



The **OHIO** Journal of
Teacher Education

FALL 2014 . VOLUME 28 . NUMBER 2

The **OHIO** Journal of Teacher Education

FALL 2014 . VOLUME 28 . NUMBER 2

PUBLISHED BY THE OHIO ASSOCIATION OF TEACHER EDUCATORS

Dr. Leslie Ann Prosak-Beres, Xavier University
Dr. Suzanne Mac Donald, University of Akron
EDITORS

CONTENTS

Message from the Editors	1-2
Editorial Board	3
ARTICLES	
Easing the Transition: Retention and Development of New Teachers <i>Teresa L. Young, Xavier University, Cincinnati, OH</i> <i>Delane Bender-Slack, Xavier Univeristy, Cincinnati, OH</i>	5
The Effect of Strengths Intervention on Pre-Service Teacher Dispositions During the Student Teaching Experience <i>Sharon K. Metcalfe, Ed. D Mount Vernon Nazarene University, Mount Vernon, OH</i> <i>Arfe Ozcan Ph. D, University of Phoenix</i>	22
Preparing Culturally Responsive Educators: Using the Cultural Plunge to Strengthen Pre-service Teachers' Cultural Awareness and Understanding <i>Winston Vaughan, Ph. D., Xavier University, Cincinnati, OH</i>	35
Collaboration as a Valued Practice <i>Kimberly K. Miller, Ph. D., Ohio Dominican University, Columbus Ohio</i> <i>Martha G. Michael, Capital University, Columbus, Ohio</i>	43



A MESSAGE FROM THE EDITORS

The Ohio Journal of Teacher Education is going ONLINE!

Welcome from the The OHIO Journal of Teacher Education Editorial Team. Xavier University, Cincinnati, Ohio, is the institutional home of The OHIO Journal of Teacher Education under the new editorship of coeditors Dr. Leslie Ann Prosak-Beres, Xavier University (prosak-b@xavier.edu) and Dr. Suzanne Mac Donald, University of Akron (smacdonald@uakron.edu).

We are making some changes. As we change to our new format, we would first of all, like to thank our recent past editor, Dr. Gail Saunders-Smith, for all of her tireless work on this journal. She has set some high standards for us to meet; we are thankful for her shared guidance.

The Ohio Journal of Teacher Education (OJTE) provides a forum for the exchange of information and ideas concerning the improvement of teaching and teacher education. Articles submitted should reflect this mission. Their focus should concern concepts, practices and/or results of research that have practical dimensions, implications, or applicability for practitioners involved with teacher education. OJTE's journal articles cover topics such as research to classroom practice and using strategies to help all learners succeed. The journal is regional in scope and is sent as a benefit of membership in the Ohio Association of Teacher Education. Points of view are those of the individual authors and are not necessarily those of either Association.

The process of moving from a printed journal to an online journal presents many "challenges". Thank you for your patience with this inaugural online edition.

Editorial Procedures

As editors, we aim to achieve a strategic balance among the areas of preservice and inservice teacher education practice, policy, and research, bringing those areas to bear on one another in challenging and productive ways. We offer a forum for diverse work of teacher education researchers (university and non-university based), teacher education practitioners (e.g., university, state, district, community college), and policy makers at all levels. Linking research and practice is paramount in our vision for the OJTE.

All manuscripts must be submitted electronically at prosak-b@xavier.edu or smacdonald@uakron.edu. This system will permit the editorial team to keep the submission and review process as efficient as possible. Your manuscript will be judged on its contribution to the field, timeliness, freshness of approach, and clarity and cohesiveness of presentation. After an initial review by the editors, those accepted will be sent to reviewers. Manuscripts are blind-peer reviewed by at least two members of the Editorial Review Board. All submissions are acted upon as quickly as possible. Editors will make minor changes; major changes will be made by the author prior to publication. Manuscripts are accepted throughout the year.

NOTE: It is assumed that all submitted manuscripts have received local IRB approval and have not been previously published and are not under consideration for publication elsewhere. Manuscript Guidelines

Content: Journal issues may be thematic or open.. Currently, future issues are designated open.

Length: Manuscripts, including all references, bibliographies, charts, figures, and tables, generally should not exceed 15-20 pages including references. Include only references cited in the work. Abstracts should summarize the work in one paragraph.

Style: For writing and editorial style, follow directions in the latest edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association. Omit the author's name from the title page. Include a short abstract. Please do not use auto formatting when preparing the manuscript.

Cover Page: Include the following information on a separate sheet: title of the article; date of submission; and, each author's name, terminal degree, and brief bio with institutional affiliation and responsibilities. Only the mailing address, e-mail address, business, and home phone number of the lead author are needed.

Submission: Submissions must be word processed using Microsoft Office word (Microsoft Excel tables are permitted). Submit the manuscript as an attachment to an email to Dr. Leslie Prosak-Beres, prosak-b@xavier.edu.

One Final Note. Articles for the Spring 2015 have now closed. Submissions for the Fall 2015 journal will be received Until July 1, 2015. Notifications of acceptance for the journal will be given no later than July 15, 2015. Questions? Please email or call Dr. Leslie Prosak-Beres, prosak-b@xavier.edu or 513-315-8179.

We hope you share your ideas and research with us in the near future by submitting an article for online publication.

Best,

Leslie Ann Prosak-Beres and Suzanne Mac Donald



EDITORIAL BOARD

Savilla Banister, Ph.D.
Bowling Green State University

Michele Beery, Ph.D.
Wilmington College

Cynthia Bertelsen, Ph.D.
Bowling Green State University

Beth Clark-Thomas, Ph.D.
Malone College

Joy Cowdery, Ph.D.
Muskingum University

Charolette M. Harris, Ed. D.
Wright State University

Martha Hendericks, Ed. D.
Wilmington College

Lisa Huelskamp, Ph.D.
Ohio State University
Westerville City Schools

Lynn Kline, Ph.D.
University of Akron

Terry Miller, Ed. D.
Wilmington College

Carol Ramsay, Ed. D.
Lake Erie College

Linda Ingling Rogness, Ph.D.
Muskingum University

Marlissa Stauffer, Ph.D.
Ohio Dominican University

Megan Wereley, Ed. D.
College of Wooster

The editors of this journal wish to thank Ms. Sarah Dulle, graphic designer, for her creativity, time and professional design for our inaugural online edition of the OHIO Journal of Teacher Education.

The Spring 2015. Volume 29. Number 1 is anticipated to be released by April 1, 2015.

Submissions for Fall 2015. Volume 29. Number 2 will be accepted through July 1, 2015.



SARAH DULLE

Graphic Designer
dulle.sarah@gmail.com
513-746-0920



Retention and Development of New Teachers

Teresa L. Young, Xavier University, Cincinnati, OH
Delane Bender-Slack, Xavier University, Cincinnati, OH

Abstract

Teacher induction is critical in building a strong teaching force that is prepared for the 21st century. Support programs focus on student learning and teacher effectiveness. We will provide an overview of the process of designing and implementing The New Teacher Academy, a regional teacher induction program in order to demonstrate the challenges of this endeavor. First, we provide the rationale and theoretical framework for creating The New Teacher Academy. Second, we explain the organization and design of the academy, including data collection and analysis. Last, we highlight the findings and discuss particular obstacles regarding creating a program that eases the transition of new teachers into the teaching profession.

Easing the Transition: Retention and Development of New Teachers

New teacher induction is critical in building a strong teaching force that is prepared for the 21st Century. Support programs, often referred to as teacher induction programs, focus on student learning and teacher effectiveness. Without guidance and support, promising new

teachers fail to reach their peak level of effectiveness and generally leave the field of education out of frustration. “Between 30% and 40% of teachers leave the profession within the first five years, and in under-resourced schools in urban and rural areas the percentage is even higher” (NCTE, 2010, p. 16). Programs that offer positive, supportive experiences, professional learning communities that regularly provide seminars on topics of interest, and on-line communication with colleagues appear to be most effective in helping beginning teachers ease the transition during their first year of teaching. Research has shown that 88 percent of new teachers remain in teaching after six years subsequent to participating in a support program that incorporates the key elements of effective induction (Strong, 2005). Successful teacher induction systems may increase the retention rate of beginning teachers and also accelerate new teacher effectiveness.

The focus on beginning teachers and teacher education in general is crucial because “after decades of school reform, a consensus is building that the quality of our nation’s schools depends on the quality of our nation’s teachers” (Feiman-Nemser, 2001, p.

1013). Historically, little attention has been paid to the development of beginning teachers, and induction programs were virtually unknown two decades ago (Moir & Gless, 2001). In recent years, there has been a rapid expansion of policies and resources devoted to new teacher induction as it relates to student achievement, teacher development, and teacher preparation. In our state, the passage of recent legislation has set in motion the creation of a new licensure system for teachers and for the development of a Resident Educator Program that was effective in January 2011 (State Department of Education, 2010). It is clear at this point that teacher preparation is still in transition as states move away from summative assessment and toward formative assessment. Our state's transition program focuses on formative assessment and on enriching the mentoring that is already part of the Entry Year Program. The current mentoring system offers new teachers a yearlong program of support that is aligned to the state's Standards for the Teaching Profession. Although mentoring is part of many teacher induction programs, the logistics can be problematic. Mentors provided by school districts may not be in the same building or teaching at the same grade level as the new teachers, so the guidance provided may not fully meet the complex needs teachers face during their induction years. Teacher induction programs must complement the state's mentoring program and provide innovative approaches that meet the specific needs of beginning teachers. These types of teacher induction systems could then become models for regional, state, or national implementation.


Consequently, our purpose was to design an induction program that explicitly

addressed the needs of beginning teachers. We defined beginning teachers as educators in their first three years of teaching. As suggested by the New Teacher Center, our goals were to offer support to beginning teachers; to accelerate teacher effectiveness for beginning teachers in order to improve student learning; to increase the retention rate of beginning teachers; and to complement the state's mentoring program. Since 1998, the New Teacher Center has served over 49,000 teachers and 5,000 mentors, impacting millions of K-12 students across the country through comprehensive mentoring and professional development programs. The New Teacher Center links policy, practice, and research to support beginning teachers and administrators.

In order to demonstrate the challenges of this endeavor, we will provide an overview of the process of designing and implementing The New Teacher Academy, a teacher induction program. First, we provide the rationale and theoretical framework for creating The New Teacher Academy. Second, we explain the organization and design of the academy, including data collection and analysis. Last, we highlight the findings and discuss challenges regarding easing the transition of new teachers into the teaching profession.

Rationale

Due to the high attrition rate and the demands of teaching in the 21st century, greater support mechanisms are needed to assist beginning teachers and ease their transition into the profession (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003).



Beginning teachers have specific needs. For example, most new teachers lack sufficient professional support, feedback, and models for student achievement (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2005). In addition, novice educators are often placed in the most difficult teaching assignments because veteran teachers are often given the most desirable teaching positions. In fact, Darling-Hammond (2000) denounced the traditional process of placing beginning teachers in the most challenging teaching positions. The lack of mentoring and challenging teaching experience can negatively impact student learning. Although teacher quality is critical to student success, the high rate of turnover has become an obstacle to student learning and achievement. Something can be done. “The American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) suggests that beginning teacher induction programs play a role in decreasing the number of teachers leaving the profession” (Tankersley, 2010). Effective induction programs can support new teachers in many ways; however, in order to be a successful induction program, there are several essential components. First, participation from key stakeholder groups is vital; new teacher induction should be a part of a school district’s initiative when seeking to support new teachers and their development. Second, guidelines for professional

standards are used to articulate best practices and include instruction, equity, English language development, and collaboration with school mentors. Third, beginning teachers require a network for professional development, particularly the development of communities of practice. Fourth, induction programs must be linked to preservice education and program evaluation (“High Quality Mentoring and Induction Practices,” 2007). A program consisting of these four components offers much-needed support during this critical stage of a teacher’s development.

There are multiple benefits for beginning teachers who participate in an effective induction program. One benefit of teacher induction programs is that it provides a model for the values of service, independence, responsibility, and relevance within the field of education. Collaboration between higher education, the local community of educators, and schools provide beginning teachers a network of support during that complicated transition time. “Induction programs can represent a new conceptualization of teacher development when the responsibility for teacher learning is shared across traditional institutional boundaries by linking university teacher preparation with in-service learning” (Moir & Gless, 2001, p. 110).

Second, working with novice teachers can increase teacher retention. Teachers with the highest scores on certification tests are twice as likely to leave as those with the lowest (Strong, 2005). This means that it is not the least qualified but rather the most promising teachers that leave the profession first. With the assistance of an induction program, these promising teachers can reach their peak level of effectiveness rather than leave due to disappointment and frustration.

Next, providing new teachers with the appropriate support may improve student achievement. The students most in need of highly accomplished teachers are more likely

to be taught by new teachers because, as previously mentioned, veteran teachers are assigned classes based on years of experience. Induction programs can help new teachers to develop their pedagogical skills and content knowledge, improving student learning. This is important because studies have shown that students taught by teachers who receive induction support demonstrate significantly greater learning gains (Strong, 2005).

Fourth, if designed appropriately, teacher induction programs can combine mentoring with communities of practice. Besides being tremendously difficult, teaching can be an extremely solitary profession. New teachers can become part of a collaborative learning community, providing them with a supportive culture and a designated time to meet that includes active, sustained learning. This is essential because teachers who develop allies remain fresh, committed, and hopeful (Nieto, 2009). Moreover, online communities provide timely, cost-effective mentoring, supplementing in-person meetings and professional development training and extending the peer and mentor relationships. Mentoring and learning communities combine to support teacher development.

Last, effective teacher induction can move them along the continuum of professional development, which ranges from preservice education to new teacher induction to career-long professional development (Goldrick, 2009). After participating in an induction program, teachers may be inclined to continue their graduate education as part of their professional development plan. In addition, induction programs provide an opportunity to collaborate with new teachers to determine their concerns and needs during the first

years of teaching. University teacher education programs can be redesigned to meet the needs and standards of beginning teachers. In fact, universities can lead the way in designing induction programs.

Induction programs can vary in their quality and focus. “Quality induction programs include a mentor; supportive communication from the principal, other administrators, and department chairs; common planning time with others in the field; assistance from a teacher’s aide; and participation in an external network of teachers” (Vanderslice, 2010, p. 301). Moreover, beginning teachers specifically benefit from professional learning communities that regularly provide seminars on topics of interest and on-line communication with colleagues. Novices are in a unique transitional phase and often times, although mentoring or professional development support is provided by school districts, the topics most relevant to the beginning teacher are not addressed (New Teacher Center, 2007). The next section describes The New Teacher Academy, a teacher induction program that was designed to meet the needs of area beginning teachers.

Design and Organization

Beginning teachers need support during this transitional moment in teacher education in general and in their professional journey in particular. Induction programs are most effective when new teacher induction is part of a school district's initiative to improve teaching and learning. Consequently, one element of effective induction programs is that the stakeholders share a common vision. Stakeholders - regional principals and superintendents - were consulted to provide input and gain specific commitment of support for the New Teacher Academy. Email blasts and flyers were sent to area schools, and stakeholder meetings were also used to recruit beginning teachers.

Due to the lack of economic resources for professional development, our goal for this induction program was to make it cost effective. Consequently, The New Teacher Academy was designed so that there was no cost to participants. Applications for participating in the induction program were submitted by interested beginning teachers. We decided to accept participants on a first come, first served basis. Our initial goal was 30 beginning teachers in their first, second or third year of teaching. After a flurry of applications during a four-week period, we accepted 54 beginning teachers before capping the number of participants. There continued to be interest, but we limited the

number of new educators due to funding, facilities, and personnel.

Once applications were accepted and participants notified, we established meeting dates and locations that would include six, face-to-face meetings. In addition, we provided an on-line component through the use of Google Groups. The six on-campus teacher seminars were developed for beginning teachers to discuss, collaborate, and learn from experienced educators. Moreover, the seminar structure remained consistent beginning with open-discussion, informational articles and handouts, and guest speakers. Guest speakers were invited to share their expertise and resources on a particular topic. Examples of topics included the starting the school year, assessment, and differentiated instruction. At the conclusion of each seminar, beginning teachers provided reflections, indicating their questions and concerns. Seminar topics were then aligned to address their specific needs.

Table 1: Design

Meeting Dates	Topics
Date: August 9, 2010 Time: 4:30-7:30 p.m.	Beginning the School Year Setting up Classroom
Date: September 12, 2010 Time: 4:30-7:30 p.m.	Preparing for Effective Parent-Teacher Conferences
Date: November 8, 2010 Time: 4:30-7:30 p.m.	Managing the Classroom Knowing School Law
Date: January 10, 2011 Time: 4:30-7:30 p.m.	Helping English Language Learners Increasing Teacher Effectiveness
Date: March 14, 2011 Time: 4:30-7:30 p.m.	Differentiating Instruction Response to Intervention
Date: May 2, 2011 Time: 4:30-7:30 p.m.	Ending the School Year Setting Professional Goals

Funding for the New Teacher Academy went through three phases. First, we received an internal grant from our university to attend the New Teacher Center Symposium: Innovations in Teacher Induction held in San Jose, California, 2010,

gaining access to current research on teacher induction and support programs.

Attending that particular symposium was critical because the New Teacher Center has been integral in re-designing teacher induction in our state. Our state is part of a consortium that was formed to improve teacher preparation based on data on new and practicing teachers (Goldrick, 2009). We intended to use the research-based knowledge acquired at the New Teacher Symposium to identify and address areas of concern in teacher induction.

Second, we received an external grant from the Martha Holden Jennings Foundation for \$13,700 for public school participants. The purpose of the Martha Holden Jennings Foundation is to foster the development of young people to the maximum extent through improving the quality of teaching in secular elementary and secondary schools in our state. With a Martha Holden Jennings Foundation Grant, we developed The New Teacher Academy, a comprehensive induction program, at our university that supported the needs of first, second, and third year teachers in order to ease the transition by providing support that would increase retention and accelerate new teacher effectiveness.

Third, we received funds from the College of Social Sciences, Health, and Education for private school participants because they were not provided by the grant. With this funding, we provided books and materials. Additionally, we received funds from the university's Office of Grant Services for refreshments, which were provided at each evening session.

We had several funding sources but the Martha Holden Jennings Grant funded the majority of The New Teacher Academy.

[See Figure 1 on previous page]

The projected budget and actual expenses fluctuated because of space availability and additional savings in marketing and materials. However, we identified in figure 1 specific expenditures we deemed necessary for creating an induction program. Furthermore, faculty supplemental compensation, student assistant, seminar speakers, meeting space, marketing (brochures, flyers, postage, copies) teacher materials (texts, notebooks, and folders), instructional materials, office supplies, and refreshments may vary, but are necessary expenditures to effectively operate the New Teacher Academy.

Data Collection and Analysis

By using a mixed methods approach (Calfee & Sperling, 2010), we collected a variety of qualitative and quantitative data. Data collection consisted of records of attendance, pre and post self-efficacy surveys, reflections from seminar sessions, on-line postings, professional development goals, principal post-surveys, and teacher post-surveys. Data were collected at each of the six face-to-face seminars and throughout the length of the academy.

Attendance data were analyzed by quantifying the number of sessions attended by first, second, or third year teachers. The long form of the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale was used in this study (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001), and it was administered to beginning teachers before and after participating in The New Teacher Academy. Three separate subscale scores were calculated that corresponded to the three factors identified by Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001). Specifically, two scores were

calculated for each subscale pre- and post-participation in The New Teacher Academy program: Efficacy in Student Engagement (coefficient alpha = .92 and .84 for Time 1 and Time 2, respectively), Efficacy in Instructional Strategies (coefficient alpha = .89 and .86 for Time 1 and Time 2, respectively), and Efficacy in Classroom Management (coefficient alpha = .92 and .90 for Time 1 and Time 2, respectively).

Seminar reflections underwent content analysis, which is studying “a set of objects (i.e., cultural artifacts) or events systematically by counting them or interpreting the themes contained in them (Reinharz, 1992, p. 146). The data from the reflections were analyzed using analytic induction, a process in which initial coding categories are identified from patterns within the transcripts (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). In this case, qualitative grounded theory meant creating the codes as the data were studied (Charmaz, 2004). Data were coded by topics such as differentiation, classroom management, special education, support, organization, planning, time management, parents, resources/technology and assessment.

Data from the professional development goals were deductively analyzed, a process in which initial coding categories were identified from an established framework (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003).

Specifically, the professional development

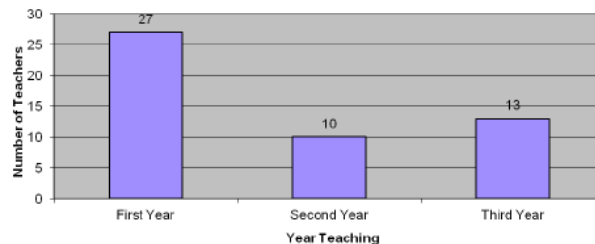
goals were coded using the state’s teaching standards. Rates of return were determined for principal surveys and teacher post-surveys. Regarding the online component, there were not enough data to conduct an effective analysis.

Findings

As previously mentioned, we collected and analyzed a large amount of data throughout the duration of The New Teacher Academy. In order to evaluate the impact of the induction program, we sought to elicit feedback from the stakeholders and the beginning teachers. Specifically we will share the findings regarding need, attendance, self-efficacy, reflections, online communications, and surveys.

Need

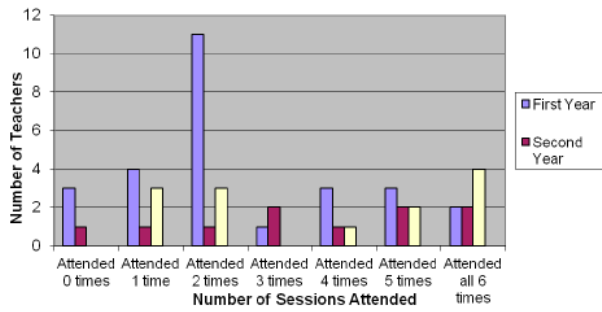
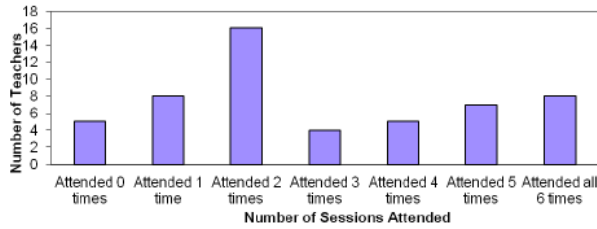
As previously mentioned, our initial goal was to accept 30 beginning teachers in their first, second, or third year of teaching. We received a number of applications, and we accepted 54 novice educators. We continued to receive applications and inquiries; however, due to space, materials, and ideal size of the community of practice, we chose to limit the number of participants. The number of teachers categorized by years of experience is provided in the following graph.



Clearly first year teachers sought initial support, however, second and third year teachers felt the need for support as well. Although first year teachers recognized the need for support, in the next section we address the significant decrease in their attendance over second and third year teachers.

Attendance

Six seminars were conducted throughout the yearlong The New Teacher Academy. We kept attendance records for each meeting. Fifty beginning teachers were present for the first seminar, but the attendance rate for subsequent seminars decreased. Beginning teachers' attendance was influenced by schedule conflicts, school meetings, and personal obligations. The attendance record is provided in graphs two and three.



The New Teacher Academy was consistently attended by approximately 20 participants at any one time. We found that many participants attended the seminars two times or less. Of particular interest is that third year teachers demonstrated a greater commitment by attending most often. Perhaps first year teachers are so overwhelmed with instructional and institutional obligations, simply trying to survive, that they may be unable to recognize the need for professional support.

Self-Efficacy

A self-efficacy survey was completed two times during the academy. Related-samples t-tests were conducted to investigate the effect of The New Teacher Academy program on scores on the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale. Results showed that there was no significant effect of the program on efficacy in any of the three subscales: student engagement, $t(17) = 1.10, p = .29$, instructional strategies, $t(17) = 1.94, p = .07$, and classroom management, $t(17) = 1.40, p = .18$. Please refer to Table 2 for the means and standard deviations for the three efficacy subscales before and after participating in the program.

Subscale	Mean	SD
<i>Student Engagement</i>		
Time 1	7.08	1.15
Time 2	6.88	0.79
<i>Instructional Strategies</i>		
Time 1	7.29	1.03
Time 2	6.92	0.89
<i>Classroom Management</i>		
Time 1	7.29	1.07
Time 2	6.92	1.01

The results of the self-efficacy were not unexpected due to inconsistent attendance. In addition, the self-efficacy surveys were analyzed as a group as opposed to distinguishing between first, second and third year teachers. This is a limitation of the data analysis.

Reflections

Teachers were asked to complete reflections at the conclusion of four of the six on-campus seminars. The questions were as follows: What are your goals for the school year? What are your concerns? What are your specific areas of need? Please identify guest speakers or special topics. After analyzing the reflections, the teacher feedback generally correlated to the seminar topics. For example, the topics mentioned on four out of four reflections were as follows: differentiating instruction, classroom management, instructional strategies, assessment, and planning. As indicated in table one, the seminar topics addressed the teachers' needs. Additionally, through teacher discussions and questions during on-campus seminars, we ascertained that the seminar topics aligned with the beginning teachers' concerns and needs.

[Refer to Table 1 on page 16]

Online Component

We provided an online space for beginning teachers to build a community of practice by sharing comments regarding their needs such as classroom management, conferences, differentiation, professional goals, etc. With regards to the online component, which was Google Groups, we considered it a failure. Only two teachers posted consistently, both of which were taking The New Teacher Academy for college credit. We attribute this

to two reasons. First, teachers claimed the site was difficult to access, and they suggested using a social media site such as Facebook. Feedback regarding the online component consisted of the following:

I was bombarded with email.

I forgot about it... Sorry!

I did not use the online component because I honestly did not have time to read others' problems. I didn't like the online component very much because not many others would communicate and it felt forced.

I never figured out how to accept the Google group, so I didn't use the online component.

Additionally, teachers were not required to post on Google Groups; they were not penalized nor rewarded in any concrete way for posting or not posting. Although our research found that there was little interest in or commitment to participating online, a few beginning teachers saw the benefit in doing so. One respondent did say that it was a "good experience." Another participant said that s/he "posted as often as I could. It was very one-sided. I still found it beneficial, like a journal entry." We chose not to influence the online communications by implementing requirements, sending reminders, or participating in online dialogue because we wanted to determine the support needed by beginning teachers. We tried to remain cognizant of the demands on beginning teachers' time and resources.

Surveys

A post-survey was emailed to the principals who had beginning teachers that participated in the academy. (See Appendix A on page 24.) The rate of return was poor with only two percent received from the principals. Those responses were favorable or very favorable with regard to every aspect of The New Teacher Academy. The principals said they would recommend The New Teacher Academy to other beginning teachers.

In addition, we asked beginning teachers to complete a post-survey regarding their experience participating in The New Teacher Academy. (See Appendix B on page 24.) We asked them to respond to five questions. The rate of return for the teachers' survey was 36 %. Generally, the beginning teachers' responses were positive with recommendations or comments regarding specific seminar topics.

I liked breaking off into small groups based on our content/grade level areas, and I liked the books.

The lecture sessions were more beneficial. For example, when veteran teachers presented their ideas that was helpful.

I enjoyed the seminar where they talked about preparing for conferences and keeping yourself organized.

I liked gaining new ideas from the different presenters who are in the classroom currently teaching.

There were also suggestions for improvement. Would like to see more information geared toward high school teachers.

I think in the future perhaps starting a little later would be beneficial due to traffic or later schools.

I would recommend integrating more specialized components to content areas (whole group meetings coupled with separate workshops for specials teaches, special ed etc.)

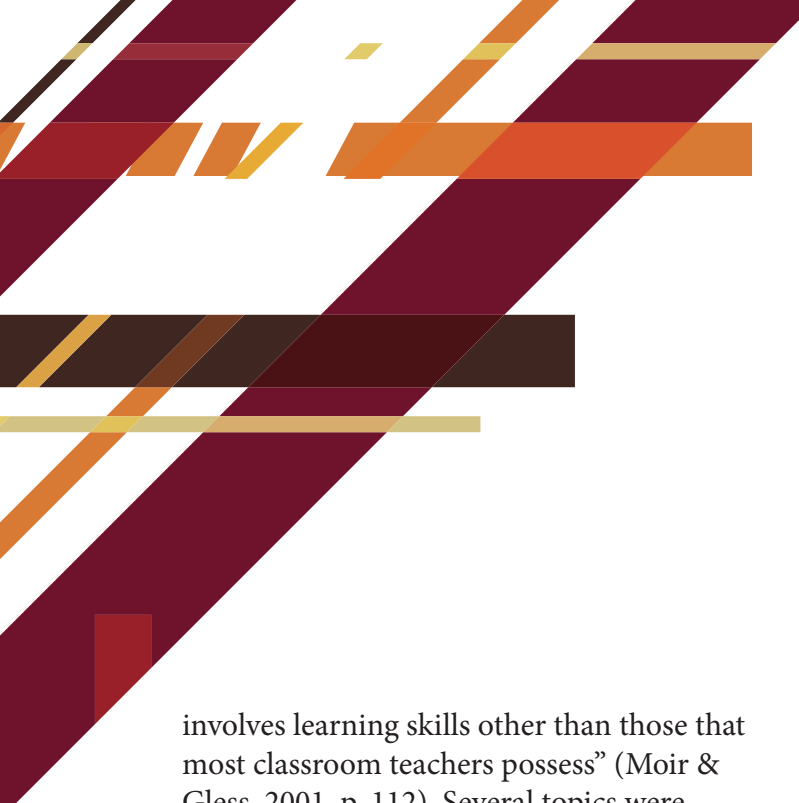
I think it would be helpful to get experienced teachers involved. They could moderate some group discussion.

The survey responses provided us with suggestions for re-designing The New Teacher Academy to better address the need of beginning teachers.

Discussion

There is an obvious need for support of beginning teachers because they are isolated with students in their classrooms for most of the day. "Teachers do their work out of the sight of other adults. Current school structures provide few opportunities for teachers to confer with fellow teachers about their work. Regular opportunities for substantive talk with like-minded colleagues help teachers overcome their isolation and build communities of practice" (Feiman-Nemser, 2001, p. 1043). As previously mentioned, the value of induction programs in helping beginning teachers during this transitional period is vital for their development. Induction programs must be relevant to the beginning teachers' professional needs, reasonable in terms of time commitment, and recurring to build communities of support. Our goal of designing an induction program for beginning teachers had its strengths as well as its challenges.

Part of creating an induction program is to provide space and time for beginning teachers to gather and address their issues of concern. Therefore, the seminar topics need to be relevant to the specific needs of novice teachers. "Supporting new teachers is complex and demanding work, and it



involves learning skills other than those that most classroom teachers possess” (Moir & Gless, 2001, p. 112). Several topics were identified by the beginning teachers in The New Teacher Academy that were indicative of their needs during this transitional time. Seminars that related to differentiated instruction, parent-teacher collaboration, and assessment were deemed most important.

Additionally, beginning teachers requested support in balancing their professional obligations with their personal life commitments. Inductions programs must be comprehensive in their design and specific in addressing the needs of the beginning teachers. We feel that the seminar topics specifically addressed the needs of the beginning teachers that attended our academy.

Although the number of applicants far exceeded our initial expectations, attendance became one of the major challenges. Approximately 20 participants attended each seminar consistently, a substantial decrease from the original 54 attendees. Data from the reflections and surveys demonstrated that beginning teachers found the on campus seminars valuable. Unfortunately, balancing professional and personal obligations were obstacles to attending each seminar.

Online forums provided an additional challenged. Google Groups offered a space for beginning teachers to be part of a virtual

community of practice, however, the novice teachers at The New Teacher Academy chose not to utilize this opportunity. We believe accountability was an issue with regard to online participation and attendance. Beginning teachers must be motivated to participate, whether it is for course credit, professional development hours, or CEUs. Moreover, if a goal of the induction program is to build communities of practice, we must be explicit about the purpose and expectations when participating in the collaborative. “What distinguished professional learning communities from support groups where teachers mainly share ideas and offer encouragement is their critical stance and commitment to inquiry” (Feiman-Nemser, 2001, p. 1043). Fostering beginning teachers’ critical stance and commitment to inquiry must be made explicit - evident in the activities provided by the induction program and through online communication.

Funding an induction program can also be an obstacle. We sought sources for funding the academy through limited grant writing support. Furthermore, locating grants opportunities that supported both private and parochial schools presented additional issues. Moreover, establishing a budget for an outside funder required specific expenditures for the facilitators, meeting space, materials and guest speakers, but we found the budget had to remain flexible and fluid for the changing financial needs of the academy. For example, we thought it was important to provide refreshments for the teachers coming to the campus seminars at the end of their school day, but this cost was not covered by the funding source. Therefore, we solicited additional funds from a number of university departments.

Induction programs should be designed in a way that complements the professional development and support offered by the beginning teachers’ state and school districts. Higher institutions must be aware

of the unique demands placed on beginning teachers in order to prepare them for professional development responsibilities in the future. Collaborations between schools and universities can be challenging, however, they are necessary if we are to meet the needs of beginning teachers during this transitional period.

Conclusion

Our purpose was to share the process of designing and implementing a teacher induction program and to demonstrate the challenges of this endeavor. We believe that the decisions for creating and revising this induction program are context-specific. “Successful induction programs demonstrate flexibility and seek integration with site- and district-level reform initiatives while balancing the new teacher’s already steep learning curve with the needs of these local improvement efforts” (Moir & Gless, 2001, p. 112). Regional induction programs can be designed to suit the needs of specific populations, but each will have its own obstacles. As the project directors, we developed The New Teacher Academy, with the goal of providing instruction and support for beginning teachers. We were also responsible for recruitment of candidates for the academy, administrative responsibilities, and assessing project outcomes.

New teacher support is a critical component in a comprehensive plan to retain teachers, improve teacher quality, and increase student achievement. The New Teacher Academy meant to provide novice teachers with sustained learning experiences that incorporated topics relevant to their needs, time with university faculty, and engagement in frequent on-line

conversations with their colleagues at no cost to the beginning teacher. Reflective journals, guided and open discussions, and guest speakers supported this initiative.

We designed this induction program to meet the needs of beginning teachers, providing an alternative program during the challenging first years of teaching. However, in creating the academy, we did not anticipate the challenges that occurred with low attendance, funding, and lack of online communication. There are many difficulties and obstacles that need to be negotiated when creating and implementing an induction program. However, we did succeed in the academy through high interest of participants and stakeholders, student reflections, student feedback, survey and relevance of topics. The New Teacher Academy provided an opportunity for beginning teachers to form a community of learners transitioning from novice to experienced teachers. We hope to redesign this innovative approach to regional teacher induction, and to address the specific challenges that occurred during the first year of The New Teacher Academy. Teacher support is an ongoing process. As teacher educators, we recognize the need to first prepare preservice teachers in our program, and then support beginning teachers in easing the transition during those critical first years.

Appendix A

Principal Post Survey Questions

- 1.) Compared to most new teachers, how effective was the beginning teacher in establishing a classroom management system?
- 2.) Compared to most new teachers, how effective was the beginning teacher in implementing a variety of assessment strategies?
- 3.) Compared to most new teachers, how effective was the beginning teacher in addressing the needs of diverse learners?
- 4.) Compared to most new teachers, how effective was the beginning teacher in communicating with parents?
- 5.) In your opinion, how well did The New Teacher Academy meet the needs of the beginning teacher?
- 6.) In your opinion, how well did The New Teacher Academy align with the state program?
- 7.) In your opinion, how well did The New Teacher Academy align with your district's program?
- 8.) How would you rate the level of support offered to the new teacher by The New Teacher Academy?
- 9.) Would you recommend The New Teacher Academy to future new teachers? Why or why not?

Appendix B

Beginning Teacher Post Survey Questions

- 1.) How many times did you attend The New Teacher Academy seminars?
- 2.) If there were seminars you did not attend, please explain why.
- 3.) If you did attend the seminars, which topics were most beneficial?
- 4.) Explain your experience using the online component.
- 5.) Additional Comments

References

- Alliance for Excellent Education. (2005). *Teacher attrition: A costly loss to the nation and to the Washington DC*: Author.
- Bogdan, R. C., & Biklen, S. K. (2003). *Qualitative research for education* (4th ed.). Boston: Pearson.
- Calfee, Robert C. Sperling, Melanie. (2010) *On mixed methods: Approaches to language and literacy research*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Charmaz, K. (2004). Grounded theory. In S. Hesse-Biber, Leavy, P. (Ed.), *Approaches to qualitative research* (pp. 496-521). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2000). *Solving the dilemmas of teacher supply, demand, and standards: How we can ensure a competent, caring, and qualified teacher for every child*. New York: National Commission on Teaching and America's Future.
- Feiman-Nemser, S. (2001). From preparation to practice: Designing a continuum to strengthen and sustain teaching. *Teachers College Record*, 103 (6), 1013-1055.
- Goldrick, L. (2009). *A Teacher Development Continuum: The role of Policy in Creating a Supportive Pathway into the Profession*. New Teacher Center, University of California at Santa Cruz. www.newteachercenter.org.
- High Quality Mentoring and Induction Practices. (2007). Retrieved from http://www.newteachercenter.org/pdfs/Cap_Hill_HQM_final.pdf
- Johnson, S., & Birkeland, S. (2003). Pursuing a "sense of success": New teachers explain their career decisions. *American Educational Research Journal*, 40, (3), 581-617.
- Moir, E., & Gless, J. (2001). Quality induction: An investment in teachers. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 109-114.
- NCTE (2010). *Preparing, inducting and retaining English language arts teachers*. *Council Chronicle*, 19(3), 15-18.

New Teacher Center, (2007). High Quality Mentoring & Induction Practices. New Teacher Center, University of California at Santa Cruz. www.newteachercenter.org.

Nieto, S. (2009). From surviving to thriving. *Educational Leadership*, 66 (5), 8-13.

[State] Department of Education (2010). www.ode.state.oh.us

Reinharz, S. (1992). *Feminist methods in social research*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Strong, M. (2005). Research brief: Does new teacher support affect student achievement? Santa Cruz: New Teacher Center.

Tankersley, A. (2010). Discovering curriculum concerns of beginning early childhood teachers. *Childhood Education*, 86(5), 293-297.

Tschannen-Moran, M., & Woolfolk-Hoy, A. (2001) Teacher efficacy: Capturing an elusive concept. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 17, 783-805.

Vanderslice, R. (2010). ABC's of keeping the best: Attrition, burnout and climate. *Childhood Education*, 86(5), 298-301.

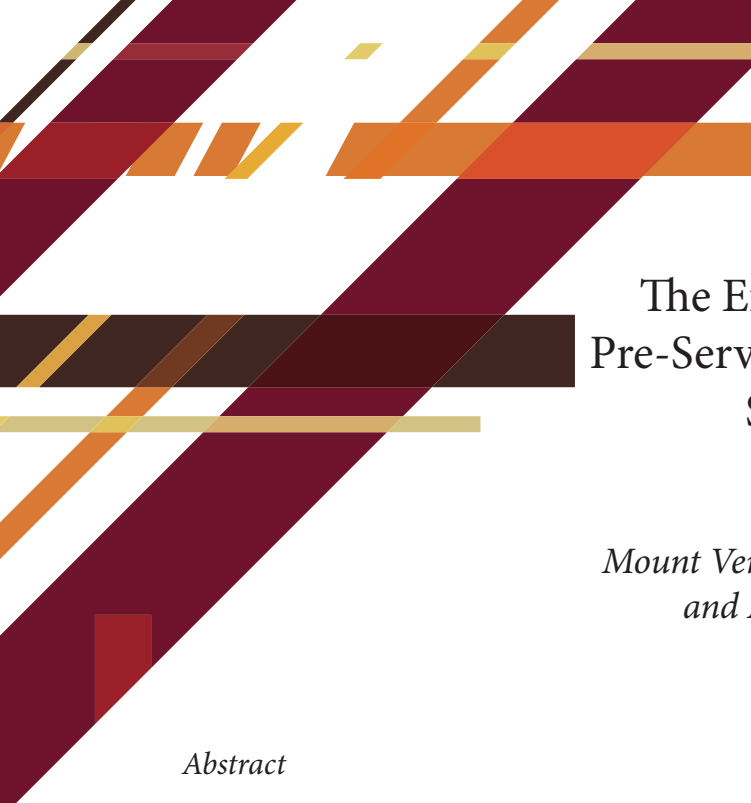
Retention and Development of New Teachers
Teresa L. Young, Ed. D., Associate Professor
Xavier University, Cincinnati, Ohio

Delane Bender-Slack, Ed. D., Associate Professor
Xavier University, Cincinnati, Ohio

Authors

Teresa L. Young is an associate professor and chair of the Department of Childhood Education and Literacy at Xavier University. Her research focus is literacy-based education, specifically reading education, children's literature and student learning and teacher effectiveness.

Delane Bender-Slack is an associate professor in the Department of Childhood Education and Literacy at Xavier University. Delane's research is literacy based focussing on multicultural education, content literacy and children's literature.



The Effect of Strengths Intervention on Pre-Service Teacher Dispositions during the Student Teacher Experience

Sharon K. Metcalfe, Ed. D

*Mount Vernon Nazarene University, Mount Vernon, OH
and Arfe Ozcan Ph. D., University of Phoenix*

Abstract

Although accrediting institutions have mandated the assessment of teacher dispositions in teacher candidates, there is a need for the purposeful development of the dispositions of an effective teacher throughout teacher education programs. A quasi-experimental study was designed to assess whether talent identification or talent development interventions differed significantly in their effect on the development of teacher candidate dispositions in a sample of teacher candidates during their 12-week student teaching semester. Data analyses revealed no significant differences in post disposition scores for any of the curricular interventions. However, a significant increase between pre and post-assessments results was detected signifying that teacher candidates' disposition scores increased during their student teaching but the increase was not significantly dependent upon the type of curricular intervention.

The study of dispositions in teacher education programs is important because the profile of personal traits or dispositions that enable one to teach is the most important resource of an effective teacher (Serdyukov & Ferguson, 2011; Singh & Stoloff, 2008).

Although knowledge and skills are

competently assessed in a variety of ways, such as Praxis II examinations, professional portfolios, and clinical evaluations, dispositions are more elusive to evaluate objectively. Katz and Raths (1985) were the first educators to have the insight that some teacher candidates had the necessary knowledge and skills but lacked the dispositions to use them well. This realization prompted the organizational leaders governing teacher education to include the assessment of dispositions in their standards. Focusing on the improvement of teacher preparation programs will, in turn, help to ensure only the best candidates qualify for a teaching license.

Background and Theoretical Framework

In 1992, authorities of the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) incorporated teacher dispositions into the principles required by state standards boards. This move was intended to prevent teacher candidates who had high grade point averages and demonstrated content knowledge but did not reflect dispositions that indicated understanding and compassion for their students from obtaining a teaching license. In 2002, the NCATE included the assessment


of teacher dispositions in the standards for accreditation.

While the NCATE accredited teacher education programs are defining and assessing dispositions (Murrell, Diez, Feiman-Nemser, & Schussler, 2010), the issue remains regarding how to strengthen or develop dispositions that will enable teacher candidates to become maximally effective teachers (Lee & Herner-Patnode, 2010; Schussler et al., 2008). One of the goals of teacher education should be to help teacher candidates determine which dispositions may be stable traits and to develop or strengthen the dispositions that will enable teacher candidates to become more effective 21st century educators (Diez, 2007b; Lee & Herner-Patnode, 2010).

Clifton's seminal work took a unique approach to the development of a person's identity that included identifying one's talents (Clifton Strengths School, n.d.). Instead of focusing on weaknesses or the need to improve, Clifton asked what would happen if the focus were on what was right with people. Clifton later became the father of strengths-based psychology (Liesveld & Miller, 2005) and developed the Clifton StrengthsFinder®, an assessment used to identify a person's top signature themes of talent. The Clifton StrengthsFinder®, when augmented with strengths-based curriculum, is designed to aid the person with self-knowledge needed to make the adjustments necessary to become an effective teacher (Diez, 2007c). Talent identification and strengths-based development or training increases self-knowledge or identity as well as teacher attitudes such as hope, feelings of confidence, and well-being (Hodges & Clifton, 2004). The identification and development of talents into strengths may

assist teacher educators in coaching teacher candidates to use their identified strengths and self-knowledge to develop the dispositional traits of reflection and self-awareness (Diez, 2007c; Edwards, 2007). The results of this study may be useful in transforming teacher education programs to include the thoughtful and purposeful development of dispositions in teacher candidates with strengths-based education.

A significant body of research exists to support the premise that the beliefs, attitudes, and values teachers hold about students, themselves, and about teaching, strongly influences the effect teachers will have on student learning and development (Combs et al., 1974; Diez, 2007a; Serdyukov & Ferguson, 2011; Taylor & Wasicsko, 2000). Researchers have been studying the dispositions of effective teachers for many years and have found relationships between a teacher's effectiveness and his or her beliefs, attitudes, and values (Schussler, 2006; Taylor & Wasicsko, 2000). Although research exists regarding the use of strengths-based approaches in higher education, the application of strengths-based education to teaching is just beginning (Anderson, 2005). A gap exists in the literature for research in teacher education (Grossman & McDonald, 2008). Specifically, a literature gap exists for using strengths-based approaches in teacher education programs to identify, develop, and nurture the talents of pre-service teachers into strengths and help them reach their full potential. The literature is especially silent regarding using strengths-based education to develop the positive dispositions of a teacher. By introducing strengths-based education in teacher education programs, educators will assist teacher candidates to become more self-aware, to develop their personal



identities, and to understand their talents within the changing context of the classroom (Schussler, 2006; Schussler et al., 2008). The teacher education program is the ideal arena to introduce teacher candidates to knowledge, ideas, and experiences, which will assist them in developing the beginnings of their professional identities (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). Teacher educators need to include opportunities for candidates to develop their professional identities throughout the teacher education program (Berry & O'Neil, 2007; Kelchtermans, 2009; Puri, 2009). As teacher candidates become increasingly self-aware and begin to use their knowledge and skills to develop their talents and self-identities, their self-efficacy should increase (Mostek, 2010; Poulou, 2007). Self-knowledge and self-efficacy are two positive teacher dispositions, which lead to the actions of an effective teacher (Bandura, 1997).

The purpose and scope of this study was not to define dispositions, evaluate various types of dispositions assessments, or enter the debate on how to best empirically assess dispositions. The professional dispositions assessment instrument was developed and tested by the university as a response to the NCATE's mandate to assess teacher candidate dispositions and will be discussed further. The results of this study may be generalized to include the

development of teacher candidate dispositions throughout the entire education program and not only during student teaching.

Research Methodology and Design

The research study followed a quantitative research methodology with a quasi-experimental, nonequivalent control group research design (Campbell & Stanley, 1966; Creswell, 2007; Neuman, 2006; Salkind, 2009) to explain the effect of either talent identification or a talent development intervention on the dispositions of teacher candidates during the 12-week student teaching experience. This study used the independent variable of talent intervention to influence disposition changes for each participant. There were two types of talent interventions in addition to a control group. The first talent intervention was the simple identification of student teacher talent themes using the Clifton StrengthsFinder® online assessment. In addition, this group received the book, *Teaching with your Strengths: How Great Teachers Inspire Their Students* (Liesveld & Miller, 2005). The second talent intervention included the StrengthsFinder® online assessment as well as the book received by the first group. However, the second intervention group also received purposeful training and development of identified talents into strengths for specific use in the classroom.

The dependent variable was the change in teacher candidate dispositions across the student teaching experience as measured by candidate performance on the university dispositions assessment. The teacher candidates in the intervention groups and the control group completed the dispositions assessment prior to beginning student teaching as a pretest and as the posttest at the end of student teaching. Each undergraduate and graduate teacher candidate enrolled in spring 2012 student teaching semester at a private, faith-based

liberal arts university in the mid-western United States was invited to participate in the study.

Participants belonged to pre-existing groups. For example, the graduate teacher candidates were already divided into three cohorts based on the geographic location of the satellite campus. The undergraduate teacher candidates who met on the main campus were randomly divided into three groups. There was a control group and one of the two intervention groups for each of the undergraduate and graduate groups of teacher candidates. The intervention type was randomly assigned.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study.

1. To what extent do strengths-based curricular interventions impact development of the dispositions of teacher candidates during his or her student teaching semester?
2. To what extent does talent identification differ from talent development training or a case-study based approach in the impact development of talents on the dispositions of teacher candidates during his or her student teaching semester?

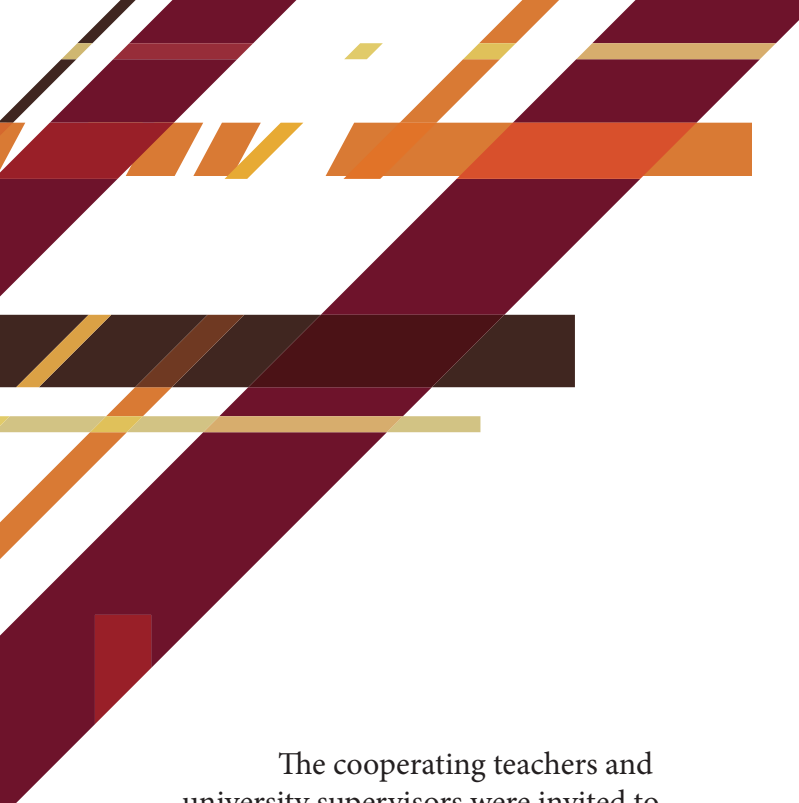
Findings

Data Collection

Quantitative data collection was achieved through use of the Chalk & Wire© data assessment system. Detailed instructions for submission of the dispositions assessment were created by the university's Chalk & Wire© administrator. These instructions were copied and given to each participant. In

addition, the researcher met with each group of participants at the beginning of the study to demonstrate how to submit the assessments correctly. All initial dispositions assessments were submitted by the participants during these meetings. Intervention facilitators were chosen by the researcher from existing university faculty members who were familiar with the teacher candidates from other courses or field experiences. Each facilitator was randomly assigned one type of intervention and facilitated that intervention for both an undergraduate and graduate group. At the beginning of the study, the researcher met individually with each facilitator to introduce the study and to discuss each specific curriculum. The three interventions were labeled as 1 (control—case study curriculum), 2 (talent identification), or 3 (talent development) and the facilitators were not told which specific intervention they were facilitating, other than a number, until after the study participants took their post-assessments.

The final dispositions assessments were completed during the final week of student teaching. The researcher visited each group of teacher candidates to assist participants in completing the assessment. In addition to the dispositions assessment, a final open-ended survey was distributed to collect candidate opinions about the effectiveness of the strengths-based curriculum. After all assessments were completed, materials from the interventions were re-distributed and the participants in the control groups were given the book, *Teaching With Your Strengths* that contained the code for completing the Clifton StrengthsFinder®.



The cooperating teachers and university supervisors were invited to participate in the research study for the purpose of possibly triangulating the data. One hundred and thirty-six cooperating teachers were emailed the explanatory PowerPoint presentation and the informed consent letter and asked to email the signed consent form to the researcher if he or she agreed to participate in the study. Some teacher candidates had two cooperating teachers so that explains the number higher than the initial teacher candidate sample size of $N=100$. The researcher received signed consent forms from 50 cooperating teachers (37%). Of the 50 positive responses, only 23 cooperating teachers completed the pre-assessment and 22 cooperating teachers completed the post-assessment. Due to the small sample size, the researcher excluded the cooperating teacher data from subsequent data analyses.

The researcher presented the PowerPoint presentation to 37 university supervisors during the supervisor orientation, prior to the start of student teaching. Thirty-six supervisors signed informed consent documents. Three supervisors did not return the pre-assessment and only one did not complete the post-assessment for his or her teacher candidates. Most supervisors had multiple student teachers so that is why the number is much smaller than the total

number of teacher candidates. Supervisor data was not used if it corresponded to a teacher candidate whose data was excluded. Cooperating teachers and supervisors were asked to complete their assessments approximately two weeks after student teaching began. The delay gave cooperating teachers and university supervisors time to observe the teacher candidate in the classroom, interacting with students and colleagues.

Data Analysis

The mean and standard deviation were selected as measures of central tendency for each variable. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) on the covariate (pre-assessment scores) was calculated to determine if there were any significant relationships among the variables at the beginning of the study (Field, 2005; Foster, Barkus, & Yavorsky, 2006; Mertler & Vannatta, 2010). In addition, paired-samples t-tests were calculated to compare the mean pre-assessment score to the mean post-assessment score. A paired-samples t-test was calculated for each intervention of the independent variable for teacher candidates and university supervisors. The significance level was .05 ($p < .05$) or a 5% probability that a Type I error will be made or that the null hypothesis will be rejected when it is true (Foster, Barkus, & Yavorsky, 2006; Salkind, 2009).

Comparisons Between Pre and Post Disposition Scores

Student self-assessment. A significant increase from pre-assessment to post-assessment was found for the case study intervention ($t(26) = -6.05$, p (2-tailed) = .00). The mean for the pre-assessment was 3.10 ($sd = .27$), and the mean for the post-assessment was 3.52 ($sd = .34$). There was no significant correlation ($p = .13$) between the candidates' pre and post-assessment scores within the control intervention group.

A significant increase from

pre-assessment to post-assessment in the talent identification intervention was found ($t(28) = -7.82$, p (2-tailed) = .00). For the talent identification intervention group, the mean for the pre-assessment was 3.08 ($sd = .40$), and the mean for the post-assessment was 3.63 ($sd = .28$). There was a significant correlation ($p = .023$) between the candidates' pre and post-assessment scores within the talent identification intervention group. A significant increase from pre-assessment to post-assessment was found ($t(29) = -8.81$, p (2-tailed) = .00) in the talent development intervention. The mean for the pre-assessment was 2.91 ($sd = 0.37$), and the mean for the post-assessment was 3.57 ($sd = .32$). There was no significant correlation ($p = .13$) between the candidates' pre and post-assessment scores within the talent development intervention group. Table 1 summarizes the comparison of the teacher candidate self-assessed, pre and post-assessment means. There were increases in teacher candidates' pre and post-assessment scores with all three interventions. Further analyses will determine if this difference is significant.

Table 1

t-test Results for Candidate Pre and Post Self-Assessment

Intervention	Assessment Condition		<i>t</i>	df
	Preself	Postself		
Control – Case Study	3.10 (.27)	3.52 (.34)	-6.05*	26
Talent Identification	3.08 (.40)	3.63 (.28)	-7.82*	28
Talent Development	2.91 (.37)	3.57 (.32)	-8.81*	29

Note. * $p < .05$. Standard Deviations appear in parentheses below means.

Qualitative data

Open-ended questions were distributed to the candidates following the curricular interventions for the purpose of triangulating data regarding the impact of the talent identification or talent development

curricula on candidate self-knowledge and teaching. The question asked of the talent identification groups was; What impact has the identification of your signature talent themes had on your reflection of yourself, your self-knowledge, and your teaching? The questions asked of the talent development groups were; What impact has the identification of your signature talent themes had on your reflection of yourself, your self-knowledge, and your teaching? What changes will you make to begin to develop your talents into strengths? What impact will this knowledge have on your teaching and interactions with your students and colleagues? The additional information for the talent development into strengths group indicated the additional training and reflection required in the curriculum for talent development into strengths rather than simple talent identification.

Major themes discovered in the talent identification group were (1) increased confidence in one's self and teaching abilities; (2) Increased self-awareness of one's own talents, the talents in one's students, and talents in colleagues. The increased awareness of one's own talents included recognition and confirmation about why one acts/feels/or makes the decisions that are made, enlightenment regarding the type of teacher one can become, and a better understanding of how one interacts with students and colleagues. Becoming more aware of the talent in one's students helps in planning and differentiating lessons for increased student learning. Becoming aware of the talents of one's colleagues, can lead to better teamwork and communication.

Theme (3) was talent identification gives a name or identification to what one

does instinctively (this theme was higher in the graduate group). Theme (4) was it created a more positive outlook on life. By identifying talents, one does not have to fix weaknesses, but rather focus on developing strengths and obtain help from others to manage weaknesses. “I can now identify my personality traits as strengths instead of things I need to change.”

The themes in the talent development groups were similar to the talent identification group but ranked in a different order. First was increased self-awareness of talents in self, students, and colleagues. One student said “Knowing myself will help me better teach my students.” Second was the knowledge created a more positive outlook on life. Third was increased confidence and comfort with self and with teaching. Fourth, was that talent development into strengths gave a name or identification to what one instinctively knows about oneself and again, this theme was more predominant with the group of graduate candidates.

University supervisor

To investigate if the supervisor pre and post-assessment scores differed by intervention, paired-samples t-tests were calculated. A significant increase from pre-assessment to post-assessment in the control case study intervention was found ($t(25) = -6.99, p(2\text{-tailed}) = 0.00$). For the control case study intervention group, the

mean for the pre-assessment was 3.18 (sd = 0.42), and the mean for the post-assessment was 3.72 (sd = 0.25). There was no significant correlation between the supervisors’ pre and post-assessment scores within the case study intervention group.

A significant increase from pre-assessment to post-assessment within the talent identification intervention was found ($t(17) = -6.56, p(2\text{-tailed}) = 0.00$). For the talent identification intervention group, the mean for the pre-assessment was 2.97 (sd = 0.43), and the mean for the post-assessment was 3.75 (sd = 0.19). There was no significant correlation between the supervisors’ pre and post-assessment scores within the talent identification group. A significant increase from pre-assessment to post-assessment within the strengths development intervention was found ($t(25) = -5.53, p(2\text{-tailed}) = 0.00$). For the strengths development intervention group, the mean for the pre-assessment was 3.23 (sd = 0.44), and the mean for the post-assessment was 3.65 (sd = 0.41). There was a significant correlation ($r = 0.60, p = 0.001$) between the supervisors’ pre and post-assessment scores within the strengths development group. Table 2 summarizes the comparison of the university supervisor pre and post-assessment means.

Table 2

t-test Results for University Supervisor Pre and Post Assessment

Intervention	Assessment Condition		<i>t</i>	df
	PreUS	PostUS		
Control – Case Study	3.18 (.42)	3.72 (.25)	-6.99*	25
Talent Identification	2.97 (.43)	3.75 (.19)	-6.56*	17
Talent Development	3.23 (.44)	3.65 (.41)	-5.53*	25

Note. * $p < .05$. Standard Deviations appear in parentheses below means.

Comparisons Among the Interventions Talent identification and control.

A one-way between subjects ANCOVA was calculated to examine the effect of talent intervention on candidate post-assessment dispositions scores, covarying out the effect of the pre-assessment scores. The pre-assessment

scores were significantly related to the post-assessment scores ($F(1, 80) = 9.18, p = .00$). The main effect for the intervention was not significant ($F(2, 80) = .18, p = .83$), with the post-assessment scores of the talent identification intervention group not being significantly different ($m = 3.63, sd = .28$) than the post-assessment scores of the control case study group ($m = 3.52, sd = .34$), even after covarying out the effect of the pre-assessment scores.

Talent development and control.

A one-way between subjects ANCOVA was calculated to examine the effect of the talent development intervention on candidate post-assessment dispositions scores, covarying out the effect of the pre-assessment scores. The main effect for the intervention was not significant ($F(2, 80) = .18, p = .83$), with the post-assessment scores of the talent development intervention group not being significantly different ($m = 3.57, sd = .32$) than the post-assessment scores of the control case study group ($m = 3.52, sd = .34$), even after covarying out the effect of the pre-assessment scores.

Talent development and talent identification. The main effect for the intervention was not significant ($F(2, 80) = .18, p = .83$), with the post-assessment scores of the talent development intervention group not being significantly different ($m = 3.57, sd = .32$) than the post-assessment scores of the talent identification group ($m = 3.62, sd = .28$), even after covarying out the effect of the pre-assessment scores. Table 3 summarizes the results of the ANCOVA for teacher candidate self-assessments.

Table 3

<i>Analysis of Covariance Summary-Self Assessment</i>					
Source	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	η^2
Corrected Model	1.07 ^a	5	.21	2.34	.13
Intercept	6.51	1	6.51	71.39*	.47
Pre-assessment	.84	1	.84	9.18*	.10
Intervention	.03	2	.02	.18	.01
Error	7.30	80	.09		

Note. * $p < 0.05$, a. $R^2 = .13$ (Adjusted $R^2 = .07$)


University supervisor assessment of candidates.

A one-way between subjects ANCOVA was calculated to examine the effect of the intervention on candidate post-assessment dispositions scores, assessed by the university supervisors, covarying out the effect of the pre-assessment scores. The curricular intervention was significantly related to the supervisor post-assessment scores ($F(2, 64) = 6.56, p = .00$). Gabriel's posthoc test was used to determine the nature of the differences between the interventions. Gabriel's was used because the sample sizes were slightly different (Field, 2005). This analysis revealed that supervisors who had students in the talent development intervention scored them lower ($m = 0.41, sd = .38, p = .02$) than students who had the talent identification intervention ($m = .78, sd = .51$). Students who received the case study control intervention were not scored significantly differently ($m = .55, sd = .40$) from either of the other two groups. Table 4 summarizes the results of the ANCOVA for the university supervisor scores.

Table 4

<i>Analysis of Covariance Summary-University Supervisor Assessment</i>					
Source	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	η^2
Corrected Model	1.88*	5	.38	5.24*	.29
Intercept	10.77	1	10.77	149.91*	.70
Pre-assessment	.63	1	.63	8.80*	.12
Intervention	.94	2	.47	6.56*	.17
Error	4.60	64	.07		

Note. * $p < 0.05$, a. $R^2 = .29$ (Adjusted $R^2 = .24$)



Discussion of Findings

A strong teacher education program is one that assists its teacher candidates to identify, develop, and examine the values, attitudes, and beliefs they bring with them into the program and help them further develop those qualities within the context of increased knowledge and pedagogy exercised within the teaching environment (Breese & Nawrocki-Chabin, 2007; Diez & Murrell, 2010; Hare, 2007; Notar et al., 2009). The current literature is sparse regarding the conscious development of positive dispositions in teacher education programs. If a disposition is an inherent character trait, then the question of how a teacher education program can best help its candidates develop or practice knowledge, skills, attitudes, or the motivation to use or exercise that disposition for the purpose of having a positive impact on student learning arises (Arnstine, 1967). This study focused on a specific curricular intervention, taking place during the student teaching semester, with the intent that it would allow teacher candidates the opportunity to increase their self-knowledge and through reflection, discussion, and practice in the classroom, for the purpose of developing their dispositions to positively influence student learning.

Strengths-based curricula was chosen as the intervention for this study because previous research has demonstrated

that the philosophy and daily practice of the strengths-based philosophy assists students in learning more about themselves and using the knowledge of what they do well to shape their sense of identity (Anderson, 2005; Lopez & Louis, 2009; Shushok & Hulme, 2006). Research has also demonstrated that when teachers use a strengths-based philosophy in their classrooms, the result was higher GPA scores, less tardiness, and lower absenteeism (Clifton & Harter, 2003). The use of strengths-based education in the classroom, first involves the teacher becoming familiar with his or her own talents and developing and applying strengths as he or she works to improve teaching (Anderson, 2004). While great teachers use their talents instinctively, it takes hard work and practice to combine accumulated knowledge and skill with those talents that they become strengths (Liesveld & Miller, 2005). These strengths, once applied contextually in the classroom, help students understand their own talents and may increase learning and engagement (Clifton & Harter, 2003).

The strengths-based education philosophy and practice has been used in higher education for over a decade (Cantwell, 2006; He, 2009; Louis, 2008; Mostek, 2010; Shushok & Hulme, 2006) and recent research has shown increases in student feelings of academic control, academic engagement, hope, and implicit self-theory when a strengths-based curriculum was used (Cantwell, 2006; Louis, 2008). Most strengths-based approaches in education appear to be a superficial introduction to the philosophy and identification of one's signature talents (Louis, 2008). Louis' research (2008) was the first to demonstrate a significant difference between using a talent identification only approach versus one that consciously teaches and models the process of talent development into strengths on first-year college students' perceptions of themselves and their abilities to succeed in the academic environment.

The current literature is sparse

regarding the use of strengths-based education in teacher education programs (Grossman & McDonald, 2008) even though according to Liesveld & Miller (2005) the first step on the journey to becoming a great teacher is becoming aware of one's talents and continuing on to learning to own and apply them contextually, in various classroom situations. The literature is seemingly silent when looking at the application of strength-based education to the development of teacher dispositions. The hope is that by introducing strengths-based education into teacher education programs, educators will assist teacher candidates to become more self-aware, to develop their personal identities, and to understand their talents within the changing context of the classroom (Schussler, 2006; Schussler et al., 2008).

The results of the data analysis were initially disappointing. The ANCOVA tested each of the interventions against the post-assessment scores and the results failed to show any significant difference between post-assessment scores and the specific type of intervention: control (case study), talent identification, or talent development interventions; controlling for the pre-assessments scores. The researcher further tested these results by calculating paired-sample t-tests that compared the pre and post-assessments with each intervention.

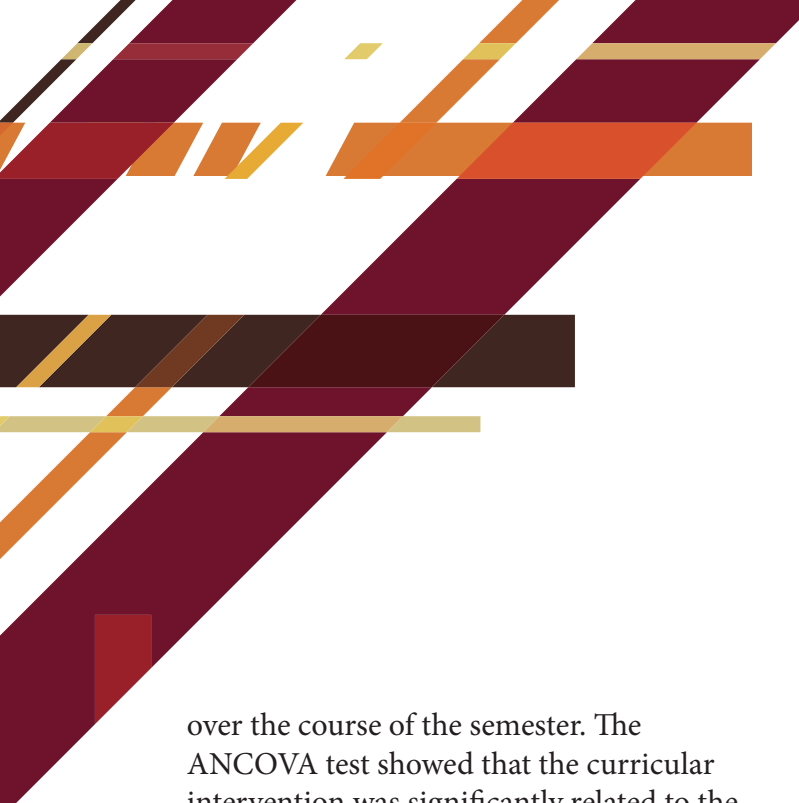
The t-test results showed a significant increase from pre and post-assessment for each intervention, including the control. Although there was no significant difference between pre and post-assessments scores based on the intervention, examination of the means showed that self-assessed teacher candidate post-assessment scores did increase across all interventions. The results indicated that the

dispositions of teacher candidates did increase during student teaching, but they were not significant increases or dependent on the type of intervention.

Qualitative data indicated that candidates experienced an increase in confidence as well as an increase in awareness for themselves, their students, and their colleagues regarding signature talent themes. Most felt a sense of relief that they could identify their instinctive ways of teaching and interacting with others. They also felt relief that they did not have to do all things well or to fix all of their weaknesses. Rather, they should focus on their talent themes and learn to manage their weaker areas by working cooperatively with others.

Data was also collected from the cooperating teachers and the university supervisors to determine if their observations of the candidates were similar to the candidates' self-assessed scores. When comparing the means between the pre and post-assessments completed by the participating cooperating teachers, no significant difference or correlation was found between pre and post-assessments among all three interventions. Because of the small sample size and other possible confounding variables, no conclusions can be made regarding the cooperating teacher assessments.

Analyses of the university supervisor data also indicated inconclusive results. When the means of the pre and post-assessments were compared using the paired samples t-tests, there was a significant increase among supervisor pre and post-assessment results across all three interventions. This indicated they did see dispositional growth in their candidates



over the course of the semester. The ANCOVA test showed that the curricular intervention was significantly related to the post-assessment scores, but closer investigation revealed the talent identification group indicated a significant difference in post-assessment scores when the pre-assessments were the covariate. In fact, university supervisors rated the talent identification group with the greatest growth when previous research found the talent development group indicated the highest levels of growth (Louis, 2008).

The researcher concluded that some factor was assisting teacher candidates in the development of their dispositions during the student teaching semester, however, the increase was not significantly related to the specific intervention used in this study. It is possible that any type of intervention that causes a candidate to self-reflect, dialog, and to integrate previous knowledge and skills into instructional practices may influence dispositional development. Both the case study curriculum used in the control group and the two talent/strengths interventions integrated self-reflection and discussion about possible ways to use knowledge in specific classroom situations. This might suggest that student teaching seminar should include purposeful discussions involving self-reflection and integration of knowledge in the classroom.

Suggestions for Further Research

There are many questions yet to answer regarding the development of a candidate's dispositions during his or her teacher education program. Further research is needed to explore the variables impacting the development of the dispositions of an effective teacher. An additional analysis of a 3 (interventions) x 2 (program type) between-subjects factorial ANOVA calculated with post-assessment scores showed interaction between the two independent variables ($F(2,80) = 4.08, p = .02$). Using the means, there was a significant interaction between the type of program group and intervention with greater pre-post-assessment change for graduate candidates than for undergraduate candidates.

Specifically, further investigation into the age, life experience, and previous teaching experiences is warranted to determine any possible impact on candidate dispositional development. Furthermore, additional research into the impact of various curricular interventions, including strengths-based strategies is suggested to determine the overall impact as well as specific components of these curricula that may impact dispositional growth. Much of the existing research focuses on the overall impact of strengths-based interventions, specifically talent identification, but further research could guide faculty, curriculum developers, and school leaders to determine the optimal content and focus of any intervention.

Continued investigation is needed into a possible relationship between one's dispositions and one's innate talents and developed strengths to better inform both curriculum development and the assessment of dispositions. Researchers could also explore whether a different result may have occurred with a semester-long integration of the strengths-based curricula within the student teaching seminar rather than only four individual sessions facilitated by separate

faculty members. Additionally, investigation into whether the Clifton StrengthFinder® assessment is a necessary component of the strengths development curriculum or whether candidates might intuitively understand their areas of talent and with coaching, develop those areas into strengths.

Additionally, qualitative studies using focus groups, questionnaires, and interviews might also increase the body of knowledge relating the effect of a strengths-based curriculum on dispositional development. School leaders might gain insights by exploring when during a teacher candidate's curriculum, dispositional development might be the most receptive or exposure to strengths development might be the most effective; during the first semester, the final student teaching semester, or somewhere in-between.

Conclusions

Because professional dispositions are as important as content knowledge and pedagogical skill in an effective teacher, teacher education programs must not only assess dispositions but also consciously nurture and systematically develop dispositions in all teacher candidates (Breese & Nawrocki-Chabin, 2007; Diez & Murrell, 2010; Jung & Rhodes, 2008; Schussler et al., 2008; Young & Wilkins, 2008). Although the results of the data analysis indicated no significant difference in post-assessment scores among the control and two talent/strengths interventions, there was a significant increase between pre and post-assessment results for all three groups during student teaching. These results indicate the need for further research to explore the effects of strengths-based education as well as other variables on the

development of teacher candidate dispositions throughout the teacher education program, not just during the student teaching semester.

References

- Anderson, E. C. (2004). What is strengths-based education? A tentative answer by someone who strives to be a strengths-based educator. Unpublished manuscript.
- Anderson, E. (2005). Strengths-based educating: A concrete way to bring out the best in students--and yourself. The confessions of an educator who got it right--finally! The quest for strengths. *Educational Horizons*, 83, 180-189.
- Arnstine, D. (1967). *Philosophy of education: Learning and schooling*. New York, NY: Harper & Row.
- Asplund, J., Lopez, S., Hodges, T., & Harter, J. (2007). The Clifton StrengthsFinder® 2.0 technical report: Development and validation. The Gallup Organization. Retrieved from <http://strengths.gallup.com/private/Resources/CSFTechnicalReport031005.pdf>
- Bandura, A. (1977). Self efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioral change. *Psychological Review*, 84, 191-215.
- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy, the exercise of control*. New York, NY: W. H. Freeman.
- Baumgardner, A. H. (1990). To know oneself is to like oneself: Self-certainty and self-affect. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 58, 1062-1072.
- Beauchamp, C., & Thomas, L. (2009). Understanding teacher identity: An overview of issues in the literature and implications for teacher education. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 39, 175-189.
- Berry, B., & O'Neil, M. (2007). Teacher preparation-beyond the textbook. Presented at the National Center for Education Innovation Conference, New Orleans, LA. Retrieved from www.teachnow.org/Beyond.doc
- Binet, A., & Simon, T. (1916). *The development of intelligence of children* (Kite, E. S., Trans.). Baltimore, MD: Williams & Wilkins.
- Black, T. R. (2005). *Doing quantitative research in the social sciences*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Breese, L., & Nawrocki-Chabin, R. (2007). The social cognitive perspective in dispositional development. In M. Diez & J. Raths (Eds.), *Dispositions in teacher education* (pp. 31-52). Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.
- Brown, J. R., Brown, L. J., & Brown, C. L. (2008). "Signs, signs, everywhere there's signs . . . and the sign says": You got to have a PRAXIS II membership card to get inside. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 35(1), 29-42.
- Buckingham, M. (2007). *Go put your strengths to work*. New York,

NY: The Free Press.

Buckingham, M., & Clifton, D. O. (2001). *Now, discover your strengths*. New York, NY: The Free Press.

Campbell, D. T., & Stanley, J. C. (1966). *Experimental and quasi-experimental designs for research*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.

Cantwell, L. (2006). Creating the teaching-learning environment you've always dreamed of. *Educational Horizons*, 84, 161-169.

Caprara, G. B., & Cervone, D. A. (2003). A conception of personality for a psychology of human strengths: Personality as an agentic, self-regulating system. In L. G. Aspinwall & U. M. Staudinger (Eds.), *A psychology of human strengths* (pp. 61-74). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Clifton, D. O., & Anderson, E. C. (2004). *Developing leadership strengths in college*. The Gallup Organization. Unpublished manuscript.

Clifton, D. O., & Harter, J. K. (2003). Investing in strengths. In K. S. Cameron, J. E. Dutton, & R. E. Quinn (Eds.), *Positive organizational scholarship* (pp. 111-121). San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler.

Clifton, D. O., & Nelson, P. (1992). *Soar with your strengths*. New York, NY: Delacorte Press.

Clifton Strengths School. (n.d.). A new kind of graduate education emphasis. Omaha, NE. Retrieved from <http://strengths.org/emphasis.shtml>

Cochran-Smith, M. (2008). The new teacher education in the United States: Directions forward. *Teachers and Teaching*, 14, 271-282. doi:10.1080/13540600802037678

Combs, A. W., Blume, R. A., Newman, A. J., & Wass, H. L. (1974). *The professional education of teachers: A humanistic approach to teacher preparation* (2nd ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Educational research* (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). *Flow*. New York, NY: HarperCollins. Dewey, J. (1916/1938). *Democracy and education*. New York, NY: The Free Press.

Diez, M. E. (2007a). Assessing dispositions: Context and questions. In M. E. Diez & J. Raths (Eds.), *Dispositions in teacher education* (pp. 183-201). Charlotte, NC: Information Age.

Diez, M. E. (2007b). Looking back and moving forward: Three tensions in the teacher dispositions discourse. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 58, 388-396. doi:10.1177/0022487107308418

Diez, M. E. (2007c). The role of coaching in working with dispositions. In M. E. Diez & J. Raths (Eds.), *Dispositions in teacher education* (pp. 203-218). Charlotte, NC: Information Age.

Diez, M. E., & Murrell, P. C. (2010). Dispositions in teacher education—starting points for consideration. In P. E. Murrell, M. E. Diez, S. Feiman-Nemser, & D. L. Schussler (Eds.), *Teaching as a moral practice: Defining, developing, and assessing professional dispositions in teacher education* (pp. 1-26). Cambridge, MA: Harvard Business Press.

Donato, R. (2009). Teacher education in the age of standards of professional practice. *The Modern Language Journal*, 93, 267-270. doi:10.1111/j.1540-4781-2009

Dottin, E. S. (2009). Professional judgment and dispositions in teacher education. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 25(1), 83-88. doi:10.1016/j.tate.2008.06.005

Dweck, C. S. (2006). *Mindset*. New York, NY: Ballantine Books. Educate. (2011). In Merriam-Webster online dictionary. Retrieved from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/educate>

Edwards, S. (2007, February). Dispositions: Research, assessment, and defensibility. Presentation at the annual meeting of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, New York City, NY.

Edwards, S., & Edick, N. (2006). Dispositions matter: Findings for at-risk teacher candidates. *The Teacher Educator*, 42(1), 1-14.

Elliott, A. C., & Woodward, W. A. (2007). *Statistical analysis quick reference guidebook: Analysis of variance and covariance*. Retrieved from SAGE Research Methods Online. doi:10.4135/9781412985949 Field, A. (2005). *Discovering statistics using SPSS*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Foster, J., Barkus, E., & Yavorsky, C. (2006). Understanding and using advanced statistics: Basic features of statistical analysis and the general linear model. Retrieved from SAGE Research Methods Online. doi:10.4135/9780857020154

Freeman, L. (2007). Teacher dispositions in context. In M. E. Diez & J. Raths (Eds.), *Dispositions in teacher education* (pp. 117-138). Charlotte, NC: Information Age.

Gatbonton, E. (2008). Looking beyond teachers' classroom behavior: Novice and experienced ESL teachers' pedagogical knowledge. *Language Teaching Research*, 12, 161-182.

Grossman, P., & McDonald, M. (2008). Back to the future: Directions for research in teaching and teacher education. *American Educational Research Journal*, 45(1), 184-205. doi:10.3102/0002831207312906

Hamachek, D. (1999). Effective teachers: What they do, how they do it, and the importance of self-knowledge. In R. P. Lipka, & T. M. Brinthaup (Eds.), *The role of self in teacher development* (pp. 189-224). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Hare, S. Z. (2007). We teach who we are: The intersection of teacher formation and educator dispositions. In M. E. Diez & J. Raths (Eds.), *Dispositions in teacher education* (pp. 139-149). Charlotte, NC: Information Age.

He, Y. (2009). Strength-based mentoring in pre-assessment service teacher education: A literature review. *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning*, 17, 263-275. doi:10.1080/13611260903050205

- Hodges, T. D., & Clifton, D. O. (2004). Strengths-based development in practice. In A. Linley & S. Joseph (Eds.), *Handbook of positive psychology in practice*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons, Inc.
- James, W. (1890). *The principles of psychology* (Vol. I). New York, NY: Holt and Company.
- Jung, E. (2008, February 7). A dimensional analysis of teacher dispositions: A confirmatory factor analytic model for disposition assessment. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, New Orleans, LA.
- Jung, E., & Rhodes, D. M. (2008). Revisiting disposition assessment in teacher education: Broadening the focus. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 33, 647-660. doi:10.1080/02602930701773059
- Kaplan, D. (2004). *The SAGE handbook of quantitative methodology for the social sciences: Experimental, quasi-experimental, and nonexperimental design and analysis with latent variables*. Retrieved from SAGE Research Methods Online. doi: 10.4135/9781412986311
- Katz, L. G., & Raths, J. D. (1985). Dispositions as goals for teacher education. *Teaching and Teacher Education* 1, 301-307.
- Kelchtermans, G. (2009). Who I am in how I teach is the message: Self-understanding, vulnerability and reflection. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*, 15, 257-272. doi:10.1080/13540600902875332
- Lee, Y. A., & Herner-Patnode, L. (2010). Developing teacher candidates' knowledge, skills, and dispositions to teach diverse students. *Journal of Instructional Psychology*, 37, 222-235.
- Liesveld, R., & Miller, J. (2005). *Teach with your strengths: How great teachers inspire their students*. New York, NY: Gallup Press.
- Lopez, S. J. (2006). *Positive psychology and higher education*. StrengthsQuest. Princeton, NJ: The Gallup Organization. Retrieved from <https://www.strengthsquest.com/content/25195/Resources-Newsletters.aspx>
- Lopez, S. J. (2011). *Strengths-based education and student engagement*. Gallup Inc. Retrieved from http://www.gallup.com/consulting/education/File/145691/Strengths-Based_Education_and_Student_Engagement.pdf
- Lopez, S. J., & Louis, M. O. (2009). The principles of strengths-based education. *Journal of College & Character*, X(4). Retrieved from <http://journals.naspa.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1041&context=jcc>
- Louis, M. C. (2008). A comparative analysis of the effectiveness of strengths-based curricula in promoting first-year college student success. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 69 (06), 335A. (UMI No. 3321378)
- Maslow, A. H. (1968). *Toward a psychology of being* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Van Nostrand Reinhold.
- McTighe, J., & O'Connor, K. (2005). Seven practices for effective learning. *Educational Leadership*, 63(3), 10-17.
- Mertler, C. A., & Vannatta, R. A. (2010). *Advanced and multivariate statistical methods*, (4th ed.). Glendale, CA: Pyrczak Publishing.
- Mostek, J. A. (2010). Understanding the influence of strengths on the college experience: A qualitative case study of undergraduate business students. Master of Arts thesis, University of Nebraska, United States -- Nebraska. Retrieved from Dissertations & Theses: Full Text.
- Murrell, P. C., Jr., Diez, M. E., Feiman-Nemser, S., & Schussler, D. L. (Eds.). (2010). *Teaching as a moral practice: Defining, developing, and assessing professional dispositions in teacher education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.
- Neuman, W. L. (2006). *Social research methods* (6th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
- Notar, C. E., Riley, G. W., Taylor, P. W., Thornburg, R. A., & Cargill, R. L. (2009). Dispositions: Ability and assessment. *International Journal of Education*, 1(1), 1-14. Retrieved from www.macrothink.org/ije
- Osborne, J. (2008). Best practices in quantitative methods: Testing the assumptions of analysis of variance. Retrieved from SAGE Research Methods Online. doi:10.4135/9781412995627
- Palmer, P. (1998). *The courage to teach*. New York, NY: Jossey-Bass.
- Peterson, C., & Seligman, M. E. P. (2004). *Character strengths and virtues*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Poulou, M. (2007). Personal teaching efficacy and its sources: Student teachers' perceptions. *Educational Psychology*, 27, 191-218. doi:10.1080/01443410601066693
- Puri, D. (2009). The formation and development of moral literacy as a component of pre-assessment service teacher identity. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 70 (11), 144A. (UMI No. 3380985)
- Raths, J. (2007). Experiences with dispositions in teacher education. In M. E. Diez & J. Raths (Eds.), *Dispositions in teacher education* (pp. 153-163). Charlotte, NC: Information Age.
- Rogers, C. R. (1963). The concept of the fully functioning person. *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, and Practice*, 1(1), 17-26.
- Salkind, N. J. (2009). *Exploring research* (7th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
- Schussler, D. L. (2006). Defining dispositions: Wading through murky waters. *The Teacher Educator*, 41, 251-268. Retrieved from http://www.proquest.com/en-US/catalogs/databases/detail/pq_ed_journals.shtml
- Schussler, D. L., Bercau, L. A., & Stooksberry, L. M. (2008). The fabric of teacher candidate dispositions: What case studies reveal about teacher thinking. *Action in Teacher Education*, 29(4), 39-52.
- Seligman, M. E. P. (2006). *Learned optimism* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Random House.

teacher evaluation instruments: Commonalities across institutions.
The Teacher Educator, 43, 198-215. doi:10.1080/08878730802055115

Authors:

Sharon K. Metcalfe is currently the Associate Dean for Education Programs at Mount Vernon Nazarene University overseeing both the undergraduate and graduate education programs.

Arfe Ozcan, Ph. D. is a full-time research faculty member at the University of Phoenix.

Seligman, M. E. P., & Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2000). Positive psychology: An introduction. *American Psychologist*, 55(1), 5-14. doi:10.1037/0003-066X.55.1.5

Serdyukov, P., & Ferguson, M. (2011). Teacher disposition: What kind of candidates do we have in a teacher preparation program and how can we make them better?. *Journal of Research in Innovative Teaching*, 4(1), 106-119.

Shushok, J., & Hulme, E. (2006). What's right with you: Helping students find and use their personal strengths. *About Campus*, 11(4), 2-8. Retrieved from <http://web.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.apollolibrary.com/>

Singh, D. K., & Stoloff, D. L. (2008). Assessment of teacher dispositions. *College Student Journal*, 42, 1169-1180.

Sockett, H. (2006). *Teacher dispositions: Building a teacher education framework of moral standards*. New York, NY: American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education.

Sockett, H. (2009). Dispositions as virtues. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 60, 291-303. doi:10.1177/0022487109335189

Stooksberry, L. M. (2007). Dispositions as a dialogue in teacher preparation. In M. E. Diez & J. Raths (Eds.), *Dispositions in teacher education* (pp. 219-232). Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.

Tabachnick, B. G., & Fidell, L. S. (2007). *Using multivariate statistics* (5th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.

Taylor, R. L., & Wascisko, M. M. (2000, November 4). The dispositions to teach. Retrieved from <http://coehs.nku.edu/educatordispositions/resources.php>

Title II Higher Education Act. (2010). Title II – State Report 2010 Ohio – Introduction. Retrieved from <https://title2.ed.gov/Title2STRC/Pages/Introduction.aspx>


Wascisko, M. M. (2007). The perceptual approach to teacher dispositions. In M. E. Diez & J. Raths (Eds.), *Dispositions in teacher education* (pp. 53-89). Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.

Winseman, A. L., Clifton, D. O., & Liesveld, C. (2004). *Living your strengths*. New York, NY: Gallup Press.

Young, A., & Wilkins, E. (2008). *Dispositional statements on student*

Watch for the Spring 2015 edition of The OHIO Journal of Teacher Education (OJTE) coming April 1, 2015 to the website.

Submissions for Fall 2015 of The OHIO Journal of Teacher Education will be accepted until July 1, 2015. Present your own research and tell your colleagues about the unique opportunity to publish for OJTE.



Preparing Culturally Responsive Educators: Using the Cultural Plunge to Strengthen Pre-service Teachers' Cultural Awareness and Understanding

*Winston Vaughan, Ph. D.
Xavier University, Cincinnati, Ohio*

Abstract

This article examines the positive impact of a cultural plunge experience on a group of pre-service teachers enrolled in a cultural diversity course at a Midwestern University. Data analysis from their paper reflections, responses to reflective questions, and oral responses indicated that this experience helped them to become more culturally aware and to seriously reflect on their prejudices, misconceptions and stereotypes about minority groups in our society and their future classrooms. Through personal convictions they acknowledged that positive changes toward cultural diversity had to be made if they were going to be culturally responsive as teachers in the classrooms.

Cultural Plunge

The demographics of the children in our schools have changed dramatically over the years. Banks (2001) suggests that one-third of our nation's schools are students of color. Further projections show that by the year 2020 about 48-50 percent of the student population will be students of color (Banks 2006; Nieto & Bodie, 2008). Likewise, the rise of English language learners in our schools

has also been challenging for educators. There is also a great disparity between the diverse student population and white teachers. According to (Banks, 2001; Glazer, 2003; Grant & Secada, 1990; Ladson-Billings, 2000; Sleeter, 1995) the majority of pre-service teachers continue to be white, monolingual middle class females.

Research suggests that with the changing demographics in our schools, teacher education programs must prepare teachers with the knowledge, skills and dispositions that will enable them to be more culturally responsive in the classroom, enabling them to meet the challenges of a changing school population (Banks, 2001; Delpit, 1995; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Nieto, 2012).

According to (Brown, 2004; Vavrus, 2002) teacher education programs in response to these suggestions have implemented stand-alone courses in multicultural education in order to help prepare pre-service teachers to be culturally responsive in diverse classrooms. This is supported by other researchers (Banks, 2006; Farley, 2000; Ukpokodu, 2003) who have suggested that knowledge of multicultural

education can be very important in helping pre-service teachers to be culturally responsive in culturally diverse classrooms. (Brown, 2004; Sleeter, 2001) posits that many pre-service teachers' cross-cultural competence and attitudes regarding diversity and teaching a culturally diverse population are very limited. Therefore, (Suleiman, 1996; Ukpokodu, 2003; Vaughan, 2002) call for diversity training within education programs consisting of instructional programs and field experiences designed to enhance pre-service teachers' opinions and understanding of the changing demographics within our society. Likewise (Grant & Secada, 1990; Tellez, Hlebowitsh, Cohen & Norwood, 1995) support the need for field experiences in teacher education programs when preparing pre-service teachers to work with diverse learners. Others, (Olmedo, 1997; Wiggins & Follo, 1999) have recommended a combination of strategies that includes both course work and immersion field experiences with opportunities for guided reflections. However, Whitfield & Klug (2004) cautioned that pre-service teachers need to have a clear understand that attitudinal changes must accompany the immersion experiences if success is to be obtained.

Research (Nieto, 2006) suggest that the cultural plunge, although short in duration can help pre-service teachers gain a better understanding of the cultures in our society and strengthen their cultural awareness.

In this paper, I examine how a short cultural diversity plunge experience designed to strengthen pre-service teachers' cultural sensitivity and awareness strongly impacted them in a positive manner. The cultural diversity plunge is an assignment given to pre-service teachers enrolled in a teacher

education program during their sophomore or junior year. The purpose of the assignment is to give students an opportunity to explore other cultures, to experience what it would be like to be a minority in another cultural setting, and try to make connections to what it would be like to be a minority student in the classroom.

This experience takes place after they have done self-reflective exercises on their racial and cultural identities, followed by readings and discussions on the works of Sonia Nieto and James Banks and their perceptions of the importance of cross-cultural communications, culture and society, and cultural identity and learning.

During the initial phases, students brainstorm ideas about what would be appropriate experiences and how best to plan and approach them with special emphasis placed on stereotypes and misconceptions they might have of possible cultural groups. Students are required to "plunge" into an unfamiliar culture for a minimum of 1 hour to gain a better understanding of the cultural differences that may exist within our community; to experience what it would be like to be a minority; have direct contact with individuals who are culturally different from themselves; and gain insight into their knowledge, values, and dispositions pertaining to the focal group. The expectation is not only to show up and observe, but also be an active participant in the experience. The relationships must be equally balanced without any power relations. Students are not allowed to take anyone with them, and must be in a situation where they feel extremely uncomfortable.



Course Description

This course, “Cultural Diversity in Educational Settings” is a stand-alone course which was implemented as a diversity requirement in the education program at a Midwestern University. All students majoring in Early Childhood Education, Special Education, Middle Childhood Education and Montessori Education are required to take this course during their sophomore or junior year. In this course students explore areas pertaining to race, class, ethnicity, gender, disabilities, sexual orientation, religion, stereotyping racism and discrimination and the impact on schools. They also engage in activities and field experiences to gain a greater understanding of the various marginalized cultures within in our society.

Cultural Diversity Plunge

The cultural plunge, modeled after the work of Nieto (2006) forces students to become immersed into cultural settings which may be somewhat uncomfortable for them. Students are required to participate in a historically marginalized unfamiliar culture for a minimum of 1 hour to gain a better understanding of the cultural differences that may exist within our community; to experience what it would be like to be different from most of the people around

them; have direct contact with individuals who are culturally different from themselves; and gain insight into their knowledge, values, and dispositions pertaining to the focal group. After the experience students try to make sense of it by making connections to the experiences of minorities in our schools today. The situation selected must meet the following criteria. The group must be a historically marginalized people; the majority of people must be from the focal group; experience must be one that they have never experienced before and must last for at least 1 hour; no notes must be taken; plunge must take place after the course begins (credit will not be given for past experiences), and in reflecting, connections must be made to the teaching/learning education. Some groups that students focused on were African American culture, Hispanic culture, Gay /Lesbian culture, Jewish, and Muslim culture.

After completing the experience students are required to write a three-page paper reflecting on their experiences. The first page consists of listing five stereotypes, misconceptions and biases they might have, or have heard about the group and what prior contacts/experiences they have had with the group. The second page describes their reactions as well as the reactions of the group to the experience and reasons why they reacted that way. The third page discusses whether the plunge reinforced or challenged the popular stereotypes of the group. The paper concludes with how their experience may impact them in the teaching/learning practice especially when dealing with minorities in their classrooms.

Another aspect of the reflection process at the conclusion of the plunge calls for pre-service teachers to respond to the following questions:

1. What impact did the plunge have on your perceptions of (group that you did your plunge)?

2. What did you learn about yourself?
3. Did you feel intimidated by the plunge?
Explain
5. Do you feel that the plunge was a worthwhile experience?

Data Analysis

Data were collected from students' paper reflections, responses to the reflective questions, and oral presentations on experiences. Data were analysed to look for reoccurring themes. As themes emerged, common themes were grouped into categories which would be specific to students' responses. Students' comments, conversations, and reflections suggested that students learned a great deal from the plunge experience, especially in the areas of learning more about diversity, understanding and respecting diversity, and the significance of understanding the various cultures students may bring to school when engaging in curricular practices. The following categories reflect the various themes that emerged:

1. Personal Conviction
2. Cultural Knowledge and Understanding
3. Worthwhile Experience/Intimidation /Uncomfortable
4. Limited Exposure to Diversity/ More Education on Diversity Issues
5. Understanding the Plight of LEP Students in Classrooms
6. Rethinking Prejudice/Misconceptions When Working With Minority Students


Cultural knowledge and understanding

At the beginning of this experience, students always seemed scared and reluctant to move out of their comfort zone in order to explore the beyond. In most cases, faces and

looks gave the impression that this was not something they had expected as an education major. Students tend not have an understanding of diversity and the connections to education. They were constant references to what does this have to do with them being a teacher. However, after completing the experience most of them seemed quite pleased and had interesting and revealing stories to report. They all reported that they had gained some knowledge and had a better understanding of the various groups they had "plunged" into. The fact that students had limited exposure to cultures that were different from their own indicated that this was a new beginning for most of them. One student who spent some time in an African American beauty salon reported that it was her first time being a minority, but she learned a great deal about African American hair. She was shocked to see the amount of time it took to complete a particular hair style. This was of importance to her because some of the students in her future classroom will be African Americans.

Personal conviction

Journal reflections and oral conversations indicated that this experience enhanced the students' ability to deconstruct and personalize situations and feelings for other individuals when being a minority. Students came away with a general understanding that they have experienced little or no diversity in their lives, how it feels when you are not a member of the dominant culture living in a society that is reluctant to embrace your culture, and the feelings of fear, uneasiness, and apprehension that can accompany this. One student stated that



she needs to step out of her comfort zone more often, and that one can learn a lot about oneself through the experiences of others. Another student because of her unwelcomed experience during the plunge stated that it's her personal responsibility to get to know her students individually, and she is indebted to make sure that all students regardless of race, class, gender, religion, sexual orientation or disability reach their full potential in her classroom. The previously mentioned comments suggest that these pre-service teachers began to personalize their experiences and made some positive gains in their understanding and awareness of cultural differences.

From this experienced it is evident that these white middle class female pre-service teachers all agreed that if they are going to maximize the potential of all student who they may encounter in the classroom, there is a need for exposure and understanding of the diversity that is around us, and also the cultural backgrounds of students who they may encounter in the classroom.

Worthwhile experience/intimidation /uncomfortable

Although most students felt that the plunge was intimidating and uncomfortable, forcing them out of their comfort zone, they all agreed that the plunge was a worthwhile

experience.

One student stated that the in initial stages she felt very intimidated and did not want to put herself through such an intimidating and awkward situation. Another student reported that she supported the project 100% and wanted to take this experience and use it in her life to become a better teacher. She also stated that through this experience, she wanted to be challenged through emerging herself into other cultures. Another student also stated that the plunge although intimidating, allowed her to get a sense of how marginalized students may feel in the classroom, and how experiencing other cultures, enables you to further develop who you are as a person, and how you accept others. This student reported that the plunge helped her a lot, and she was extremely glad she did it. It helped her to understand other groups of people better, and consequently relate to her students better.

Rethinking prejudice, stereotypes, and misconceptions and minority students

Most students agreed that this experience gave them some understanding of what it would be like to be a minority in our society. The experience helped them to change their held perceptions of the groups' stereotypes, biases and misconceptions. One student stated that the experience enriched her knowledge and thoughts about life, and sometimes there is a need to be shaken from our prejudices and misconceptions. Another student describing her understanding of the Gay/Lesbian culture stated that she learned never to judge a person by appearance, and that personalities and beliefs make them who they are. Yet another student stated that the experience helped her to better realize that stereotypes are unnecessary and should not be considered as facts.

Limited exposure to diversity / more education on diversity issues

Several students also agreed that

if they are going to be educators, with the changing demographics in schools, they need to be more educated about dealing with diversity in the classroom. They all agreed that this experience is a good start, but more needs to be done with pre-service teacher educators in experiencing diversity since most of them have limited exposure to diversity. One student commented that pre-service teachers need to be more educated about different cultures and not just the one you may be part of.

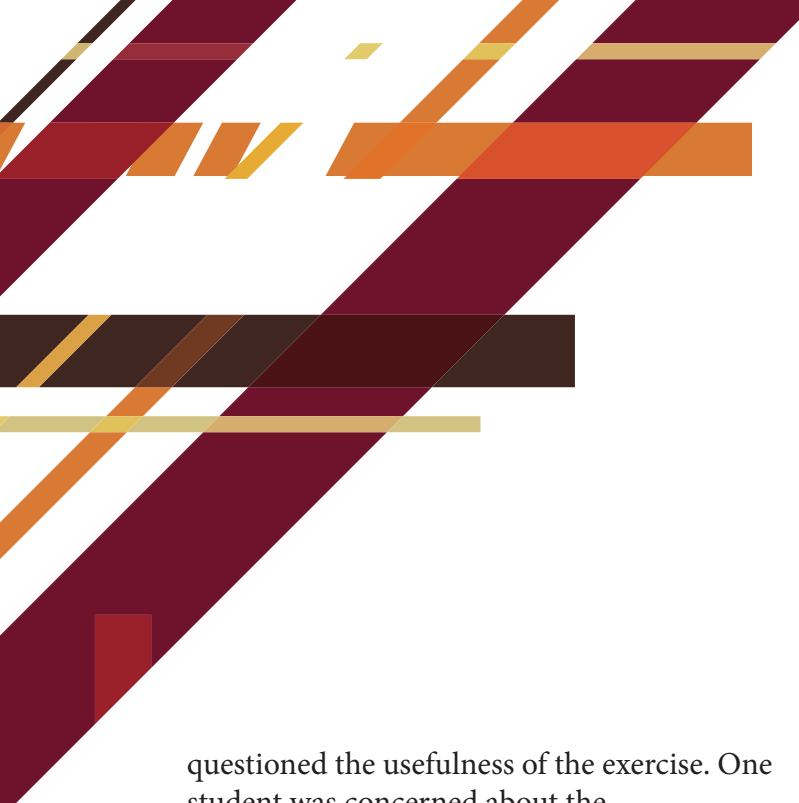
Understanding the plight of LEP students in classrooms

Students in making connections to the educational process made some good observations especially with students whose language is not Standard English. This was realized by students who attended Jewish synagogues or Hispanic church services where the experience was not in the English language. They encountered situations where they couldn't make connections to what was going on around them, because of the language barrier, resulting in frustration and a feeling of loneliness, and a desire to remove themselves from the situation. One student commented that she takes comfort in her language, but when placed in a situation where that is stripped away there is a feeling of being uncomfortable and insecure. She stated that because of the language barrier, she left the experience confused and unaware of what was going on. Another student stated that she was able to learn about a different minority culture and it helped her to understand how students may feel in the classroom. She also agreed that she cannot help her students achieve until she knows what it feels like to be in their position and the plunge gave her an opportunity to do that. This student, after her

experience with the Hispanic culture, stated that because of the experience she now had a better understanding of students whose language is not English. She suggested that she would incorporate their language in to selected activities to make them feel welcomed.

Conclusion

The purpose of the cultural plunge was to engage students in a variety of settings where they could experience being a minority. I strongly believe that one cannot understand what it means to be a minority in another culture, and understand the issues minorities face in schools and society until one has actually experienced it. In order to understand cultural diversity it is necessary to submerge oneself into situations where one is out of one's comfort zone and surrounded by individuals who may be different. Although the plunge can be a useful exercise to help pre-service teachers gain some insight into issues of diversity, one would not say that it is sufficient experience to make them culturally responsive educators in the classroom. However, from the responses of students it can be concluded that it was very beneficial to them in understanding what it means to be a minority in society and the classroom. One student mentioned that it was her first time being a minority in any aspect of society, but she had a great experience because she was able to ascertain some aspects of African American culture. Prior to the beginning of the assignment, students were very nervous, uneasy and felt very uncomfortable about the assignment. Students who could not see the connections between diversity issues and education



questioned the usefulness of the exercise. One student was concerned about the usefulness of it to her as an early childhood teacher. However, by the end of the exercise students unanimously endorsed the plunge as a starting community engaged experience for helping pre-service teachers to cross cultural boundaries and to make some sense of the cultural diversity that surrounds us making connections to the diverse student they may encounter in the classroom.

If teacher educators are going to be successful in preparing teachers to meet the needs of a changing school population, they must take a serious look at the changing demographics and the diversity that accompany these changes. Research (Banks, 2001; Grant & Secada, 1990; Glazer, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 2000; Zimpher, 1989; Nieto & Bode 2012) suggest that the minority population is increasing tremendously in our classrooms but the pre-service teachers remain as white middle class females with very little experience and understanding of diversity.

The plunge forced students to move out of their comfort zone, and immerse themselves into situations which were uncomfortable and unnerving, but yet rewarding. It also allowed them to dispel some of the misconceptions, stereotypes and fears they may have about minority and disenfranchised groups. However, an exercise

like this is only one minute aspect of what it takes for teachers to become a culturally responsive educator. Research by Sleeter, 1995, Ukpokodu (2003 and Vaughan (2002), suggest that this type of exercise along with more in-depth and extensive projects and experiences would be beneficial in helping pre-service teachers develop a new understanding and different perspectives toward cultural awareness. Likewise, (Weist, 1998) suggests that aligning this kind of experience with other courses in education programs might have a cumulative effect throughout the program. She further suggests that whatever the duration and frequency of the experience aimed at increasing students' cultural knowledge and sensitivity, experiences should include study of subject matter both from an intellectual and personal immersion with the whole of oneself. Sleeter (2001) also posits that when short community-based immersion experiences are studied, researchers generally report powerful impact on participants, and white teachers describe the experiences as important to them. Therefore, results from this exercise seem to be consistent with the current research on short immersion experiences.

The USA over the course of the years have become more culturally and ethnically diverse. According to various reports by the year 2050 the Hispanic population is going to be the majority. As we examine the pre-service population the majority still remains white females with little or no experience with diversity. According to (Nieto & Bodie, 2013) pre-service teachers must be taught to pay great attention to the struggles, hopes, and dreams of students from diverse backgrounds since teaching/learning cannot take place in settings where students' cultures are ignored and devalued. Pre-service teachers must have necessary knowledge, skills and dispositions to work with students from diverse backgrounds if they are going to be successful in the teaching/learning process. Since it is crucial that these teachers be prepared to

teach students from ethnic, racial or socioeconomic diverse backgrounds, exposing them to experiences such as the diversity plunge can be very useful in helping them to break down cultural barriers and be more culturally responsive. Since teaching students from culturally diverse backgrounds is going to be the norm for future educators, teacher preparation programs must embrace multicultural education and the concept of culturally responsive pedagogy as part of their program requirements.

References

- Banks, J.A. (2001). *Citizenship education and diversity*. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 52(1), 5-16.
- Banks, J.A. (2006). *Cultural Diversity and Education: Foundations, curriculum, and teaching* (5th ed). Boston: Pearson.
- Brown, E. L. (2004). *Overcoming the challenges of stand-alone multicultural courses: The possibility of technology integration*. *Journal of Technology and Teacher Education*, 12(4), 535-559.
- Brown, E. L. (2006). *Knowing, valuing, and shaping one's culture: A precursor to acknowledging, accepting, and respecting the cultures of others*. *Multicultural Education*, 14(1), 15-19.
- Delpit, L. (1995). *Other people's children: Cultural conflict in the classroom*. New York: The New Press.
- Farley, J. E. (2000). *Majority-minority relations* (4th ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Gay, G. (2000). *Culturally responsive teaching. Theory, research and practice*. New York and London: Teachers College Press.
- Glazier, J. (2003). *Moving closer to speaking the unspeakable: White teachers talking about race*. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 30 (1), 73-93.
- Grant, C.A., & Secada, W. G. (1990). *Preparing teachers for diversity*. In W. R. Houston (Eds.), *Handbook of research on teacher education* (pp.403-422). New York:Macmillan
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). *But that's just good teaching! The case for culturally relevant pedagogy*. *Theory into Practice*, 34(3), 159-165.
- Nieto, J. (2006). *The Cultural plunge: Cultural immersion as a means of promoting self-awareness and cultural sensitivity among student teachers*. *Teacher Education Quarterly* 33(1), 75-84.
- Nieto, S. (2004). *Affirming diversity: A sociopolitical context of multicultural education*. Boston: Pearson Education Inc.
- Nieto, S. & Bodie, P. (2008). *Affirming diversity: A socio-political context of multicultural Education* (5th ed.). Boston: Pearson Education Inc.
- Nieto, S. & Bodie, P. (2012). *Affirming diversity: A socio-political context of multicultural Education* (6th ed.). Boston: Pearson Education Inc.
- Olmedo, I. M. (1997). *Challenging old assumptions: preparing teachers for inner city schools*. *Teaching and teacher Education*, 13 (3), 245-58.
- Sleeter, C. E., (1995). *White pre-service students and multicultural education coursework*. In J. M. Larkin & C. E. Sleeter (Eds). *Developing multicultural education curricula* (pp. 81-94) Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Sleeter, C. E., (2001). *Preparing teachers for culturally diverse schools: Research and the overwhelming presence of whiteness*. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 52(2), 94-106.
- Suleiman, M. F. (1996). *Preparing teachers for the culturally diverse classrooms*. Paper presented at the Annual Effective Schools Conference, Topeka, KS. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. 396057).
- Telez, K., Hlebowitsh, P. S., Cohen, M. S., & Norwood, P. (1995). *Social service field experiences and teacher education*. In J. M. Larkin & C. E. Sleeter, (Eds.)
- Developing multicultural teacher education curricula* (pp. 65-78). Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Ukpokodu, O. N. (2003). *Teaching multicultural education from a critical perspective: Challenges and dilemmas*. *Multicultural Perspectives*, 5(4), 17-23.
- Vaughan, W. (2002). *Teaching for diversity and social justice: Pre-eservice teachers engage in assignments to promote multicultural education*. *Journal of Professional Studies*, 9(2), 61-69.
- Vavrus, M. (2002). *Transforming the multicultural education of teachers*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Weist, L. R. (1998). *Using immersion experiences to shake up pre-service teachers' views about cultural differences*. *Journal of Teacher Education*. 49(5), 358-365.
- Whitfield, P. T., & Klug, B. J. (2004). *Teachers as "healers": 21st century possibility? or necessity?* *Multicultural Perspectives*, 6(1), 43-50.
- Wiggins. R. A. & Follo, E. J. (1999). *Development of knowledge, attitudes and commitment to teach diverse populations*. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 50(2), 94-105

Author

Winston Vaughan is an associate professor at Xavier University in Cincinnati, Ohio. His areas of teaching and research include middle level Social Studies, Multicultural Education, and Critically Responsive Teachings.



Collaboration as a Valued Practice in Teacher Education Programs

*Kimberly K. Miller, Ph. D. Ohio Dominican University, Columbus Ohio
and Martha G. Michael Capital University, Columbus, Ohio*

Abstract

Given the history of collaborative efforts in teacher education programs in the country, and results from a recent survey of teacher-education programs in the State of Ohio, it is evident that deliberately designed collaboration is not readily taught as a needed skill set in personnel preparation. However it appears to be valued in schools as new teachers enter the field (Michael & Miller, 2011). A survey of teacher educators' perceptions, completed by teacher educators representing all of Ohio teacher education programs, has indicated a need for teacher education programs to shift from discrete to integrated or merged programming. While a study by Michael and Miller (2011) reveals an overwhelming need for continuing reform in teacher education programs in order to incorporate deliberately designed collaboration as a skill to be taught to both special and general educators alike, modeling of this approach at the higher education level could promote the practice most effectively. Recently, in a follow-up phone survey, it was found to be valued enough to be taught as a discrete skill set in less than 5% of Ohio teacher education programs, though 95.5% of responding programs had this as a goal.

Introduction

University teacher education programs graduate new teachers that find that they are expected to collaborate with other educators in K-12 settings in which they find themselves. Employers seek individuals that are “team players” and those that share and work well towards common goals with others. Many new teachers have not experienced ‘deliberately designed’ collaboration such as the practice of co-teaching in their teacher education programs, and therefore are not prepared to face the sometimes overwhelming and unfamiliar task of collaboration. Collaboration that is a deliberately designed skill set would, in effect, be a sanctioned approach in a school setting that encouraged collaborating teachers to co-plan, co-teach and co-evaluate their instruction. In turn, if teacher education candidates do experience deliberately designed collaboration in their teacher education programs, they may possibly become those new teachers prepared to collaboratively teach all K-12 students in inclusive environments.

Some special education programs do emphasize collaboration and consultation, but find that their general education counterparts have not had this preparation. In the recent phone survey, 73% of the programs in Ohio have a collaboration course for the spe-


cial education teacher candidates. According to Pugach and Blanton (2011) however, there is a growing trend in teacher education preparation to teach candidates how to collaborate. Teaching collaboration may create new ways in which new practicing teachers can meet the diverse needs of all students. But, instruction at the pre-service level, with authentic experiences of deliberately designed collaboration in clinical practice, would give teacher education candidates opportunities to grow in this skill even more. Further research is called for to determine if clinical practice includes co-teaching or deliberately designed collaboration in teacher education programs nationally.

According to the Center for Improving Teacher Quality (Blanton & Pugach, 2007), most teacher education program models focus on the idea of general education candidates only taking a course or two in special education.. Teacher education candidates in these programs are generally taught methods or pedagogy separately rather than together where they could experience real life skills of working towards the common goal of K-12 student achievement.

As K-12 classrooms become more inclusive, teacher education programs clearly need to provide exposure to authentic inclusionary practice for teacher education candidates (Hardman, 2009). Pugach and Blanton (2009) have further argued that for teacher education programs to explore effective approaches to inclusion, programs need to become integrated or merged, where teacher education students are educated together a majority of the time. As integrated or merged programs encourage higher education faculty members to engage in deliberately designed collaboration, teacher education candidates' knowledge and experiences of

these approaches used in inclusive settings are strengthened (Young, 2011). The faculty within teacher education programs that employ and value these inclusionary collaborative approaches benefit from the expertise of both special and general educators sharing knowledge about pedagogy and content delivery strategies, unlike programs that are considered to be discrete that display little or no interdependence at all (Blanton & Pugach, 2007).

The growing need to identify if co-teaching is valued as an instructional approach for teacher education programs led to an investigation of current practice in Ohio (Bacharach, Heck, & Dahlberg, 2008; Michael & Miller, 2011). Specifically, current Ohio teacher educators' knowledge, practice, and intention to practice levels regarding co-teaching were explored. Moving toward more integrated and merged programming through the use of co-teaching and other intentional collaborative practices in teacher preparation, may be an indication that programs are fostering these collaborative skills, increasing student participation, and improving classroom instruction through professional growth for all participants (Bacharach, Heck, & Dahlberg, 2008). Integrated or merged teacher education programs, rather than discrete programs, are more likely to use co-teaching as a valid approach and believe that the knowledge, skills, and dispositions from both general education and special education are important for all teacher education candidates to learn (Blanton & Pugach, 2007). Ohio teacher educators' current knowledge level about co-teaching, their practice and intention to practice levels were examined in



reference to how collaboration and integration of programs are valued. Additionally, the intentional level of teacher educators to co-teach in the future may be a signal of movement toward integrated or merged programming (Michael & Miller, 2011).

In two important ways, the results demonstrated a genuine dichotomy that teacher education candidates experience as a result of their teacher preparation programs. First, while teacher educators may be practicing co-teaching and believe that they have at least a satisfactory knowledge level of co-teaching, a large number of respondents had little knowledge of the current literature supporting their practice. As a result, all new teachers in Ohio may exit many teacher education programs without a deep understanding of deliberately designed collaboration as a skill set. This result may be due to the fact that little to no instruction occurs about co-teaching models (Cook & Friend, 1995; Villa, Thousand & Nevin, 2004; Michael & Miller, 2011). Teacher education candidates, who complete field experiences in K-12 schools that practice a high degree of collaboration successfully, may develop the important skills associated with co-teaching while not experiencing the same collaboration at a higher education level (Blanton & Pugach, 2007). This contradiction may produce new teachers who experience a potential disconnect. As new teachers enter the work force they may practice collaboration as modeled

by their colleagues, but be uninformed of the theoretical reasoning behind their practice. For the newly implemented national teacher performance assessment (edTPA, <http://edtpa.aacte.org>, 2013), teacher education candidates are required to identify the rationale and the theoretical underpinnings that support their practice.

In the results of the aforementioned study by Michael & Miller in 2011, this disconnect was also noted when analyzing one of the patterns found in the qualitative responses at the end of the knowledge section of the survey. A few teacher educators revealed that they had little to no knowledge of any models of co-teaching; indicated by statements such as; “I have little knowledge of the literature on co-teaching; my insights have come predominately through observation and reading on inclusion”, and “I do not have much formal knowledge on co-teaching, but have what I have gained through practice”. The second response was conveyed by a number of the teacher educators, indicating that while they co-taught as K-12 teachers, their K-12 experience may have been the extent of their knowledge about co-teaching.

Another way new teachers experience a dichotomy, is when they graduate from programs where the faculty may not collaborate, or, where they may maintain their autonomy in program and coursework development, as in discrete programs. In these programs, both the faculty and students in general and special teacher education programs, may be unfamiliar with what the curriculum involves for the other programs. Indicative of discrete teacher education programs, faculty members in general education may be relatively puzzled about the content in a special education class and they do not purposely link what their students are learning in one class to another class. For example, general education faculty members in a discrete program usually do not teach adaptations needed for the K-12 academic content of their courses to support diverse learners who have learning differences, or those who are English Language Learn-

ers (ELL).

K-12 students with disabilities may not be considered by general teacher educators when they are planning for differentiating the general education content. Therefore, the general education teaching candidates may not demonstrate such a skill. While differentiation may be required as a skill for individual students, group differentiation as in tiered lessons, may be less likely to be considered.


Likewise, general and special teacher education candidates may be learning contradictory information or approaches in their general and special education courses because the faculty members may not be collaborating or attempting to reconcile any differences in information and approaches (Blanton & Pugach, 2007). The possibility of teacher education candidates taking stand-alone general and/or special education courses and hearing contradictory information was evidenced in the second pattern found in the qualitative responses. The following quote from a teacher educator demonstrates this, “I don’t have knowledge of the specific research you ask about. It is an area of interest to me in a broader sense: we are teaching our teachers (pre-service and graduate level) a new paradigm of teaching (NCTAF, etc.)--collaborative, team teaching, moving away from the stand-alone teacher in an isolated classroom--yet our teachers (candidates) never experience this model as learners.” (Michael & Miller, 2011).

Michael & Miller (2011) also found that the study results indicated that there was little to no expectations for university education faculty to collaborate, which is important for candidates to experience during their programs. Blanton and Pugach (2007) argued that the reality of establishing discrete

programs only, may allow for collaboration at the level of individual courses but not systemically at the programmatic level. In discrete teacher education programs, faculty members in both general and special education typically do not have the opportunity to sit down and identify shared goals as well as programming options in regards to the preparation of all teacher education candidates (Arguelles, Hughes, & Schumm, 2000). Unless supported by outside funding and/or enlightened leadership, the luxury of curriculum mapping and full education department conversations about curriculum and pedagogy are rare.

Other results showed signs that faculty members’ beliefs about working together and having students from general and special education taking the same pedagogy and content courses as well as corresponding field experiences, was preferential. This commonality would allow teacher education candidates to learn the same content and pedagogy in order to support them when working with all K-12 students (Bondy & Ross, 2005; Michael & Miller, 2011). Additionally, the aforementioned edTPA requires all teacher education candidates to provide rationale connecting their pedagogy to content delivery for all K-12 students, which would include the ability to differentiate the curriculum (edTPA, <http://edtpa.aacte.org>, 2012).

Further promising information gleaned from the results of the study by Michael & Miller (2011) was that this shift may be indicative of the potential for faculty to work collaboratively at the programmatic design level to achieve interdependence – a clear sign of a move towards integrated teacher education programs (Blanton



& Pugach, 2007). As teacher education programs become more integrated, faculty consider the teacher education program holistically and identify the specific expertise of their colleagues in either general or special education. This is evident when teacher education candidates in special education take several courses to gain in-depth knowledge of academic content as well as pedagogical content knowledge in the content areas (Blanton & Pugach, 2007).

In addition, an integrated program might ensure that the candidates from general education have the advantage of getting to know faculty in special education through having them collaboratively teach general education courses, and vice-a-versa, acquiring sufficient knowledge about students who have disabilities and how to accommodate these students in inclusive classrooms (Villa, Thousand, & Nevin, 2004; Clift & Brady, 2005). It is hoped that the integration of course content involves more than just the placement of candidates into courses, but is deliberately designed to emphasize collaboration as a skill set in the overall teacher education program. A restructuring and rethinking of content delivery through deeper discourse and curriculum mapping may be necessary in order to achieve this outcome (Blanton & Pugach, 2011).

It was evident that there was also great intent on the part of the participants in the study by Michael & Miller (2011) to increase

the use of co-teaching in current or future courses at the IHE level. Over 66% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that this would be the case. Teacher educators realized that general education candidates fully expect to work with diverse students and that special education candidates will need to possess a great deal of knowledge about the general education content and pedagogy in order to enable them to make adaptations (Blanton & Pugach, 2007). This expectation requires that faculty in both general and special education adequately prepare future teachers at the pre-service level (Taylor & Sobel, 2001).

Finally, the last pattern found in the results of the study illustrated the importance of providing collaborative experiences in college or university courses, not only at a course-by-course level, but as an overall programmatic goal (Michael & Miller, 2011). One teacher educator stated it best in this open-ended response, “I am confident that many of our students (pre-service teachers) have a much deeper understanding of differentiated instruction, creating curb cuts in curriculum, co-teaching models, and the elements of universal design for learning and response to intervention, than previous cohorts of AYA English language arts candidates. I believe that many are more aware of all of the students in their room. Their understanding of teaching is more intricate, complex, and comprehensive than it was in January. I think that many realize that every child in front of them is their responsibility. Finally, I believe that when they are in a setting where there is more than one teacher available in the same space, they may be able to make more effective use of that collaborative opportunity.”

A 2007 research study (Arthaud, Aram, Breck, Doelling, & Bushrow, 2007) demonstrated that only 6% of 150 teacher education programs had a course on collaboration for all teacher education candidates. These results reflected similar findings of a follow-up phone survey carried out by the authors (see table 1). On a smaller scale, the authors’ follow-up phone survey examined

the number of teacher education programs in the State of Ohio that require a collaboration course for all of their teacher education candidates. Four questions were asked to scrutinize this likelihood:

1. Does the teacher education program have a course on collaboration/co-teaching for ALL teacher education candidates? If not, ...
2. Is there a course on collaboration/co-teaching for the teacher education candidates in special education program?
3. Does your department, college, division, or school have a goal regarding collaboration for the faculty and the candidates in your programs?
4. How do your teacher education candidates learn about collaboration?

Of the 22 programs surveyed only 1 program had a requirement that all teacher education candidates take a course on collaboration while 16 of the 22 programs required their special education candidates take such a course. This may be indicative of the inclusionary approaches teacher education programs take in the State of Ohio. The third question in the survey indicated whether or not teacher education programs have a goal regarding collaboration. The results of this question may again be suggestive of the inclusionary approaches taken in Ohio whereas only 1 program out of 22 had a program goal of collaboration. Further, the last open-ended question identified the nature of instruction about collaboration in the 22 surveyed programs. 20 of the 22 programs specified that teacher education candidates only learned about collaboration through the strategy being embedded in coursework rather than the strategy being explicitly taught.

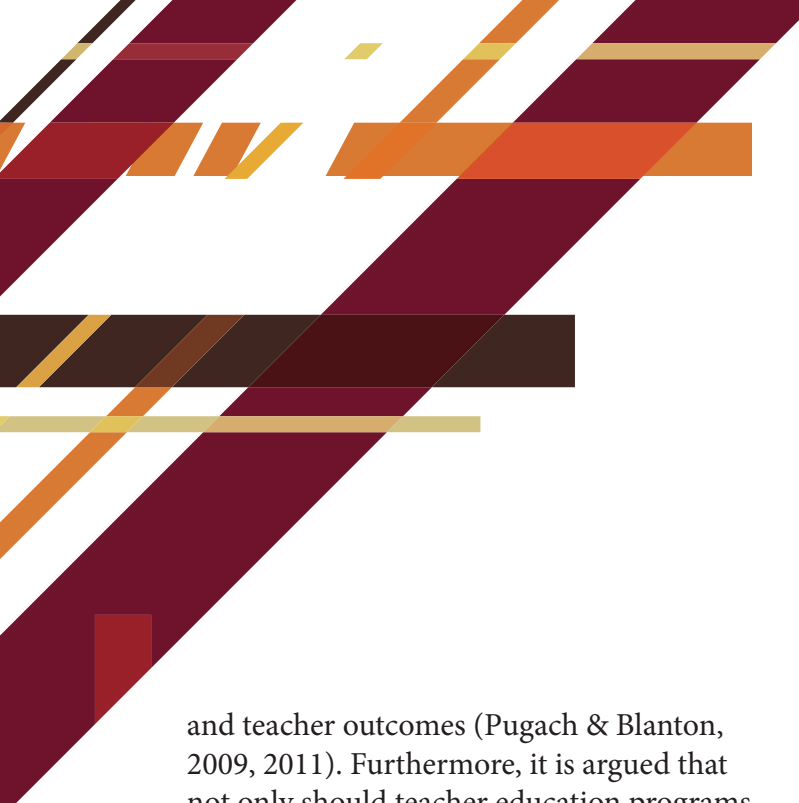
Table 1

Number 22	Yes	No	
Questions			
Question #1 : Does the teacher education program have a course on collaboration/co-teaching for ALL teacher education candidates? If not, ...	4.5% N: 1	95.5 % N: 21	
Question #2 : Is there a course on collaboration/co-teaching for the teacher education candidates in special education program?	73% N: 16	27% N: 7	
Question #3 : Does your department, college, division, or school have a goal regarding collaboration for the faculty and the candidates in your programs?	95.5% N: 21	4.5% N: 1	
Question #4 : How do your teacher education candidates learn about collaboration?			Embedded (Not Explicit) 91% (N -20) Course for All 4.5% (N-1) Course for general ed. only 4.5% (N-1)

Further research is needed across the country in other states regarding what is occurring in their teacher-education programs, and how higher education faculty, in both general and special education work as teams to ensure sufficient content knowledge and knowledge about differentiating instruction for all students. Additionally, it may be important to investigate what reasons keep teacher education programs discrete, and why collaboration is not emphasized. It may be that the standards for the Specialized Professional Associations (SPAs) need to further stipulate the need for collaboration at the higher education level, and state departments of education need to affect policy change that requires the move to integrated or merged programs.

Conclusion

With legislation such as No Child Left Behind (2001), IDEA (2004) and Race to the Top (2009) influencing educational practice, all educators, both at the K-12 and university levels are expected to practice collaboration. In terms of higher education, it may be necessary to study and reevaluate our teacher education programs in terms of overall systematic collaborative efforts



and teacher outcomes (Pugach & Blanton, 2009, 2011). Furthermore, it is argued that not only should teacher education programs look at overall collaborative efforts, but they should focus on the necessity of encouraging university faculty to engage in planned and “coordinated program level development to accomplish a substantial degree of curricular integration and overlap” (Blanton & Pugach, 2007, p.12). In other words, not only should faculty members co-teach courses, but they should meet together on a regular basis to discuss their overall program content and delivery practices, and model ‘deliberately designed collaboration’ for candidates. Faculty may want to discuss the purpose and function of courses and/or field experiences, and establish goals as to how to best prepare all teacher education candidates to provide effective instruction. In the future, it may be essential that all teacher education candidates, begin to learn more of the same content and pedagogical approaches to support them as they begin working with diverse K-12 students (Blanton & Pugach, 2007; Bacharach, Heck, & Dahlberg, 2008; Michael & Miller, 2011).

The future of teacher preparation is unclear as policy changes are being implemented at the federal and state level. However what is clear is that all teacher educators need to know how to establish shared goals and demonstrate intentional collaboration in the overall teacher education program that they share, so they can effectively teach all

students with colleagues in inclusive settings.

This paper calls for higher education programs to nurture faculty who can make collaborative, purposeful, and explicit connections across courses and field experiences. Just as in K-12 settings, general and special education university faculty may want to regularly share their expertise in order to ensure that their teacher education candidates are experiencing an intentional and effective approach to making connections for future collaborative practice (Blanton & Pugach, 2007; Pugach, Blanton & Correa, 2011). Further and more specific research is needed using identified knowledge and skills indicators of collaborative effectiveness in relationship to 1) teacher change and outcome data, 2) K-12 student outcome data, as well as 3) how intentionally collaborative teacher education programs design and evaluate their overall programs (Brownell, 2011; Utey, 2009).

References

- Alreck, P. L., & Settle, R. B. (1995). *The Survey Research Handbook: Guidelines and Strategies for Conducting a Survey* (2nd). Burr Ridge, IL: Irwin.
- Arguelles, M., Hughes, M., & Schumm, J. (2000). Co-teaching: A different approach to inclusion. *Principal*, 79(4), 48, 50-1.
- Arthaud, T. J., Aram, R. J., Breck, S. E., Doelling, J. E. & Bushrow, K. M. (2007). Developing collaboration skills in pre-service teachers: A partnership between general and special education. *Teacher Education and Special Education* 30(1), 1-12.
- Bacharach, N, Heck, T, & Dahlberg, K (2008). Co-teaching in Higher Education. *Journal of College Teaching and Learning*, 5(3), 9-16.
- Blanton, L & Pugach, M. (2007). *Collaborative Programs in General and Special Teacher Education: An Action for Higher Education and State Policy Makers*. U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs.
- Blanton, L.P. & Pugash, M.C. (2011). Using a classification system to probe the meaning of dual licensure in general and special education. *TESE*, 34(3), 219-234.
- Bondy, E., & Ross, D.D. (2005). *Preparing for Inclusive Teaching: Meeting the Challenges of Teacher Education Reform*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Bradburn, N., Sudman, S. & Wansink, B. (2004). *Asking Questions*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Brownell, M.T., Griffin, C., Leko, M.M., & Stephens, J. (2011). Improving collaborative teacher education research Creating tighter linkages. *TESE*, 34(3), 235-249.

Clift, R.T., & Brady, P. (2005). Research on methods courses and field experiences. In M. Cochran-Smith and K. Zeichner (Eds.), *Studying Teacher Education: The Report of the AERA Panel on Research in Teacher Education* (pp. 309-424). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Cook, L., & Friend, M. (1995). Co-Teaching: Guidelines for creating effective practices, *Focus on Exceptional Children*, 28(3), 1-16.

Dillman, D. (2007). *Mail and Internet Surveys: The Total Design Method* (2nd Ed.). New York: Wiley. edTPA. (2012) Retrieved January 1, 2013 from <http://edtpa.aacte.org>.

Fowler, F. J. (1995). *Improving Survey Questions: Design & Evaluation*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Fowler, F.J. (2002). *Survey Research Methods* (3rd Ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Friend, & Cook, L. (2003). *Interactions: Collaboration skills for school professionals* (4th Ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Friend, M. (2007). The co-teaching partnership. *Educational Leadership*, 64(5), 58-62.

IDEA (2004) *Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act*. PL 108-446, 108th Cong., 20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq. (2004) (enacted).

Hardman, M. L. Redesigning the preparation of all teachers within the framework of an integrated program model *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 25 583- 587.

Kluth, P. & Straut, D. (2003). Do as we say and as we do: Teaching and modeling collaborative practice in the university classroom. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 54, 228-240.

Michael, M.G. & Miller, K.K. (2011). Co-teaching in Ohio's teacher education programs. *The Ohio Journal of Teacher Education*, 24 (1), 29-36.

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Pub.L.107-110. (2001). Retrieved November 21, 2007 from <http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/publaw/107publ.html>

Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods* (2nd Ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Pugash, M. C., & Blanton, L. P. (2009). A framework for conducting research on collaborative teacher education. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 25, 575-582.

Pugash, M.C., Blanton, L.P. & Correa, V.I. (2011). A historical perspective on the role of collaboration in Teacher Education reform: Making good on the promise of teaching all students. *TESE*, 34(3), pp. 183-200.

Race to the Top Fund. (2011). Retrieved July 10, 2011 from <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/index.html>

Sudman, S. & Bradburn, N. (1982). *Asking Questions*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Survey Monkey. Retrieved May 1, 2010 from www.surveymonkey.com.

Villa, R., Thousand, J., & Nevin, A. (2004). *A Guide to Co-teaching: Practical Tips for Facilitating Student Learning*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Young, K.S (2011). Institutional separation in schools of education: Understanding the functions of space in general and special education teacher preparation. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 27, 483-493.

Authors

Kimberly K. Miller is an assistant professor at Ohio Dominican University. Her research interests are co-teaching new teacher assessment, emergent literacy and reflective practice.

Martha G. Michael is an associate professor at Capital University. Her research interests are Universal Design, and all innovative means for delivery of content and professional development in the field of education.