | 3.33  | .69       | .10            |
|               | Transfer | 50 | 3.12  | 1.00      | .13            |
| Total Score   | Native   | 42 | 3.38  | .76       | .12            |
|               | Transfer | 50 | 16.46 | 4.35      | .61            |
|               | Native   | 42 | 16.81 | 3.71      | .57            |

Although not statistically significant, the greatest difference between the means of native and transfer candidates was in the reflections sub-scale, where the native student mean was 3.38 compared to a 3.12 mean for transfer students. Also, the standard deviation for transfer students, 1.00 was the largest of any examined in this analysis. To understand better the quality of differences between native and transfer student work, portfolios for five transfer and five native students were randomly selected and reviewed.

Verbal feedback of portfolio reviewers to transfer students tended to address the depth of reflection in this component of the portfolio. For example, the instructor noted, “a couple of artifact summary/reflects were a bit too brief but other than that, it looks really good!” Most comments from the instructors dealt with the reflections being somewhat brief with limited content to the reflection.

Native students received instructor comments in the reflection feedback section that dealt more with the artifact selection and quality of the candidate understanding of the standard than with length. For example, the instructor feedback commented to one native candidate, “The selections for INTASC 6 and 8 seem to me especially thin, with one hinging on songs as classroom signals and the other on a diagnostic assessment that is not presented with considerations for the broader purposes of assessment.” In this case, in spite of limitations in the artifacts selected, the reflection included in the portfolio was perceived to adequately convey a deep understanding of the standard. Taliaferro (2006) found that inter-rater reliability in scoring of the portfolios by trained faculty was greater than 70% for each of the 10 standards but less than 70% for the total scores using Spearman rho correlation coefficients.

### **Conclusions**

This study explored the differences in Checkpoint 1 portfolio performance between students who transferred from a two-year or four-year college and those enrolled only at the sponsoring university. For 93 candidates, there were not significant differences between sub-scores of native and transfer students on the overall portfolios or on any of five sub-score components. The greatest difference observed between the two groups was in “quality of reflection,” and some work has been done to describe differences in instructor feedback related to narrative provided by the native and transfer groups. This study contributes to a small group of studies becoming available about native and transfer students in elementary education. Like many studies, this project requires further development. Analyzing a larger sample might have produced results that were statistically significant, considering that all statistical means favored native students. Using the same raters for all the portfolios or training the raters to work in teams could help, also, with the consistency of the findings. Further information about the quality of artifacts presented by the native and transfer candidates is necessary in understanding the level of academic knowledge acquired through study at a two-year college or another university compared to the sponsoring university. Analysis of results by feeder

community college might be of local interest, also, if completers of some community college programs were consistently more successful than others in meeting the requirements of the Checkpoint 1 portfolio. Characteristics of the feeder programs might be examined as well as the quality of the articulation agreements related to candidate transfer. Roksa and Keith (2008) suggest that that if articulation policies were effective, the challenges of transfer would be lessened because articulation policies are designed explicitly to eliminate unnecessary duplication of courses. This effectiveness should be reflected in the outcomes examined in this study.

Continued work may lead to this study's being related to the considerable body of research that exists on reflection by teacher education candidates (Howard & Aleman, 2008; Rodgers & Scott, 2008). Kates (2010) indicates further research is necessary to provide teacher candidates with the peer and faculty support many need in order to meet the intellectual and behavioral demands of a bachelor's degree program without compromising the rigor and depth appropriate to the four-year setting. According to Ross (1988), few college seniors move beyond moderate levels of reflective judgment; however, it is necessary for teacher educators to examine how collegiate programs contribute to more reflective judgment. The information would be used to develop more mature and effective teachers in the classroom.

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## A TALE OF TWO PROGRAMS: A SELF-EVALUATION OF TEACHER CANDIDATE OUTCOMES

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### Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the current structure of the university's undergraduate teacher education program for students preparing to receive EC-12 or 8-12 certifications. The milieu of this inquiry is a recently revised teacher education program at a rural state-supported university in Texas. The majority of teacher candidates take 24 credit hours within the Department of Secondary Education and Educational Leadership. However, candidates majoring in music, agriculture, special education, and deaf education take only 15-18 credit hours within said department, the remaining courses have equivalents within other departments. The major question is: Is there a difference in test scores for students who do not take all of the included courses for certification? Although the researchers anticipated some difference between the groups that completed the Secondary Education hours and those that did not, the tests revealed there was no significant difference between any of the groups and the means of all groups varied only by a few points. The fact that there is no difference in those groups indicates that the program is meeting the needs of both certification groups.

### Introduction

Quality educators continually ask themselves the question, "How am I doing?" This reflective practice aims to improve educational experiences for both teacher and student. The authors work within a teacher preparation program that stresses reflective practice, self-assessment, and learning as a life-long process. Within the context of this teacher preparation program, professors not only encourage reflective practice, they also apply it to their instructional practice and the program itself.

Reflective thinking and critical analysis are important factors in any profession. These skills must be encouraged and facilitated within a teacher preparation program. These skills

should also be modeled by the faculty. As professionals, faculty members must not only reflect on their own teaching, but should continually assess the curriculum and teaching methods they use. This study, a program evaluation, takes place within the context of such an assessment.

Wineburg (2006) lists many reasons for educational program assessment regarding teacher education, including demands of proof of effectiveness, cost-benefit analysis of programs, competence of teacher candidates, and the quality of candidate assessment. These program assessments always cater to the same demand: “produce evidence to prove the effectiveness of teacher preparation programs” (p. 51).

The College of Education puts forth as one of its core values that it is committed to life-long learning. This program evaluation exemplifies such a belief. The faculty fully embraces this belief and not only teaches it, but practices it as well as evidenced in program meetings and retreats. The faculty agrees with Connelly and Clandinin’s ideas regarding teachers and their learning:

Our...assumption is that teacher education is lifelong. Too often, teacher education is thought of as preservice teacher education. We see teacher education as ongoing throughout life. We continue to educate ourselves as teachers in our classrooms and in our lives as a whole (1994, p. 147).

So, by participating in self-reflection and assessment, the faculty models lifelong learning for the teaching candidates.

Schwab (1973) argues that “defensible educational thought must take account of four commonplaces of *equal* rank: the learner, the teacher, the milieu, and the subject matter. None of these factors can be omitted without omitting a vital factor in educational thought and practice” (pp. 508-509). This program evaluation can certainly be considered within the framework of Schwab’s four commonplaces which will be briefly considered here and later discussed in depth.

The learners in this study are undergraduate students seeking teacher certification. These students will receive degrees not in education, but in their content area. Students within

this particular program are pursuing certification to teach either grades 8-12 or all grade levels (Early Childhood through twelfth grade, known as EC-12) in the public schools in Texas.

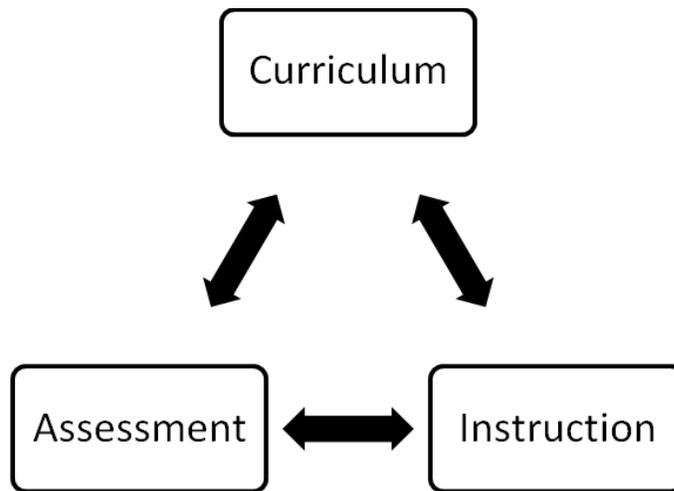
The teachers are six faculty members employed in the college of education within a program area simply called Secondary Education. These faculty members have all earned terminal degrees in curriculum and instruction from major universities and are all former classroom teachers. All are relatively new to higher education; the professor with the longest tenure has been at the university for six years; however, the authors acknowledge that these six faculty members are not the only teachers involved. The nature of teacher education programs and the field experiences contained therein necessitate the involvement of many professionals from outside the university.

The milieu of this inquiry is a recently revised teacher education program at a rural state-supported university in Texas. The majority of teacher candidates take 24 credit hours within the Department of Secondary Education and Educational Leadership; however, candidates majoring in music, agriculture, special education, and deaf education take only 15-18 credit hours within the department, the remaining courses have equivalents within other departments.

This study revolves around the subject matter of preservice teacher education. This course of study includes a myriad of topics, including, but not limited to, educational philosophy, pedagogy, legal and ethical issues, curriculum, instructional methods, assessment techniques, critical thinking, learning theories, issues of student diversity and special populations, classroom management, and the history of education.

The struggle for improvement in the area of curriculum is ongoing. One must view the revision and evaluation process within the context of a curriculum-instruction-assessment cycle (see Figure 1). This cycle can be entered at point and can travel in any direction. In other words, assessment can inform both instruction as well as curriculum as is the case in this inquiry. Then, in turn, it is the hope of the authors that curriculum and instruction are positively affected by the study so that the assessment, in this case standardized test scores, will show

gains in student achievement. This study, then asks the question, “How are we doing in our job as teacher educators?”



**Figure 1.** *Visual Representation of the Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Cycle*

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to examine the current structure of the university’s undergraduate teacher education program for students preparing to receive EC-12 or 8-12 certifications. The major question is: Is there a difference in test scores for students who do not take all of the included courses for certification? The following two questions will be used to frame the investigation:

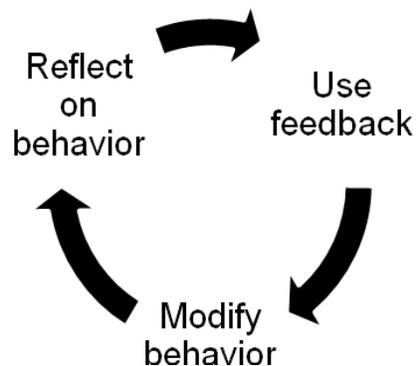
- 1) Is there a significant difference between the certification scores of the students pursuing EC-12 certification and 8-12 certification?
- 2) Is there a significant difference between the certification scores of different content area students?

### **Conceptual Framework**

This study draws on the accepted tradition of continual self-evaluation in an effort to improve student learning. This means of self-assessment has its roots in Dewey (1938), Schön (1983), and, more recently, Darling-Hammond (2000). While the initial goal of such a study is to

the improvement of teaching and curriculum, the ultimate goal is to improve the learning experiences of the pre-service educators who will one day shape the lives of their own students. By analyzing our own programs, we set an example for our students to continually analyze their own personal practical knowledge (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000), become a lifelong learner, and succumb to “the lure of learning in teaching” (Liston, 2004).

Schön (1983) writes that persons in all disciplines can be served by thoughtful, critical self-assessment. This reflective practice is easy to understand (see Figure 2) even though the theory itself is quite complex and can apply to any number of professions. First, a person must reflect on actions taken. Second, the person must accumulate data based upon this reflection. This data can come from both internal and external sources. Third, while considering the data, the person will then modify future behaviors and actions in order to improve future outcomes. This self-assessment process is both cyclical and continuous.



**Figure 2.** *Visual Representation of Schön’s Reflective Practice (from Seaman, 2008)*

This inquiry involves experiential learning; that is, the learning that takes place through our experiences. John Dewey wrote at length about this topic, most notably in his book, *Experience and Education* (1938), in which he explains the continual interaction of education, life, and experience. Teachers must be able to discern the quality and influence of a past experience, “The *effect* of an experience is not borne on its face” (p. 27). The goal of the

reflective practice should be to process one's own stories then determine their influence and applicability within a current or future context. Such a reflective practice reveals not only what one knows, but what one needs to know.

Program assessment and revision of this sort normally handled internally within a department or program; however, the authors believe that with the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (Public Law 107-110) with its emphasis on content knowledge, that similar assessments could be implemented in programs throughout the country.

### **Methodology**

This quantitative study used the test scores from the TExES Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities (PPR) test to see if there was a significant difference between candidates that pursued EC-12 and 8-12 certifications. In addition the researchers analyzed data to see if there were differences between candidates that completed the entire 24 hour course sequence and those who had equivalents substituted from other programs on campus.

### **Data Collection**

The Office of Assessment and Accountability in Perkins College of Education collects the tests scores of all our students on all certification exams for licensure in Texas. For the Secondary Education program, those tests are Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities 130 (PPR130) for 8-12 and Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities 160 (PPR 160) for EC - 12. The Office of Assessment and Accountability disseminates the data to each department. The secondary education program then manages the data in a database. The database contains scale test scores, domain scores, student names, and student identification numbers for the two years. The researchers used the student identification number to determine the student's content area field. Each score was then coded for certification level (EC-12 or 8-12) and coursework path (24 hrs or partial). The identifying information was then deleted from the database.

## Data Analysis

Demographic information for the groups was collected. Descriptive statistics were run for each content area in Secondary Education. The data were analyzed using t-tests. Descriptive statistics were run for the group means as well.

### Demographics

The sample included 233 candidate test scores. The following table shows the breakdown of those scores between groups.

Table 1  
*Demographics of Groups*

|                        |     |     |
|------------------------|-----|-----|
| Areas of Certification |     |     |
| 8 – 12                 | 88  | 38% |
| EC - 12                | 145 | 62% |
| Coursework             |     |     |
| Complete 24 hours      | 130 | 56% |
| Partial hours          | 103 | 44% |

N=233

The EC – 12 certification area represents the largest percentage of the Secondary Education program. The content area demographics are reported in Table 2.

Table 2  
*Demographics of Individual Content Areas*

| Content                 | n  | Certification | Coursework |
|-------------------------|----|---------------|------------|
| Music                   | 44 | EC-12         | Partial    |
| Kinesiology             | 46 | EC-12         | Complete   |
| Special Education       | 25 | EC-12         | Partial    |
| Theater                 | 03 | EC-12         | Complete   |
| Agriculture             | 16 | 8-12          | Partial    |
| Art                     | 05 | EC-12         | Complete   |
| Business                | 02 | 8-12          | Complete   |
| Dance                   | 08 | 8-12          | Complete   |
| Deaf Education          | 14 | EC-12         | Partial    |
| Health                  | 08 | EC-12         | Complete   |
| English                 | 13 | 8-12          | Complete   |
| Family Consumer Science | 04 | 8-12          | Partial    |
| French                  | 01 | 8-12          | Complete   |
| History                 | 09 | 8-12          | Complete   |
| Journalism              | 01 | 8-12          | Complete   |
| Life Science            | 03 | 8-12          | Complete   |
| Math                    | 05 | 8-12          | Complete   |
| Social Studies          | 18 | 8-12          | Complete   |
| Spanish                 | 08 | 8-12          | Complete   |
| Speech                  | 02 | 8-12          | Complete   |

N=233

## Descriptive Statistics

Means were calculated for each content area group in the Secondary Education program. The following table (Table 3) reports those means.

Table 3  
*Means of Individual Content Areas*

| Content                 | n  | M      | SD    |
|-------------------------|----|--------|-------|
| Music                   | 44 | 262.27 | 16.84 |
| Kinesiology             | 46 | 250.17 | 21.28 |
| Special Education       | 25 | 260.76 | 15.59 |
| Theater                 | 03 | 269.33 | 11.93 |
| Agriculture             | 16 | 240.69 | 24.29 |
| Art                     | 05 | 272.40 | 9.34  |
| Business                | 02 | 269.00 | 11.31 |
| Dance                   | 08 | 256.00 | 17.13 |
| Deaf Education          | 14 | 264.43 | 8.75  |
| Health                  | 08 | 253.12 | 12.67 |
| English                 | 13 | 265.46 | 18.17 |
| Family Consumer Science | 04 | 254.75 | 24.29 |
| French                  | 01 | 290.00 |       |
| History                 | 09 | 257.44 | 9.93  |
| Journalism              | 01 | 257.00 |       |
| Life Science            | 03 | 266.67 | 2.08  |
| Math                    | 05 | 264.40 | 5.27  |
| Social Studies          | 18 | 255.56 | 17.75 |
| Spanish                 | 08 | 255.67 | 18.14 |
| Speech                  | 02 | 239.50 | 13.43 |

N=233

## Inferential Statistics

For the first research question regarding the scores of the 8-12 and the EC-12 candidates, the data were analyzed using a t-test. There was no significant difference between the groups  $t(231) = -1.05$ ,  $p = .30$ . The 8-12 group had  $M = 255.75$ ,  $SD = 19.33$  while the EC-12 group was  $M = 258.37$ ,  $SD = 18.09$ . For the second research question regarding the scores between candidates who complete all coursework and those who do not, the data were analyzed using a t-test. There was no significant difference between the groups  $t(231) = -.86$ ,

$p=.39$ . The coursework completer group had  $M=256.45$ ,  $SD=18.42$  while the partial coursework group was  $M=258.55$ ,  $SD= 18.79$ .

### **Discussion**

Although the researchers anticipated some difference between the groups that completed the Secondary Education hours and those that did not, the tests revealed there was no significant difference between any of the groups and the means of all groups varied only by a few points. The size of the specific content area groups were too small to use in any statistical test. Even though there was a lack of difference between the large groups, it is possible that there could be differences among the specific content area groups.

The TExES PPR is a criterion referenced test with a passing score of 240. The agriculture content area group had a mean of 240.69. This was the lowest mean of any group excluding Speech which only had two scores. The agriculture students in the Secondary Education program take the least number of hours from the program and have the most equivalent courses in their content area. The top six content groups include majors in the fields of English, Life Science, Business, Theater, Art, and French. The groups with means in the middle of the range were comprised of groups that take all of our coursework as well as groups that do not take all of our coursework. Although as a group these scores showed no difference between groups that completed coursework and those that did not, it is worth looking at the implications of the individual group scores for program evaluation.

The Secondary Education program faculty continually revise and evaluate the curriculum of the program; however, this assessment only includes our specific courses. Each program that offers an equivalent for our course is solely responsible for that course. For example, the Family Consumer Science program offers a methods course for their majors who are pursuing certification. This course substitutes for Secondary Education's course Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment. Although we may make changes to the curriculum of our course, those changes do not carry over to the Family Consumer Science course. Then it could be that the

range of scores is not related to the number of hours completed in the Secondary Education program, but to the quality of hours in the major program equivalency course. If this is the case, then alignment and collaboration between programs could greatly benefit the candidates seeking 8-12 and EC-12 certification.

The lack of significant difference between the 8-12 and EC-12 groups is positive news for the Secondary Education program. These two groups have very similar curriculum for the certification tests; however, the EC-12 test covers early childhood development and appropriate instruction and assessment for the younger child. The fact that there is no difference in those groups indicates that the program is meeting the needs of both certification groups.

### **Conclusions**

While a lack of statistical significance is can be bad news for researchers, in this case the opposite is true. Through this self-evaluation, the Secondary Education faculty found that the needs of the students are being met both within and without the department. The lack of statistical significance could indicate that the coursework in other departments is delivering the desired information to the preservice teachers.

Suggestions for further research would include studying whether or not all coursework in the program can be assessed through the TExES certification exam and whether or not the certification exam is a valid assessment of a future teacher's practical knowledge. Also, the study could be expanded longitudinally to include a larger data set. Since this information is readily available, the researchers will continue to monitor current certification test data to see if current trends continue.

Through reflective practice and critical thought, the Secondary Education program has embarked on a journey of self-assessment as it continually evolves to meet the needs of its students. The results of this study indicate that the answer to the reflective question, "How are we doing?" could be that we are meeting our students' needs; however, we will continually strive for improvement, modeling for our students that progress is a life-long endeavor.

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**A LAYERED APPROACH TO COACHING IN A SCHOOL  
UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP:  
THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHOOL AS A VEHICLE  
FOR INSTRUCTIONAL IMPROVEMENT FOR ENGLISH  
LANGUAGE LEARNERS**

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**Abstract**

Project ENLACE is a five-year pilot study of a National Professional Development program grant aimed at increasing academic achievement for English learners. In addition to in-service ESL certification and an ESL-infused model for pre-service curriculum, university faculty provided on-site coaching and mentoring to teacher leaders and newly-certified ESL teachers. This article examines the challenges and successes of the coaching and mentoring process of a National Professional Development grant and provides insight into the relationships forged between the university and the public partner schools that participated in this project. The coaching model increased responsiveness to ELLs and their linguistic needs and increased teacher-knowledge of language acquisition processes. Lack of administrative buy-in, lack of time, and a large learning curve inhibited the coaching model.

**Introduction**

According to the Texas Education Agency (TEA) (2010), 16.9 percent of all Texas students in 2009-2010 were identified as English language learners (ELLs) or Limited English Proficient (LEP), while only seven percent of Texas teachers were certified in bilingual or ESL. This increase of ELL students coupled with state and federal accountability standards through No Child Left Behind (NCLB) created a need for more teachers trained to educate the growing ELL population.

This teacher shortage motivated administrators and faculty members at Stephen F. Austin State University (SFASU) in Nacogdoches, Texas, to apply for a federal grant in 2006 that would enable them to better prepare their pre-service teacher candidates to teach ELL students and would provide needed professional development to teachers in partner school districts with whom they had been working collaboratively as part of a professional development school (PDS) model since 1992. In early 2006, partner school principals were asked to identify their number one professional development need. Overwhelmingly, their responses focused on English language acquisition, a perception fueled by the rapidly changing demographic profile within the local community. Shortly thereafter, SFASU and two local independent school districts submitted a grant application proposing the creation of the English Language Acquisition Center for Excellence (ENLACE). The proposed goals for the center were two-fold: 1) increase the number of in-service teachers in partner schools who are certified and trained to teach ELLs and 2) infuse the ESL standards into existing teacher education curriculum so that candidates could pass the ESL TExES exam and be better prepared to teach ELLs in Texas.

In early summer 2007, the university received notification that its grant application had been approved as a fully-funded 5 year pilot study. With the PDS network already in place, the university and its two primary partner school districts initiated a focused and intensified collaborative relationship grounded in meeting the needs of ELL students as well as in-service professionals, pre-service candidates, and university faculty who sought to address their pressing educational needs. The ENLACE grant provided the sought-after nexus for elevating the degree of partnership interactions.

In addition to helping in-service teachers become ESL certified, the grant project sought to train teachers at a level that would surpass the basic knowledge required to simply pass the ESL TExES exam. As a result, a focus of the partnership was to create a layered coaching and mentoring relationship within the PDS network wherein university faculty members serve as mentors or coaches to teacher leaders who serve as coaches to newly-certified ESL content

teachers. Joint professional development amongst university coaches, campus coaches, and campus administrators provided the forum for knowledge dissemination related to effective teaching practices for ELLs, Texas' new English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS), and differentiation for ELLs. University coaches, campus coaches, and campus administrators then worked to share the knowledge with individual campuses in their smaller learning communities. In addition, a coaching cycle was established between the campus mentors and the newly-certified ESL teachers. The campus coach engaged in a pre-conference, observation, and post-conference to assist the mentees (newly-certified ESL teachers) in implementing best practices.

This article examines the challenges and successes of the coaching and mentoring process of the ENLACE grant and provides insight into the relationships forged between the university and the public partner schools that participated in this project.

### **Review of the Literature**

Much academic research suggests that teachers who work with a mentor/coach benefit from the relationship (Murrell, 2007). Yendol-Hoppey and Dana (2007) state that a “coach is a person who provides specific targeted instruction or support to enhance performance” (p. 70). Murrell (2007) adds that “mentoring [coaching] is important for one’s career and the overall effectiveness of any organization” (para. 2). The coaching process should be characterized by positive and supportive interactions that help an individual during the learning process (Boreen, Johnson, Niday, & Potts, 2000).

Another objective of coaching is helping someone experience the connection between theory and practice (Boreen et al., 2000). Through coaching, novice teachers are able to move from what they already believe (theory) to what they know must be done (practice) for their students and their classroom practices. Coaches serve as the conduit for this connection to take place. The results of this endeavor are beneficial to the coach, the mentee, and hopefully the students.

The coaching relationship can be a valuable learning opportunity for both the coach and the mentee. This relationship serves as one of the most appropriate and meaningful professional development activities for the veteran teacher because it leads to and promotes self-reflection (Villani, 2006) as well as renewed commitment to the profession. The mentee gains a wealth of practical knowledge and capabilities from a person who does not stand in a place of judgment, but rather, one of assistance and guidance. Coaching and the mentoring process provide both participants with the support they need to improve their practice (Villani, 2006).

Careful consideration must be taken regarding the choice of a coach and the anticipated outcomes. Those who serve as coaches must be committed to fostering the personal as well as professional development of their mentees by sharing their time and resources (Villani, 2006). In addition, the mentee must be willing and eager to accept the coach as a person who genuinely cares about him or her. Both individuals need to strive to make the relationship one that leads to a mastery of learning (Yendol-Hoppey & Dana, 2007).

Extant research also identifies barriers that could impede the success of the coach/mentee bond. For example, Boreen et al. (2000) identify the following barriers to success: lack of time for effective communication; philosophical differences; failure to see the coaching experience as one that fosters growth rather than evaluation; and the length of the coach/mentee relationship if it does not promote a sense of independence for the mentee. If these factors are present, the coaching experience may be unproductive for both participants. Similar barriers emerged in the present research.

### **Research Design**

The questions of this research, which explores complex relationships that developed during the coaching process between public school teachers and university faculty members, call for qualitative inquiry, which is particularly suited to reveal the “nuances and textures of real life” (Mareck, Fine, & Kidder, 1997, p. 633). All the authors were participants in the study and

therefore also acted as instruments in the data collection and analysis processes. Participants were selected through purposeful sampling and included eight university coaches and 32 K-12 campus coaches (twenty elementary, six middle, and six high school coaches). The partner schools participating in the grant included two high school, three middle school, and thirteen elementary school campuses in two school districts.

Data sources included the following: a) participant observation at on-site campus visits, staff development meetings, and peer debriefing and planning meetings with the university coaches that took place on the university campus, b) on-site focus group interviews with study participants, and c) descriptive field notes capturing information from informal and semi-formal interviews and meetings with study participants. The data collection and analysis phases of this study were not easily separated. Rather, it was a recursive, ongoing process of collecting data, peer debriefing (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), analysis, and then returning to data collection (Miles & Huberman, 1984).

## **Findings and Discussion**

As a result of the data analysis process, general themes emerged and were organized under two broad categories: successes and challenges of the coaching model. Researchers used the data to guide further processes in the ongoing project.

### **Successes of the Coaching Model**

The coaching model was implemented on both elementary and secondary campuses in multiple districts. Despite some challenges which will be addressed later, implementation of the coaching model resulted in numerous successes. University coaches reported a noticeable shift in attitudes towards ELLs at partner schools between 2007 and 2011. Once thought of as children for whom others were responsible, participants reported that ELLs have become children for which all staff members are accountable. With the support of campus coaches and ENLACE training sessions, the mentees began to better understand their students and develop stronger personal connections. One campus coach noted that “it took a village,” including

multiple teachers and paraprofessionals, to support a third-grade newcomer on their campus. Each person took on a particular support role for that child. For example, the student was supported by a first grade teacher for vocabulary development while waiting for his afternoon bus. Multiple staff members celebrated the child's personal growth and development. Similar examples were evidenced on many campuses, with an increased number of faculty and staff beginning to embrace all ELL students as their "own."

Beyond taking more ownership of the ELLs on their campuses, teachers and administrators developed a greater understanding of language development and the instructional strategies necessary to better support students. The coaching model offered ongoing site-based professional development in which the campus coaches modeled and discussed strategies that would best facilitate language development for ELLs. Participating teachers noted that monthly small group meetings with teachers for sharing effective strategies were "invaluable" collaborative tools which resulted in increased implementation of effective strategies on their campuses. Based on successful implementation of newly learned strategies, the mentees were eager to continue to learn additional strategies from the campus coaches. As a result of the coaching cycle and the ENLACE training sessions, one participating teacher noted that the "strategies worked well, not only for the ELL students, but also for the rest of the students in the classroom."

### **Challenges of the Coaching Model**

Although each campus was unique, several challenges were common across more than one campus. One challenge at several campuses—particularly at the secondary level—was a lack of administrative buy-in to the coaching program (Niño & Alford, 2010). In response to a focus group interview question asking coaches to identify challenging aspects of the coaching model, one high school coach immediately responded, "Administration. That's it. It's the principal." When asked to explain why he thought the principal was a roadblock, he said, "It's lack of information, for one, and then unwillingness. He doesn't think it's important." Another

high school coach lamented that “the only person who goes to the ENLACE trainings is the district ESL coordinator.” None of her campus administrators participated. The university coach for that high school campus concurred that the administrator failed to show support and/or interest in the work related to the grant that took place on the campus.

Another challenge that was encountered at numerous campuses—particularly at the elementary level—was time. In some cases, it was difficult to find meeting times that worked for the university coaches and the campus coaches. In other cases, coaches on some campuses were also regular classroom teachers, which meant that in order for them to be available to work with the university coaches, someone had to cover their classes. This finding echoes those found in extant literature (Boreen et al., 2000).

Another challenge more common at the secondary level campuses was developing a relationship between the university coach and the campus coaches. In one case, for example, after an initial meeting between one of the university coaches and two high school campus coaches, one of the coaches confessed that she had been “nervous and intimidated” about working with the university coach and said she was surprised to see that the university coach “wasn’t scary or mean.” This comment speaks to the oft-discussed divide between school campuses and teacher education programs (Zeichner, 2010).

A final challenge was the fast learning curve that many university coaches faced when beginning their roles as coaches. Many of the university coaches needed professional development themselves with regard to instruction for ELLs in order to adequately perform their duties as coaches. Some of the university coaches felt they were getting on-the-job training in ELL instruction and were just trying to stay one step ahead of the campus coaches with whom they were working.

## **Implications for Practice**

Although this coaching model evolved over the course of four years, the training will need to continue due to teacher and coach turn-over. This ongoing planning process will be facilitated by a smaller steering committee that can provide the background and context so that the original intent is not lost in human interpretation.

The authors learned several key concepts through the systematic process of shifting paradigms from ELLs being “those children” to ELLs being “our children.” Content experts were commissioned to deliver the ELL training during combined professional development with university coaches and partner school campus coaches and administrators. This created a shared sense of power between the university coaches and the campus coaches since both were on the same learning curve and were being instructed from someone on the outside. University coaches were able to utilize the training with their pre-service teachers and administrators within their respective programs, and campus coaches gained an increased capacity to become teacher-leaders on their campuses. Another lesson learned was the importance of allowing plenty of time between training and evaluation. Teachers needed almost two complete years of training and modeling prior to having the expectation that they would be held accountable within their classrooms. This created an opportunity for teachers to gain increased awareness, knowledge, and confidence prior to the campus coach coming in to observe for the coaching cycle portion.

Open lines of communication were crucial during all phases of the implementation of the coaching model. Mentees had to feel free to ask the campus coach for help without punitive measures from the administration. Campus coaches needed to feel free to ask for resources and support from the university coaches without feeling incompetent. A strong support system was built from the ground up by involving all administrative personnel from the start with trainings and critical conversations that required teaching practices to be refined.

Field notes taken during coaching meetings were beneficial in tailoring future trainings to meet the needs of the teachers and campuses. Attendance records were kept as a means to track the sustainability of the training and whether an interest level was being maintained or increased. University coaches, campus coaches, and campus administrators negotiated an observation form to be used by campus coaches during classroom observations. This form, the English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS) form, proved to be a key component in moving the focus from theory to practice in the classroom. These forms document classroom visits and evidence of instructional practices that the classroom teacher focuses on during his/her lesson. Over time, the observable concepts on the form can be quantified to determine common areas of focus during instructional delivery.

The benefits from this effort have been enormous. A renewed partnership between the university and local schools has been established. University coaches are welcomed and invited into classrooms to observe, learn, and offer feedback. Campus teachers and coaches are working together to improve instruction while using the ELPS observation form that was negotiated by all involved parties. A common language involving ELL instruction is being shared on the university and school campuses. On some campuses, all teachers have become ESL certified as a result of the ENLACE professional development. Most importantly, instruction is being refined and improved to benefit all learners, students are now seen as individual learners with specific needs, and teachers have the tools to tailor their teaching to meet those needs.

### **Sustainability**

In achieving any change effort, planning for sustainability is important (Fullan, 2010). Many times, educators have criticized professional development as offering short-term or quick-fix solutions to complex problems (Loucks-Horsley, Stiles, Hundrey, Love, & Hewson, 2010). The solutions that are proposed have been described as first order changes that do not impact beliefs, values, and actions and, consequently, do not result in long-term sustainability (Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003). In order to achieve second order changes that are not band-aid

solutions to problems, building capacity of the stakeholders to sustain the change is vital (Fullan, 2010; Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003). Sustained effort and follow-up are needed in effective professional development experiences (Richardson, 2003). Fullan (2010) described the missing link in many reform efforts as “the powerhouse force of collective capacity building and efficacy” (p. 102). Fullan (2009) also stressed, “Capacity must be evident in practice and be ongoing. Front-end training is insufficient” (p. 11). Capacity building was defined as “any strategy that increases the collective effectiveness of a group to raise the bar and close the gap of student learning” (Fullan, 2009, p. 195). Classroom based coaching as a form of professional development provides a way to sustain changes that impact student achievement (Speck & Knipe, 2001), improving the level of implementation of new instructional strategies (Wong & Nicotera, 2003).

### **Conclusion**

For Project ENLACE, the combined ELL trainings were important for the university coaches, campus coaches, and administrators in strengthening knowledge and skills to meet the needs of ELLs; however, building a two-tiered system of coaching by campus coaches and university coaches was essential to the sustainability of infusion of ELL strategies as well as to provide follow-up support on the partner campuses. To date in this project, 254 teachers have attained certification through ENLACE from October 2007 to March 2011. The project has worked to ensure that teachers have not only gained certification as ESL teachers, but that they have used the knowledge. Follow-up and coaching have been essential in this process. Sustainability is also enhanced when teachers see results from their efforts (Fullan, 2009). In addition, the relationships of the PDS network have been strengthened as all participants have worked together to improve educational opportunities and experiences for ELLs.

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## MOONLIGHTING AND TEACHER STATUS: WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE?

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### Abstract

This study investigates the trends in regard to teachers and moonlighting, the perceived effects of teacher moonlighting on classroom instruction, and attitudes of teachers toward their salaries and moonlighting. Using data captured both longitudinally over a 30-year period, along with a 2010 survey of 907 teachers from all grade levels and from urban, suburban, and rural settings, this study asks the following questions: Longitudinally over the course of thirty years, does the data reveal any significant trends about teacher salaries and moonlighting? Is there any correlation between moonlighting and the teachers' perceived quality of instruction? Does the latest data reveal that moonlighting is significantly correlated to a specific population of teachers? Would teachers quit moonlighting if their salaries increased? The findings demonstrate that teachers would stop moonlighting if their salaries were higher, and the teachers perceive that their instructional practices would be better quality if they were not moonlighting.

### Introduction

The few studies over the past decades that investigated the phenomenon of teacher moonlighting (part time work held concurrently with a full time teaching position) report that it is a common occurrence (Johnson, Rice, Sullivan, Maninger, & Beard, 2010; Bell and Roach, 1988; Bobbitt, 1988; Maddux, 1980). Moonlighting may also affect teacher performance and the status of the teaching profession (Johnson et al., 2010; Pearson, Carroll, and Hall, 2001; Henderson, Darby, and Maddux, 1982; Wisniewski and Kleine, 1984). Teachers who moonlight reported that they have less energy to give to their students (Johnson, 1990) and spend less time on school-related tasks (Farber, 1991). However, Ballou, (1995) reported that even if

teachers had no reason to moonlight, they would still not increase the time spent on their primary job.

Teachers lead all occupational groups in holding moonlighting jobs. One study of second-job-participation found that an average of 4.8% of all employed workers held more than one job (Wisniewski and Kleine, 1984). Bobbitt (1988 & 1990) reported that 15% of public school teachers in the United States hold moonlighting jobs. The percentages have grown so that one-third to two-thirds of teachers are involved in moonlighting (Bell and Roach, 1988; Wisniewski and Kleine, 1984). Most recently, a North Carolina study revealed that 72% of that state's teachers were involved in moonlighting practices (Hilty, 2008).

This current study was the sixteenth in a series of biennial surveys of Texas Public school teachers conducted by the authors and sponsored by Texas State Teachers Association (TSTA). The lack of sustained research in this area of study is evident, but the findings of this study indicate several behavioral indicators.

### **Literature Review**

Two University of Georgia professors commented in 1967: "Throughout the nation, to supplement salaries, many teachers work at other jobs in addition to their teaching, a practice commonly called "moonlighting" (Smith and Cooper, 1967, p. 51). This phenomenon has existed for as long as the questions related to teachers having a second job have been asked. Often the news releases that document such occurrences have related this to the economy, and while moonlighting may be an indicator, this research seeks deeper explanations of why teachers are the most likely profession to hold second jobs?

There are several consistencies in previous research related to the demographics. The average moonlighting teacher in the United States is a young male (Winters, 2009; Pearson, Carroll, and Hall, 2001; Wisniewski and Kline, 1984; Bobbit, 1988; Ballou, 1995) with an advanced degree who teaches in secondary education. According to Bobbitt (1988), moonlighting teachers are less likely to be minorities.

Beyond the demographics, the few research articles on this topic disagree on some main points of their research. Dependent upon their data collection and their individual definitions of time spent at a second job, several researchers agreed that teacher moonlighting may have harmful effects on their professional performance and thus on education in general (Parham and Gordon, 2011; Winters, 2009; Pearson et al., 2001; Parham, 2006; Wisniewski and Kline, 1984). Meanwhile, the teachers in Williams' study (1992) felt that their teaching was completely unaffected by moonlighting. Similarly, Ballou (1995), reported respondents from several studies had claimed no ill effect from the hours spent on their second jobs. There appears to be no clear-cut definitive answer to this question in the literature.

Clearly moonlighters are trying to improve their standard of living (Parham and Gordon, 2011; Pearson et al., 2001; Wisniewski and Kline, 1984). Do PK-12 educators really feel that the act of moonlighting is an accepted portion of their image? Do they feel that having a second job simply is no threat at all to their ability to carry out their classroom activities? How do they feel about their own personal longevity in the teaching profession? Can trends be identified over the course of time represented by reported research of teacher moonlighting?

### **Purpose**

Not all of these questions can be answered in one study. This study will provide further information and clarity on the following questions:

- Longitudinally over the course of thirty years, does the data reveal any significant trends about teachers?
- Is there any correlation between moonlighting and the quality of instruction?
- Does the latest data reveal that moonlighting is significantly correlated to a specific population of teachers?
- Would teachers quit moonlighting if their salaries increased?

## Methodology

The participants in this study consisted of a representative sample of public school teachers PK-12 in the state of Texas. A survey was released to a random sample of at least 8,000 teachers who are members of the Texas State Teachers' Association (TSTA), with a return of 907 replies (11.34%). Of the 907 respondents, 873 surveys met the requirements for participation in the study. Because they did not meet the stringent guidelines of teacher participants or because too many blank answers on the survey were left, 34 surveys were disqualified.

In 2010, the 29 item survey, "Texas Teachers, Moonlighting and Morale – 2010," was disseminated for the first time via an electronic form (Appendix A). The previous fifteen surveys dating back to 1980 (conducted biannually) were delivered in paper form. Care was taken to replicate the original pen and paper survey with the current online survey. Possible participants were sent an email with an appeal to fill out the survey. The email had a link that directed each willing participant to the survey. In addition, there were three follow-up reminders sent to remind potential participants to complete a survey.

The first section of the survey asked participants to indicate their age, gender, marital status, employment of their spouse (if applicable), highest degree, major breadwinner in the household, type of district in which they teach, grade level they taught, years of experience, and salary. The second section recorded various working conditions in their workplace, including discipline and morale questions. The third section of the instrument was devoted to questions about their moonlighting practices if they worked outside the classroom.

Some survey questions were singular choice items, some were multiple item selection questions, and others were short answer items. The survey from the current data set acquired in May of 2010 will be reported individually and in relation to the previous data reported in the survey years dating back to 1980.

## Results

### Descriptive Statistics

Group means and standard deviations for the demographic data of the participants of the 2010 survey are reported in Table 1. The longitudinal data for all surveys of all years can be found in Appendix B. The descriptive analysis for the 2010 survey data reveals many surface level descriptions that this study avoids. For example, it might be considered that the “average” teacher in Texas is a 49 year-old female who is married and holds a Bachelor’s degree and teaches secondary education (Johnson et al., 2010). However, we will look deeper into the demographics along with the other survey items to determine moonlighting analysis.

Table 1  
*Demographic Descriptive Analysis for Moonlighting Survey*

|                    |           | N   | Mean  | SD     | Percentage |
|--------------------|-----------|-----|-------|--------|------------|
| Age                |           | 863 | 49.12 | 10.70  |            |
| Gender             |           | 867 | 1.79  | .404   |            |
|                    | Male      |     |       |        | 21         |
|                    | Female    |     |       |        | 79         |
| Married            |           | 868 | 1.44  | .607   | 62         |
| Spouse Works       |           | 854 | 1.82  | .933   | 53         |
| Highest Degree     |           | 853 | 1.49  | .539   |            |
|                    | Bachelors |     |       |        | 52         |
|                    | Masters   |     |       |        | 44         |
|                    | Doctorate |     |       |        | 2          |
| Breadwinner        |           | 870 | 1.62  | .808   | 59         |
| District Type      |           | 862 | 1.58  | .664   |            |
|                    | Urban     |     |       |        | 51         |
|                    | Suburban  |     |       |        | 38         |
|                    | Rural     |     |       |        | 11         |
| Grade Level Taught |           | 858 | 2.03  | .886   |            |
|                    | K-5       |     |       |        | 36         |
|                    | 6-8       |     |       |        | 25         |
|                    | 9-12      |     |       |        | 38         |
| Years Taught       |           | 867 | 17.67 | 10.3   |            |
| Salary             |           | 806 | 50019 | 9469.5 |            |

Longitudinally from 1980 through 2010 the data reveals several trends. The average age has risen steadily over the past thirty years, as has the years of experience. The ratio of male: female respondents have remained somewhat constant through the years (80% female to 20% male), and possession of a graduate degree has increased sharply over the past four years. Being the major breadwinner of the household has increased as well. Average salary has increased from \$14,113 to \$50,019, which reveals no statistics for inflation or other indicators (refer to Appendix B for complete results).

### **Cross-Tabulations**

There was no data of significance that clearly suggested that participants' moonlighting had any implications on their perceived instructional practice. There were areas of statistical significance in regard to moonlighting that should be examined for implications. Cross tabulations reported in Table 2 indicate that 52% of the male participants moonlight, while 40% of the female participants moonlight.

Table 2  
*Crosstabs of Moonlighting and Gender*

|                  | Male | Female | Total |
|------------------|------|--------|-------|
| Moonlighting Yes | 88   | 267    | 355   |
| Moonlighting No  | 82   | 400    | 482   |

N=837

### **Correlations**

In order to find further data relationships, correlations between items in the study were conducted. Age was positively correlated significantly at the 0.01 level (2-tailed) with the participants' highest degree earned (.174), and number of years of experience (.654). Gender was similarly correlated with moonlighting (.096). Moonlighting was positively correlated significantly at the 0.01 level (2-tailed) with gender (.096), and the item indicating that the

participants answered yes or no to their serious considerations of leaving the teaching profession (.132). Moonlighting was positively correlated significantly at the 0.05 level (2-tailed) with the item the participants indicated that he/she was the breadwinner for his/her family (.078).

Table 3  
Correlations

| Scale            | Age    | Degree | Experience | Gender | Moonlighting | Leave Profession | Breadwinner |
|------------------|--------|--------|------------|--------|--------------|------------------|-------------|
| Age              | 1      | .174** | .654**     | -.056  | -.019        | -.140            | -.140       |
| Degree           | .174** | 1      | .174**     | -.033  | -.057        | -.063            | -.040       |
| Experience       | .654** | .174** | 1          | .080   | -.064        | -.118            | -.066       |
| Gender           | -.056  | -.033  | .080       | 1      | .096**       | .132**           | -.035       |
| Moonlighting     | -.019  | -.057  | -.064      | .096** | 1            | .132**           | .078**      |
| Leave Profession | -.140  | -.063  | -.118      | .014   | .132**       | 1                | .086        |
| Breadwinner      | -.063  | -.040  | -.066      | -.035  | .078**       | .086**           | 1           |

N = 837

\*\* $p < .01$ , two tailed

### Discussion

This study explored relationships between teachers' self-reported moonlighting practices and (1) how that affected quality of instruction, (2) the commonalities of teachers who involved themselves in working a second job, and (3) if their salaries were higher, would the participants quit their moonlighting jobs. This study also looked at trends over a thirty-year longitudinal data base. There were several trends that occurred and will be discussed according to the research questions.

The first research question was, "Longitudinally over the course of thirty years, does the data reveal any significant trends about teachers?" The results demonstrated primarily that the participant pool was growing older and more experienced. Also, the participants were making more money than previously reported in an upward trend through the years of study. The percentage of males and females remained constant through the thirty years of survey results. There were implied indicators of economic effects present in the longitudinal data specifically in the results of increase in graduate degrees and salary increases.

The second research question was, “Is there any correlation between moonlighting and the quality of instruction?” It has been reported that five percent of workers in the United States moonlight (Wisniewski and Kleine, 1984). The 2010 data revealed that 41% of Texas teachers moonlight. This trend seems to the authors to be a remarkable number. The participants reported an average of over 15 hours a week spent at their respective moonlighting job (see Appendix B). The participants in this study also revealed that their moonlighting jobs were detrimental to their instructional practices at a self-reporting level of 69% (see appendix B).

Longitudinally, the data revealed that over a thirty-year span of time, 28% of teachers reported having a moonlighting job. The increase from a longitudinal average of 28% to an average in 2010 of 41% was noteworthy to the authors. Longitudinally, participants reported an average of 11.9 hours spent, per week, at a second job. Over the 30-year longitudinal study, participants reported that moonlighting was detrimental to their instructional practices 67% of the time, which is a self-reported figure that has been static throughout the timeframe of the research (see appendix B).

“Does the latest data reveal that moonlighting is significantly correlated to a specific population of teachers?” was the third research question. Winters (2009), Pearson, Carroll, and Hall (2001), and Bobbitt (1988) all reported that gender, age and degree attained were demographic indicators and that satisfaction with their salaries was also an indicator of moonlighting practices. This study found that gender, if the participant was the breadwinner for the family, and whether or not the participant was seriously considering leaving the profession were indicators of moonlighting practices. This study also revealed that the higher percentage of moonlighting participants were male. A male, head of household, breadwinner, seriously considering leaving the teaching profession was the most likely participant to involve himself in a moonlighting job.

The final research question was, “Would teachers quit moonlighting if their salaries increased?” The 2010 survey revealed that participants who held a moonlighting job spent 15.2

hours at their second job, which was the second highest reported number in the longitudinal study of thirty years. Participants reported at a rate of 69% that they felt that the quality of their teaching would improve if they did not have a second job during the regular school year. When asked if they would quit their moonlighting job if their teaching salaries were higher, 63% reported “yes.” Participants self-reported an average of \$5,311 earned at their moonlighting job and revealed by self-report that an increase in their teaching salary of \$8,534 would be required in order for them to quit their moonlighting positions.

Longitudinally over fifteen years (the question was added in 1996) the surveys revealed that participants who held moonlighting jobs spent 13.4 hours at their second job. Participants since 1980 reported at a rate of 67% that they felt the quality of their instruction would improve if they did not have a moonlighting job. When asked if they (the participants) would quit their moonlighting job if their teaching salaries were higher, 76% of respondents since 1980 reported “yes.” Since 1980, participants self-reported an average of \$4,265 earned at their moonlighting jobs and revealed, by self-report, that an increase in their teaching salary of \$5,934 would be required for them to stop moonlighting. These figures stay constant through cost-of-living increases, inflation, recession, and all other economic changes that have happened through this time period.

### **Implications, Recommendations, and Future Research**

The results of this study reveal that teachers would stop moonlighting if their salaries were higher and that the result of this would aid the quality of their instruction. The data indicates that respondents believed if they made more money through their salaries, the instructional practices in their classrooms would be improved and the result could be a higher level of learning for the students they teach. Parham and Gordon (2011) state that:

When teachers moonlight, the center of their world is no longer creative lesson planning, lively interaction with students, and a sense of accomplishment when students learn. All too often, moonlighting teachers replace these ideals with stress, fatigue, lack of respect and worries about money. (p. 51)

It should be noted that the study did not seek to ascertain why the respondents needed to supplement their salary. The economic reasons for teachers moonlighting would be varied; regional cost-of-living considerations, student loans, and credit card debt could each be a contributing factor. Although many teachers find summer employment sufficient to supplement their teaching income, many report their choice to moonlight. Whatever the reason for moonlighting, it is worth noting that over 60% of the respondents reported they would stop moonlighting if their salaries were higher -- and not necessarily significantly higher, but an average of about \$8,500 higher. This report initiates the supposition that those who moonlight are not necessarily dissatisfied (to the point of leaving the profession) with working conditions and administrative challenges. Indeed, they are willing to moonlight to make extra money in order to continue teaching in spite of these challenges.

Although most states are facing shortfalls in funding, it appears that one area we should focus on in the teaching profession would be increases in salary for classroom teachers. Although this suggestion would seem to be the recommendation of every study concerning moonlighting, it is imperative to consider; not as a panacea to cure all that is wrong with education, but in light of what moonlighting is doing to classroom instruction. Parham and Gordon (2011) emphasize that in addition to instruction, moonlighting may negatively affect a teacher's collaboration, attitude, career, and personal life. Each of these, in turn, has a negative impact on instruction and assessment in the classroom. The reason for increasing salary is not limited to the issue of treating and paying teachers as professionals. Of at least equal importance is the fact that a raise in salary may improve classroom instruction.

Further research should be conducted on these questions. Although this study reports a deep longitudinal data base, it has been conducted solely in the state of Texas. Future research should include other states so that results can be compared nation-wide.

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## Appendix A

### Texas Teachers, Moonlighting and Morale -- 2010

*Directions: Please answer all items that apply to you. Additional comments at the end if needed.*

---

What is your age?

What is your sex?

- Male
- Female

What is your marital status?

- Married
- Single
- Other

If married, does your spouse work?

- Yes
- No
- N/A

What is your highest degree?

- Bachelor
- Master
- Doctorate

Are you the major breadwinner in your household?

- Yes
- No
- Equal

In What type of district do you teach?

- Urban
- Suburban
- Rural

What grade level do you PRIMARILY teach?

- K-5
- 6-8
- 9-12

How many years have you taught in the public schools?

What is your current teaching salary PER YEAR?

Are you seriously considering leaving the teaching profession?

- Yes
- No

If you answered "Yes" to the previous question, why are you considering leaving?

How is the quality of teaching at your school compared to FIVE years ago?

- Better
- Worse
- Same

How much do you spend out-of-pocket on school supplies per year?

How much do you pay PER MONTH out-of-pocket for the health insurance?

How many HOURS PER WEEK are spent outside of class on school related work?

Do you have adequate time to prepare and teach?

- Yes
- No

If you answered "No" to the previous question, what changes could be made?

What is the WORST problem in your school?

- Drugs
- Discipline
- Paperwork
- Safety
- Other:

Should a single standardized exam determine whether a student gets promoted?

- Yes
- No

Do you have an extra job during the SUMMER?

- Yes
- No

How much EXTRA do you earn during the summer?

- None
- Other:

Do you have an EXTRA (Moonlighting) job during the REGULAR SCHOOL YEAR to supplement your teaching salary?

- Yes
- No

**\*\*\* If your answer to the previous question is "Yes", please answer the following questions. \*\*\***

How much EXTRA money do you earn during the REGULAR SCHOOL YEAR?

How many HOURS PER WEEK during the regular school year do you spend working at the MOONLIGHTING job?

Do you feel that the quality of your teaching would improve if you did NOT have a second job during the regular school year?

- Yes
- No

Would you QUIT the second job if your teaching salary would enable you to give up moonlighting during the school year?

- Yes
- No

How large a raise in your teaching salary would you require to enable you to QUIT moonlighting during the regular school year?

What is your EXTRA job during the school year? (Please give a job title)

## Appendix B

### Texas Teachers, Moonlighting and Morale Longitudinal Data

|                            | 1980     | 1982     | 1984     | 1986     | 1988     | 1990     | 1992     | 1994     | 1996     | 1998     | 2000     | 2002     | 2004     | 2006     | 2008     | 2010     |
|----------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Age                        | 38.6     | 39.2     | 41.2     | 41.3     | 43.0     | 42.5     | 43.6     | 43.0     | 45.5     | 44.9     | 40.2     | 39.9     | 43.2     | 43.3     | 44       | 49       |
| Male                       | 20%      | 20%      | 15%      | 18%      | 16%      | 15%      | 17%      | 16%      | 14%      | 15%      | 20%      | 20%      | 18%      | 22%      | 22%      | 21%      |
| Female                     | 80%      | 80%      | 85%      | 82%      | 84%      | 85%      | 83%      | 84%      | 86%      | 85%      | 80%      | 80%      | 82%      | 78%      | 78%      | 79%      |
| Married                    | 77%      | 75%      | 75%      | 77%      | 73%      | 74%      | 73%      | 73%      | 76%      | 73%      | 60%      | 72%      | 71%      | 78%      | 67%      | 62%      |
| Spouse Works               | 70%      | 70%      | 66%      | 72%      | 67%      | 70%      | 73%      | 68%      | 76%      | 72%      | 59%      | 70%      | 73%      | 74%      | 59%      | 53%      |
| Bachelors                  | 64%      | 63%      | 55%      | 50%      | 53%      | 53%      | 60%      | 57%      | 56%      | 58%      | 69%      | 74%      | 58%      | 67%      | 63%      | 52%      |
| Masters                    | 36%      | 37%      | 44%      | 49%      | 47%      | 47%      | 39%      | 42%      | 43%      | 41%      | 30%      | 26%      | 39%      | 33%      | 37%      | 44%      |
| Doctorate                  | *        | *        | *        | *        | *        | *        | *        | *        | *        | *        | *        | *        | *        | *        | *        | 2%       |
| Major Income               | 40%      | 40%      | 40%      | 39%      | 43%      | 41%      | 46%      | 42%      | 42%      | 40%      | 51%      | 43%      | 48%      | 41%      | 56%      | 59%      |
| Urban                      | 41%      | 43%      | 43%      | 46%      | 38%      | 42%      | 41%      | 40%      | 40%      | 35%      | 45%      | 36%      | 48%      | 41%      | 44%      | 51%      |
| Suburb                     | 33%      | 37%      | 39%      | 37%      | 40%      | 40%      | 37%      | 41%      | 39%      | 44%      | 41%      | 45%      | 41%      | 48%      | 50%      | 38%      |
| Rural                      | 27%      | 20%      | 18%      | 17%      | 22%      | 18%      | 22%      | 19%      | 21%      | 21%      | 14%      | 19%      | 11%      | 11%      | 6%       | 11%      |
| K - 5                      | 51%      | 50%      | 46%      | 52%      | 52%      | 51%      | 53%      | 47%      | 50%      | 54%      | 47%      | 48%      | 42%      | 47%      | 41%      | 36%      |
| 6 - 8                      | 20%      | 20%      | 24%      | 23%      | 23%      | 25%      | 27%      | 29%      | 21%      | 22%      | 26%      | 21%      | 24%      | 22%      | 21%      | 25%      |
| 9 - 12                     | 29%      | 30%      | 30%      | 26%      | 25%      | 24%      | 21%      | 24%      | 29%      | 24%      | 27%      | 31%      | 34%      | 31%      | 38%      | 38%      |
| Years Experience           | 11.8     | 12.1     | 13.7     | 14.3     | 15.4     | 14.9     | 14.4     | 14.8     | 16.7     | 16.2     | 10.0     | 8.5      | 13.4     | 12.4     | 13.9     | 17.7     |
| Average Salary             | \$14,113 | \$17,351 | \$20,259 | \$24,601 | \$26,161 | \$26,838 | \$28,444 | \$30,395 | \$33,134 | \$34,572 | \$35,178 | \$36,367 | \$41,396 | \$42,654 | \$47,545 | \$50,019 |
| Jobs in Sumer              | 30%      | 36%      | 34%      | 31%      | 29%      | 32%      | 30%      | 33%      | 36%      | 35%      | 42%      | 39%      | 45%      | 42%      | 34%      | 56%      |
| Summer \$                  | \$1,252  | \$2,076  | \$2,205  | \$1,891  | \$2,480  | \$2,087  | \$2,221  | \$2,391  | \$3,035  | \$2,526  | \$2,527  | \$2,632  | \$2,780  | \$2,712  | \$3,341  | \$1366   |
| Moonlighting               | 22%      | 29%      | 26%      | 23%      | 20%      | 21%      | 22%      | 23%      | 30%      | 34%      | 28%      | 26%      | 35%      | 33%      | 28%      | 41%      |
| Moonlighting \$            | \$2,799  | \$3,189  | \$3,615  | \$3,522  | \$4,627  | \$4,329  | \$3,552  | \$3,533  | \$4,504  | \$3,340  | \$4,720  | \$3,250  | \$4,705  | \$4,952  | \$8,288  | \$5311   |
| Moonlighting Hours Weekly  | 13.6     | 11.9     | 14.4     | 12.8     | 10.4     | 11.6     | 11.1     | 12.0     | 10.8     | 11.5     | 11.6     | 11.4     | 9.9      | 11.0     | 11.5     | 15.2     |
| Moonlighting Harmful       | 64%      | 69%      | 70%      | 50%      | 66%      | 61%      | 65%      | 73%      | 63%      | 63%      | 78%      | 72%      | 76%      | 67%      | 71%      | 69%      |
| Quit Moonlighting          | 75%      | 75%      | 82%      | 61%      | 78%      | 73%      | 72%      | 78%      | 64%      | 77%      | 85%      | 82%      | 84%      | 82%      | 88%      | 63%      |
| Raise to Quit Moonlighting | \$3,399  | \$4,750  | \$5,000  | \$3,921  | \$4,914  | \$4,891  | \$5,167  | \$5,597  | \$5,893  | \$6,295  | \$7,604  | \$5,877  | \$7,318  | \$6,811  | \$8,970  | \$8534   |

## **VOICES FROM THE CLASSROOM: EXPLORING THE POTENTIAL NEED FOR UNIVERSITY PREPARATION PROGRAMS FOR COOPERATING TEACHERS**

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### **Abstract**

This purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore perceptions of cooperating teachers regarding their preparation for serving in their role as supervisors of student teachers. The participants in the study were fourteen elementary, middle, and high school teachers from a central Texas independent school district. This study is timely in the light of the November 2010 NCATE Blue Ribbon Panel's release of the report entitled "Transforming Teacher Education through Clinical Practice: A National Strategy to Prepare Effective Teachers." The report calls for a broadly-based partnership among teacher education stakeholders including universities, school districts, teachers, states, and teacher unions to improve teacher education with a focus on clinical preparation. One of the recommendations in the report is that teacher candidates should be mentored by cooperating teachers who are trained to work effectively with them.

### **Introduction**

Student teachers spend the final semester of their university preparatory experience in established classrooms with cooperating teachers. Cooperating teachers volunteer to supervise the student teachers, and placement of the student teachers is then coordinated between the university director and the school districts. Following placement, the university director or supervisor supplies the cooperating teachers with a policy handbook. While evidence indicates the cooperating teachers' role in training student teachers is most important in preparing student teachers for their careers in education (Garner, 1971; Krueger, 2006; Posner, 1989; Snow-

Gerono, 2009), not all universities require cooperating teachers to attend professional development training to prepare them for their supervisory roles. The topic for this research was to explore the perceptions of cooperating teachers regarding their role in supervising student teachers. The preparation of cooperating teachers was examined to explore the potential need for training programs designed specifically to meet the needs of cooperating teachers in order to better equip them for their role as supervisors of student teachers.

### **Preparing Cooperating Teachers**

Wentz (2001) stated “it is the cooperating teacher who assists more than anyone else in fitting all the pieces together to form a complete picture in the novice teacher’s professional development” (p. 84). Osunde (2006) reported that student teachers spend approximately one-third of their entire teacher preparation program with their cooperating teachers. Considering the importance of cooperating teachers in the education of student teachers, Snow-Gerono (2009) noted that a need exists to explore the views of field-based practitioners and analyze their perceptions in order to enhance teacher preparation. Anderson (2007) found that while cooperating teachers were committed to supporting their student teachers, they lacked necessary knowledge and skills to serve most effectively in their supervisory role. Furthermore, Anderson suggested that teacher education program coordinators provide cooperating teachers with mentorship training in order to maximize the potential of the student teaching experience. The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological research study was to explore perceptions among cooperating teachers concerning preparation for their role as supervisors of student teachers.

### **Methodology**

Researchers have acknowledged a problem with inadequately prepared cooperating teachers. While universities have used cooperating teachers for years, there may be some areas where these teachers feel unprepared to provide adequate supervision for preservice teachers. The research questions that guided this study were developed to explore how

universities can provide a professional training program designed to better prepare cooperating teachers for their role in supervising student teachers:

- To what extent do cooperating teachers feel prepared for their roles as supervisors of student teachers?
- To what extent should universities be involved in the preparation of cooperating teachers for their roles as supervisors of student teachers?
- What do cooperating teachers need to learn to feel prepared to support student teachers?
- What are the essential elements of a university preparation program for cooperating teachers?

### **Population**

The participants chosen for this qualitative phenomenological study were fourteen cooperating teachers from a central Texas independent school district. The teachers chosen had supervised a minimum of two student teachers, had at least nine years teaching experience, and were recommended by their campus administrators or professional peers. Eight participants were elementary level teachers, three were middle school level teachers, and three were high school level teachers. The teachers came from different university preparation programs. These teachers had enough teaching and supervisory experience to have formulated opinions about being cooperating teachers and could discuss issues of central importance to the purpose of the research.

### **Instrument**

A set of questions designed by the researcher was used to guide the participant interviews. The instrument, based on research questions, was developed to obtain information from participants. A six-member panel of experts in the field of education was selected to review the interview questions. The panel reviewed and revised the questions prior to a pilot study.

The pilot study consisted of interviews with five cooperating teachers who met the established criteria. Three teachers were from elementary level, one was from middle school level, and one was from high school level. The expert panel revised the questions a final time before the research study began. Open-ended questions included:

- When you have served as a cooperating teacher, were you offered preparation by the university to assist you in preparing for your role as a supervisor of student teachers?
- Describe the preparation that was offered and who offered it, and tell whether or not you chose to participate. If you had been offered cooperating teacher preparation from the university, would you have chosen to participate and why?
- Why did you choose to participate (or not to participate) in the cooperating teacher preparation offered by the university?
- Did you receive benefits and new knowledge and skills from the cooperating teacher preparation offered by the university? If so, describe benefits and new knowledge/skills gained from participating in the university preparation.
- Were there aspects of the university preparation that were not valuable to contributing to your ability to be an effective cooperating teacher? What aspects of the preparation were not valuable and why do you feel they were not valuable?
- What is your opinion of how well you were prepared to serve in your role as a cooperating teacher?
- What could have been offered to increase your interest in participating in university preparation for cooperating teachers?
- What are the critical knowledge and skills cooperating teachers need in order to serve effectively as supervisors of student teachers in order to help them to become independent, reflective educational leaders?
- Describe the type of preparation necessary for cooperating teachers including: the essential elements of the training, who should provide the training, when and where it should take place, and the length of the training.
- What other aspects of the cooperating teacher experience would you like to share?

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

Fourteen teachers participated in face-to-face interviews during the spring of 2011.

Qualitative data were collected from teacher responses to open-ended questions. Additional

probing questions were asked to elicit more in-depth responses from participants during the interviews. Interviews were digitally recorded and then transcribed by a transcriptionist. All fourteen interviews were analyzed for patterns and themes. Emerging themes were used to describe areas in which teachers felt prepared and unprepared to supervise student teachers. The data were analyzed to explore if a university preparation program was necessary for cooperating teachers to feel prepared for their roles as supervisors of student teachers.

## Findings

All fourteen teachers interviewed for this study indicated they wanted information provided to them concerning university expectations. The teachers provided specific information regarding their preparation. Their perceptions are addressed below.

### Cooperating Teacher Preparation

Nine of the fourteen research study participants indicated they were offered some type of university preparation when they served in the roles of cooperating teacher. Out of the nine teachers who were offered university preparation, seven participated. When those seven teachers were asked whether they gained new knowledge and skills from the university preparation, three teachers indicated they had gained new knowledge but no new skills. Typical responses indicated an increased amount of knowledge gained from participating in the university preparation:

- *...even after I have had several, you have questions and you're not quite for sure exactly the guidelines you need to go by... it's really nice to be able to go and review to make sure we are going through all the steps that we need to do.*
- *I think any time you go into this kind of program or situation, you're always going to come away with something new. It could be a different method for doing lesson plans, for example. It could be just the networking of other teachers who are going to have student teachers as well as networking with the university's supervising teacher. I enjoyed that immensely, and those for me were probably the two major things...just working with other teachers and working with that university person.*
- *I don't believe there were any new skills, and the knowledge would be how the university wanted the experience handled. That was basically it. We went over the calendar and things, but no new skills were taught.*

While some participants did report an increase in knowledge concerning their role as cooperating teacher, other participants who attended the university preparation indicated that they gained no new knowledge and skills.

*As far as knowledge and skills, I would say that it was not the best that it could have been. I didn't really receive a lot of information about how to support the teacher, and just what the university was expecting me to do as far as paperwork and that sort of thing.*

## **Cooperating Teachers' Feelings of Preparedness**

### ***Prepared***

The teachers in this study provided varying responses related to their feelings of preparedness regarding their roles as supervisors of student teachers. Five out of fourteen cooperating teachers in this study gained that feeling from their own experience as educators.

*I don't know if that's through the university necessarily. I think just as a teacher if you feel like you can be a leader and also a good mentor to be a good listener and help someone is what's going to make you a good cooperating teacher.*

*I haven't been really trained to do it. I think it's something that comes pretty natural as long as you want to impart what you know to someone else.*

A second way that respondents reported their feelings of preparedness was from their own student teaching experience. Two of the fourteen teachers in the study said they drew upon knowledge gained from their own student teaching experiences reflecting on the positive relationship they had with their cooperating teachers.

*... I will tell you that I actually had an incredible mentoring teacher when I was student teaching, and I have kind of used her as a guideline to kind of facilitate that out to my student teachers.*

*I think the best thing that prepared me was my own experience as a student teacher...*

### ***Unprepared***

Finally, three out of the fourteen teachers in the study indicated they did not feel prepared at all to serve as cooperating teachers.

*There was no prep. There was just the principal asking if you would like one in and, then they show up. That's it!*

*...it was not enough preparation. I did not feel I was doing a comprehensive job for that teacher.*

*I don't think I was very prepared at all, certainly not at the beginning. Once you have done three or four of them and you had gone through their paperwork and worked with the different people at the university, then that made things a little bit easier because you were figuring out what their expectations were, what they were looking for, how to contact them, just all these things. It just seems like before that time, the information I was getting was directly from the student teachers.*

### ***Desire to Participate***

The majority of cooperating teachers interviewed for this study responded favorably to the idea of attending university preparation. Of the nine participants in this study who were offered university preparation, seven cooperating teachers participated. Of the five participants who indicated they were not offered university preparation, all five answered they would have chosen to participate if they had been offered such training.

*I would have participated, yes. I think it's important for the cooperating teacher to know what to expect.*

*Yes, absolutely. I think it would have given me a better idea of what we were looking at and the expectations for the students I was working with. I would have gotten a better timeline, about when to start them in certain areas and how they wanted to do things. So, I think it would have given me a better background of what they were looking for.*

*Yes, because I think everyone needs a little guidance whenever you first have someone else in your classroom. It's important that you know the guidelines that the university expects you to meet.*

### ***Desire for University Communication***

Cooperating teachers expressed satisfaction with the university and the expectations that were given. Typical responses expressing satisfaction included:

*I appreciate when I attend the meeting they're cognizant of the time that they use. They don't waste their time. They tell us what we need to know, how it's expected, here is the handbook, and do you have any questions let us know. I think that is sufficient for the type of training they are giving us, which is the handbook.*

Other cooperating teachers indicated they would gain benefits and clarity by having more communication with the university in order to be able to meet the needs of the program and their student teachers.

*Spell out the whole thing. Spell it out! What do you want? What do you want from me?*

*What do you want to see from her? And is it my responsibility to provide what she is not getting?*

*It's important that you know the guidelines that the university expects you to meet. Different schools expect different things. If their supervisors are there, you could take care of all that at one time, and you don't have to worry about, "Well, am I doing this the way they want it done?" The girls have been really good to make sure I remembered the assigned things and that kind of stuff, but it would be really nice to know a little bit about what they expect because really we don't get a whole lot of that.*

Problems associated with this lack of clear communication were again evident when participants responded they encountered challenging issues with their student teachers.

*I don't think anyone really explains. The student comes in and says, "I am supposed to just observe for a number of weeks, and then I am supposed to do maybe one lesson per day per week or whatever." But, there is really no directionality when it comes to what happens if that student teacher is not doing what's good for your class. There is no one to really talk to about that because you don't really want to get the student teacher in trouble just because your expectation is different than theirs. But there is no one to bounce any ideas off of or there is no one to discuss, no forum that I am aware of to discuss problems or situations that come up.*

*...more than once I have had conflicting information about what I was told as the mentor teacher but what the student teacher was told maybe to do. So, if we are all hearing the same thing at the same time, it would just cut out that middle man.*

### **Suggested Content for Cooperating Teacher Training**

All fourteen cooperating teachers in the study had ideas for topics to be included in training to help be more effective in their roles as supervisors of student teachers. Suggested topics included learning student teachers' backgrounds with regards to previous coursework, guidelines and expectations for the student teaching placement, university and district policies such dress code and absences, and tips for success when working with student teachers.

*I think that just the expectation of the students, what they are looking for, perhaps copies of lessons that they have turned in or their junior observation time and what they did and notes on that. Just some background...*

*It would help me to know that the basic content that the student teacher has been taught, are they taught a balanced literacy type reading program...*

*I think it would be great for there to be a guideline. These are the steps you need to do...*

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

In this study, *voices from the classroom* were analyzed through responses to interview questions regarding the preparation of cooperating teachers. By addressing the concerns of cooperating teachers, teacher educators can potentially improve teacher preparation. Overall, cooperating teachers felt prepared to supervise student teachers but indicated a desire for information concerning university expectations.

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations are warranted. First, universities may consider an organizational change to systematically include all people in decision-making and planning of the teacher education program, including those who teach education and content courses, student teaching program directors, university supervisors, and cooperating teachers (Brandt, 1991). In Brandt's (1991) interview with Goodlad, he reported that schools and universities should establish collaborative partnerships to improve teacher education and student teacher support. Campell and Brummett (2007) noted that for development and growth of professional practices to occur for student teachers, a culture of mentoring should be nurtured, and a collaborative process must be implemented involving the students, university teacher education faculty, and cooperating teachers.

Another recommendation would be for university program directors to recruit cooperating teachers who are exceptional teachers and who also want to share their expertise with student teachers. Cooperating teachers in this study felt prepared due to their background and experience. Hamilton's (2010) qualitative study of cooperating teacher preparation also revealed that teachers relied on their own teaching experience to guide them in their role as supervisors of student teachers. Utilizing experienced teachers is important when providing appropriate models for student teachers.

One way to recruit exceptional teachers might be through campus meetings in districts near the university as suggested in a comment by one of the participants in this study. Another avenue for recruitment would be for the education department at the university to produce a brochure and brief video highlighting successful student teacher and cooperating teacher relationships and detailing the specific requirements of cooperating teachers and benefits of serving in the role of cooperating teacher. These types of powerful recruitment tools could be used at campus meetings or given to teachers who have been recommended by their campus administrators to be cooperating teachers. The video and the information presented in the brochure could be posted on the university website for potential cooperating teachers to view.

Universities could benefit from collecting data from cooperating teachers with the use of an online survey instrument. This type of survey could lead to an understanding of issues and problems related to student teaching before expending resources of time and money on solutions that may not be appropriate (McIntyre & Byrd, 1996). Data collected from the survey could be analyzed to determine training needs for cooperating teachers. The results from the survey could then be utilized to plan sessions and materials that would provide clear expectations while also meeting the needs of cooperating teachers. Most teachers in this study who were offered preparation did not mention having difficulty with travel to university campuses for training. In larger metropolitan areas, travel such as this could be problematic for cooperating teachers. These types of meetings are typically arranged by the university and scheduled after school when teachers have duties such as tutoring or campus meetings. University student teaching program directors could offer webinar training on the university website for those teachers who face travel or scheduling issues to ensure they feel knowledgeable regarding program expectations. Another way to offer support to cooperating teachers during the student teaching placement would be to have a cooperating teachers' blog sponsored by the education department available on the university website. This would be a confidential forum for cooperating teachers to post questions, problems, and issues related to student teaching. It

would also provide a way for cooperating teachers to share ideas for solving problems collaboratively without scheduling time to come together physically. Cooperating teachers typically only have the opportunity to engage in such dialogue with other cooperating teachers on their campuses. A blog for cooperating teachers would be an innovative method of providing a forum for networking more broadly with cooperating teachers on other campuses and in other districts who serve student teachers attending the same university.

Using progressive support techniques such as online survey data collection and analysis, video and webinar training, and blogs would demonstrate the university's commitment to strengthening partnerships with cooperating teachers. Teacher educators who seek solutions to twenty-first century problems might find solutions with twenty-first century solutions such as creating a cooperating teachers' network link on the university website which could have web pages for surveys, videos, webinars, blogs, timelines and calendars for program deadlines, frequently asked questions, and messages from university student teaching directors and university student teacher supervisors. Seeking out opinions from cooperating teachers for programmatic improvement concerning how best to recruit, train, and retain exceptional cooperating teachers should be a goal of progressive educational university leaders.

In November 2010, the Report of the Blue Ribbon Panel on Clinical Preparation and Partnerships for Improved Student Learning was released. The report was commissioned by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education and called for effective and trained cooperating teachers. The Blue Ribbon Panel recommended that teacher preparation program directors ensure that pre-service teachers be placed with highly qualified and effective clinical educators and mentors who have been trained to work with teacher candidates in field placements. It is further recommended by the panel that trained clinical educators be held accountable for the performance of the pre-service teachers they supervise (NCATE, 2010). Cooperating teachers in this study expressed a great need to be informed and have clear expectations for the university program. In light of the NCATE recommendations, it would

appear that while offering training in a variety of ways could be more time-consuming for university personnel, it would also be more beneficial to cooperating teachers. If the goal of the university is to have all of their cooperating teachers feel adequately prepared to support student teachers, then education department directors should be willing to serve their partners in the ways that best fit the needs of cooperating teachers.

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## CHOOSING TEACHING IN TEXAS: APPLICATION OF THE *FIT- CHOICE* SCALE ACROSS 37 TEXAS UNIVERSITIES

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### Abstract

This study investigated the attributes which influence the decision to choose teaching as a career. Participants in this study were undergraduates completing their first course in education at selected public and private Texas universities. The results indicate that among the reasons for choosing teaching as a career, those that ranked highest were: working with children, shaping the future of children, making a social contribution, belief in one's own ability, social equity, and intrinsic career value. Those reasons that ranked lowest were: fallback career and job default. In regard to the beliefs about teaching, the highest ranking beliefs include expert knowledge and high demand. The lowest ranking belief about teaching was salary.

### Introduction

#### Teacher Shortage

The most recent findings from the Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher (Metlife Incorporated, 2006) indicate a mix of issues regarding the state of the teaching profession. The national study combined quantitative and qualitative research among 1001 public school teachers and 500 public school principals through telephone interviews. According to the study, 56% of the teachers are very satisfied with teaching as a career, a 20-year high. Among elementary and secondary teachers, there seems to be little difference in the perception of this career choice. In addition, regardless of a teacher's point in career, new teachers and veteran teachers hold the profession in the same regard, about 56% are satisfied. However, the results also indicated that 27% of teachers say they will likely leave the profession in the next

five years. Older teachers indicate they will be even more likely to leave than younger teachers. This appears to have implications not only for undergraduates, but also for post-baccalaureate students and career changers. The potential and steady opening of teaching positions will create employment opportunities for each of these groups, if they so choose. This trend will be a serious problem according to the principals surveyed as well (n=500), especially in secondary schools and schools with predominantly low-income students (Metlife Incorporated, 2006). In 2008, it was estimated that teachers held about 3.5 million jobs. Employment of all school teachers, including kindergarten, elementary, middle, and secondary, is expected to grow by 13 percent between 2008 and 2018 (U.S. Department of Labor, 2010).

If the data is correct in estimating the scope of the with teacher turnover problem, then school administrators and colleges need to more strongly consider the motivation behind career choice in teaching. Traditionally in North American literature, from the 1960s through the 1990s, several factors contributed to career choice in teaching, including but not limited to: the desire for mobility, influence of family, time compatibility, the need for a stimulating career, the desire to work with young children and adolescents, and job-related benefits (Richardson, 2006). Although previous research may suggest that salary increases, an extrinsic motivator, may have been a motivator at one time (Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 1999), a more recent study would suggest that teachers are intrinsically motivated (Richardson, 2006). However, other researchers argue that higher salaries have to be at least one component of the package to attract talented people into the profession. According to a study by McKinsey and Company (2010), compensation is a factor. In fact, researchers asked 900 of the top one-third of college students what factors impact the decision as to whether or not to choose teaching. The responses included quality of the people in the profession, professional growth and compensation. Ninety-one percent indicated compensation is the biggest factor in choosing between teaching and another profession. This supports a previous study which investigated the role of salary in the decision making process of graduates (Liu et al., 2000). Although the

study was small (n=50) and confined to one state (Massachusetts), did indicate the simple fact that money may play a factor in whether or not to stay in the profession.

According to the National Education Association (2005), experts predict we will need more than 2 million teachers in the next decade, a problem most acute in urban and rural schools, high-need subject areas, and with appropriate representation of minority teachers in classrooms. Teacher compensation is a deterrent to recruitment; teachers are paid less than professions with comparable education and skills, and still are not valued and respected to the extent of their actual contributions to society. Others argue that the supply is not the problem; it is the retention of teachers. It is estimated that each year approximately half a million teachers leave their schools. Only 16 percent of this teacher attrition can be attributed to retirement, the remaining 84 percent is related to transfer or leaving the profession entirely (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2008).

### **Factors Influencing Teaching Career Choice**

Richardson (2006) questioned 895 undergraduates and 758 graduates at three universities in Australia as to why they chose a teaching career. The study revealed some important considerations for policy makers, principals, and colleges of education in the United States. First, teaching was not typically seen as a 'fallback' career, despite many of the media reports circulating in that country. Those who participated in the study indicated the intrinsic values of teaching, the desire to shape the future, and to make a social contribution as important considerations in choosing a teaching career. They understood the high demands of the job and low returns in salary, which corroborates the findings in other studies (Liu, et al., 2000). Liu's (2000) study did find, however, that salary was an issue as people moved through their teaching careers and compared their salaries to those earned in other professions. Respondents reported the altruistic and intrinsic rewards associated with teaching as a career, but they had concerns about how much teaching paid and had to seriously consider salary as

an issue. They were not attracted by the pay and were often dissuaded from it because of the relatively low salary.

If salary were the only issue keeping students from choosing teaching as a profession, that might be resolved through legislative or policy action. It is interesting to note that participants in Richardson's (2006) study reported strong experiences of social dissuasion from teaching. These undergraduates and graduates were recommended by others to choose another profession. This may have further added to the frustrations noted by principals and colleges (Metlife Incorporated, 2006) in regard to filling spots only to be compounded by salary concerns (Liu, 2000). Other reasons people did not choose teaching included opportunity costs from not choosing another profession, and dollars lost from a more lucrative career. Another factor is the comparison between tuition and cost of training for teaching careers as compared to other career choices, training for those careers, and dollars earned had that choice been made (Liu, et al., 2000). That is to say, when considering the cost versus the revenue, it is often better to choose another career because the differential is larger in relation to nearly equal tuition. It is important to keep in mind that this study was conducted in one state in the northeast. Therefore, it may be difficult to extrapolate the results of this study across other states.

Teachers are attracted to the profession for a wide range of reasons including: the challenging nature of the job, perceived benefits of teaching (long holidays) and altruistic reasons. The strongest reason was helping young people to learn. Many respondents in the study reported past as well as present experiences as important in their decision to choose teaching as a profession (Department of Education and Skills, 2005).

## **Methodology**

### **Participants**

The purpose of this study is to investigate the reasons guiding undergraduates who choose the teaching profession. Specifically, the study addressed what people who want to be teachers believe about teaching. To better understand these issues, participants chosen for this study were undergraduates completing their first course in education. Each undergraduate in Texas education programs is required to take an introductory course to the teaching profession. To secure participants, course descriptions from each university in Texas that offers a teacher education program (n=37) were analyzed to find comparable courses. Each instructor for each of those courses was contacted about participating in the study. Of the 37 instructors contacted, 7 were willing to have their students complete the survey during class. Of these seven schools, three were public and four were private. The instructors were mailed copies of the surveys. The instructors were told to give the surveys to the students, wait for them to complete the survey in class and collect all completed surveys. Participation on the part of the instructor as well as the students was voluntary. A total of 336 students completed the Fitness-In-Teaching survey.

### **Instrument**

The instrument used for this study was the Fitness-In Teaching Scale, created by Watt and Richardson (2007). The instrument was developed to provide a systematic investigation into why people choose teaching as a career. According to the authors, the scale is based in expectancy-value theory and draws on recurring themes from the teacher education literature. The instrument uses stem statements scored on a Likert scale to obtain students' perceptions about why they chose teaching. The instrument contains 54 questions about the values involved in teaching as well as demographic information provided by the student. The 54 questions collapse into 18 'categories' about teaching. The categories are ability, intrinsic career value, fallback career, job security, time for family, job transferability, shape future of children, enhance social equity, make social contributions, work with children, prior teaching and learning

experiences, social influences, expertise, difficulty, social status, salary, social dissuasion, and satisfaction with choice. (See Appendix A for reliability data.)

## **Results**

Because of the ordinal nature of survey data, the results of the study are first reported as median scores by categories (see Table 1) and analysis was conducted using non-parametrics. The results indicate that among the reasons for choosing teaching as a career, those that ranked highest were: working with children (median score 15), shaping the future of children (median score 15), making a social contribution (median score 14), belief in one's own ability (median score 13), social equity (median score 13), and intrinsic career value (median score 13). Those reasons that ranked lowest were: fallback career (median score 4) and job default (median score 4). In regard to the beliefs about teaching (see Table 2), the highest ranking beliefs include expert knowledge (median score 12) and high demand (median score 14). The lowest ranking belief about teaching was salary (median score 4). In regard to the decision to become a teacher, (see Table 3) the satisfaction with the choice was ranked as very high (median score 10) while the social dissuasion on becoming a teacher was ranked as neither influential nor not influential (median score 8).

Additional analysis was conducted concerning the fields in which students were choosing to teach. Subjects completing the survey had the option of indicating which grade level of teaching they would like to pursue. The options available in the state of Texas include: EC-6, 4-8, 8-12, and EC-12. Given that the survey was only distributed to potential teachers in Texas, this same format was used on the survey form. A Kruskal Wallis test was conducted to determine significant differences among these four levels and their reasons for leaving the profession. The rank data are reported in Table 4. Because of the length of the data table it is reported on the next 2 pages.

Table 1  
*Median Score of Influential Factors for Choosing Teaching*

| Indicator                 | Median Score | N   |
|---------------------------|--------------|-----|
| Ability                   | 13*          | 335 |
| Intrinsic Career          | 13*          | 335 |
| Fallback Career           | 4*           | 335 |
| Job Security              | 11*          | 335 |
| Time for Family           | 11*          | 335 |
| Default                   | 5**          | 335 |
| Job Transferability       | 9*           | 335 |
| Shape Future of Children  | 15*          | 335 |
| Social Equity of Children | 15*          | 335 |
| Social Contribution       | 14*          | 335 |
| Working with Children     | 15*          | 335 |
| Social Influence          | 7*           | 335 |

\*3 items totaled for response

\*\*2 items totaled for response

Table 2  
*Median Score of Beliefs about Teaching*

| Indicator      | Median Score | N   |
|----------------|--------------|-----|
| Expert Career  | 12*          | 335 |
| High Demand    | 14*          | 335 |
| Social Status  | 10*          | 335 |
| Teacher Morale | 11*          | 335 |
| Good Salary    | 4**          | 335 |

\*3 items totaled for response

\*\*2 items totaled for response

Table 3  
*Median Score of Indicators for Decision to Become a Teacher*

| Indicator                | Median Score | N   |
|--------------------------|--------------|-----|
| Social Dissuasion        | 8*           | 335 |
| Satisfaction with choice | 10**         | 335 |

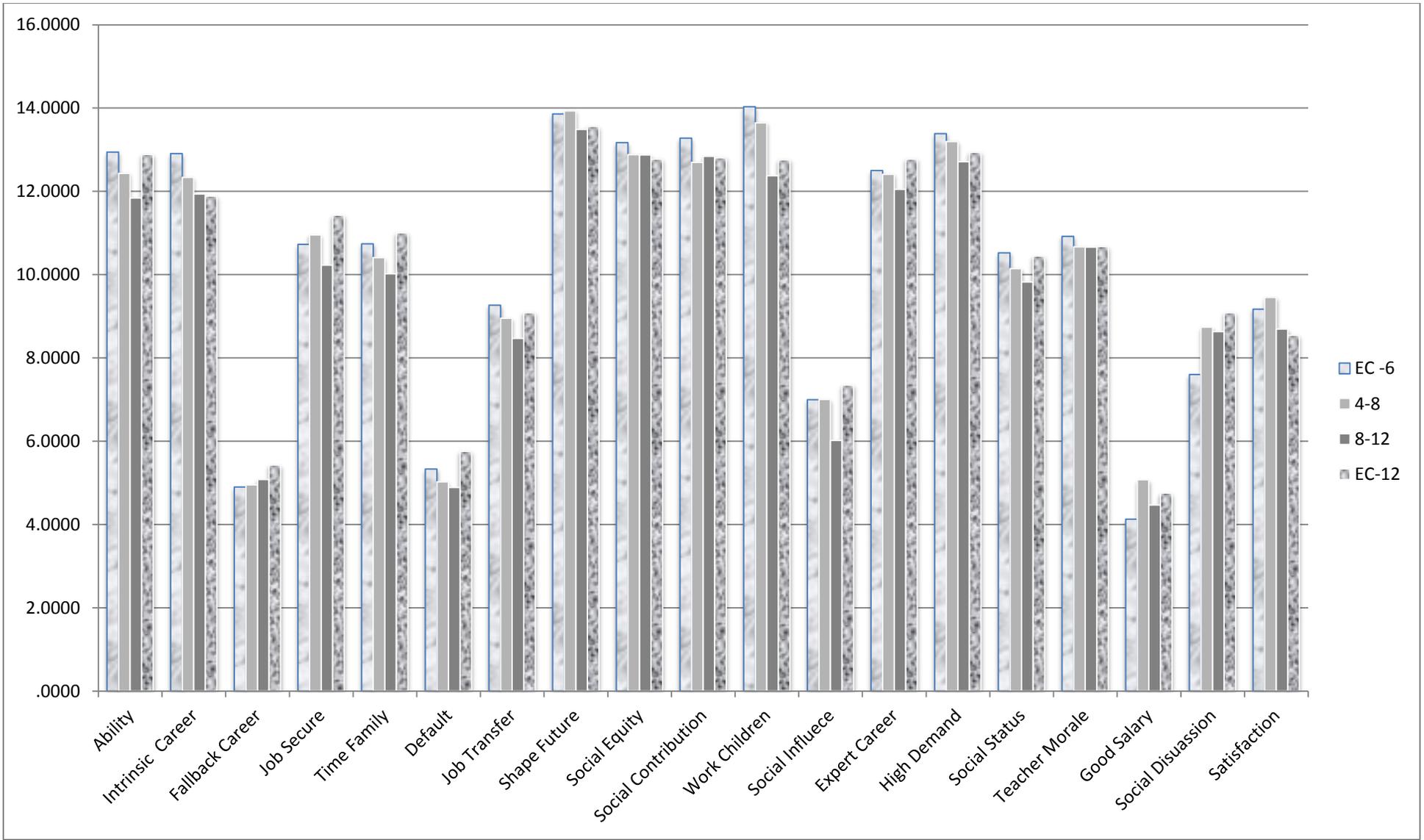
\*3 items totaled for response

\*\*2 items totaled for response

Each participant completed the survey comprised of ordinal data. Each set of responses must be ranked based upon certification level (EC-6, 4-8, 8-12, EC-12). The higher the mean rank, the more value participants place on the teaching characteristic. Figure 1 provides an

overview of each teaching characteristic in relation to mean ranking by certification level. To determine if significant differences exist between the certification levels, a Kruskal Wallis was conducted. Results of the Kruskal Wallis (Table 4) indicate that for the attributes of ability, intrinsic career, working with children, social influence, good salary, social dissuasion, and satisfaction. Each of these attributes has different levels of influence on decision making of respondents.

Based upon results of post hoc analysis, ability is ranked higher by EC-6 and EC-12 candidates ( $p < .05$ ) than 8-12 certification candidates. Intrinsic career motivation is also ranked higher by EC-6 candidates than EC-12 and 8-12 certification counterparts ( $p < .05$ ). Working with children was ranked higher by EC-6 candidates than 8-12 and EC-12 candidates, but also was ranked higher by 4-8 candidates than 8-12 ( $p < .05$ ). The factor of social influence was ranked significantly higher by 8-12 candidates than all other categories of certification level ( $p < .05$ ) as was social dissuasion ( $p < .05$ ). There was no difference between EC-6 and 4-8 candidates on the measure of satisfaction, but both of these levels of certification ranked this factor higher than 8-12 and EC-12 ( $p < .05$ )



**Figure 1.** Average Scores of Teaching Attributes by Certification Level

Table 4  
*Significant Differences between Desired Teaching Levels and Reasons for Teaching*

Test Statistics(a,b)

|             | Ability | Intrinsic Career | Fallback Career | Job Secure | Time Family | Default | Job Transfer | Shape Future | Social Equity | Social Contact |
|-------------|---------|------------------|-----------------|------------|-------------|---------|--------------|--------------|---------------|----------------|
| Chi-Square  | 14.865  | 14.563           | 2.871           | 5.098      | 3.140       | 5.201   | 2.943        | 2.721        | 1.979         | 3.668          |
| df          | 3       | 3                | 3               | 3          | 3           | 3       | 3            | 3            | 3             | 3              |
| Asymp. Sig. | .002    | .002             | .412            | .165       | .370        | .158    | .400         | .437         | .577          | .300           |

a Kruskal Wallis Test

b Grouping Variable: Level

| Work Children | Expert Career | High Demand | Social Status | Social Influence | Teacher Morale | Good Salary | Social Dissuasion | Satisfaction |
|---------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|------------------|----------------|-------------|-------------------|--------------|
| 36.831        | 4.642         | 7.501       | 2.111         | 7.897            | 1.015          | 10.532      | 12.967            | 12.480       |
| 3             | 3             | 3           | 3             | 3                | 3              | 3           | 3                 | 3            |
| .000          | .200          | .058        | .550          | .048             | .798           | .015        | .005              | .006         |

a Kruskal Wallis Test

b Grouping Variable: Level

## Discussion

The results of the data for this sample indicate that the most influential factors in choosing a career in teaching center around: shaping the future of children, providing social equity for children, and working with children-- all ranked at the top of the scale (median score 15)-- while making a social contribution (median score 14) is also highly influential. This concurred with many of the reasons cited in the original study conducted by Richardson (2006) where it was cited that perceived teaching abilities, the intrinsic value of teaching, the desire to make a social contribution, shape the future, and work with children were the highest ranked reasons for choosing teaching. It still appears that people choose teaching because they truly want to make a difference in the lives of children, and it seems to indicate this belief overrides the low pay associated with teaching. Those who completed the instrument know that teaching does not pay well, but seem to believe that the social cause and making a difference in the life of a child supersede any of the negative connotations associated with teaching.

Students in the sample do not perceive teaching as a fallback career or choose teaching by default. Given that students are entering teaching as a chose profession may bode well for the difficult tasks that lay ahead in the profession. It seems that people entering, or at least indicating that they are entering the profession, knowing what lies in store for them and may be prepared to accept the conditions associated with teaching. That being said, other researchers have found that although money is not a primary issue in choosing teaching as a career, it does have an impact on whether or not to stay in the profession (Liu, et al., 2000). Salary was ranked among the lowest of reasons for choosing teaching as a career. Respondents consistently ranked this attribute lowest among reasons for choosing teaching, along with teaching being a fallback career. So, it may seem that although future teachers know that teachers do not make much money, they are choosing to pursue that field any way. One difference could be that this study focuses on people who indicate they want to be teachers versus those who are already in the field (Liu, et. al, 2000). One limitation may be that the persons completing this study are not

in the same situation as someone who is working and trying to determine whether or not the low salary that is actually associated with teaching is meeting their needs as opposed to those who are not faced with the reality of their choice (Liu, et al., 2000).

It appears that differences do exist in regard to chosen teaching level (EC-6, 4-8, 8-12, EC-12) and the decision to choose the profession. The attribute of perceived teaching ability was ranked highest by elementary and all-level candidates, second by middle school candidates, and lowest among future high school teachers. Ability has to do with self perceptions about whether or not someone has the skills to become a good teacher. For some reason, this belief is strongest among future elementary teachers. The second area where significant differences occurred was in intrinsic career value. Once again future elementary teachers ranked highest among all four groups in choosing the career for its intrinsic value, while future high school and all level teachers ranked lowest. Intrinsic value indicates whether or not the career of teaching has always been a 'life-long dream' for someone. This belief is strongest among elementary teachers and weakest among high school teachers.

The desire to work with children was also ranked highest among future elementary teachers, with middle school teachers ranking second. Future high school teachers ranked much lower in their desire to work with children and adolescents. This may fall along the old lines of high school teachers wanting to teaching subjects while elementary teachers want to teach children. Social influence among those who report they want to be a teacher is highest among elementary, middle school, and high school teachers. The rankings, among these three groups, are very similar and seem to be significantly higher than counterparts who desire to teach high school. It would be interesting to determine what is driving this belief on the part of future high school teachers and may be tied to the lack of reality reported by Liu, et al. (2000).

Although there may be support and desire on the part of future teachers to pursue this career, there are also those who dissuade one from choosing teaching as a profession. Significant differences were reported among future teaching candidates. Potential high school

teachers received the most reported dissuasion from the profession, although middle school and EC-12 teachers seem to have had similar experiences. Finally, one must consider how satisfied he/she is with the choice they are making regarding this career. Although all participants reported satisfaction with their choice, future elementary and middle school teachers reported the highest levels of satisfaction, while high school and EC-12 teachers reported the lowest. Further correlation between level of satisfaction prior to choosing a career and longevity/turnover rate of high school teachers should be conducted.

### **Recommendations**

More analysis needs to be conducted to determine where significant differences are occurring among desired teaching levels and their reasons for pursuing teaching as a career. In addition, further analysis should be conducted in regard to other demographic traits including gender, public vs. private college, socioeconomic status, and ethnicity. This data has been collected, but because of the extensive nature of reporting this data, it will have to be included in later studies.

Colleges of education and potential employers may take into consideration the findings of this study in their recruiting efforts. It seems that individuals are driven by different sets of values depending on what grade level they are interested in teaching. Therefore, it may be reasonable to review dispositions as a part of a college program to determine the best placement for a person into a teaching field. Further analysis should be conducted to determine levels of satisfaction with each of these attributes once someone gets into the field. It would be important to determine if, and possibly how, teacher dispositions change from the time they are enrolled in a program to the time they are actually teaching.

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## THE TEXAS FORUM OF TEACHER EDUCATION 2012 CALL FOR MANUSCRIPTS & PUBLICATION GUIDELINES

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