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From the Editor

The *Excellence in Education Journal* is an open access, refereed, online journal that promotes and disseminates international scholarly writing about excellent practices in all aspects of education. Nine years ago, this journal was founded with the goal of sharing these practices to benefit the education of children and adults worldwide**.** We encourage teachers, professors, and other professionals worldwide to write about practices that promote the improvement of education. Submissions are double-blind, peer reviewed and are accepted year-round with publication occurring twice annually.

In support of our mission, we provide assistance with writing and formatting in English to international writers who seek our assistance with preparing their manuscripts. There are no fees to submit or publish manuscripts so that cost will never be a barrier. Typeset and graphics are intentionally simple in order that the journal can be more easily accessed on a variety of devices worldwide to fulfill the mission of the journal.

I am pleased to share that the United States Department of Education Institute of Education Sciences indexes all articles published in this journal on its ERIC database.

I hope that the practices discussed in this journal will be helpful to you, our readers.

Ann C. Gaudino, Ed.D., Founder and Editor-in-Chief
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The Preparation of Novice Special Education Teachers for Instructional Planning and Strategies: Viewpoints Among Teacher Educators and Preservice Teachers

Laurie A. Sharp, Frank Goode, Stephanie Grote-Garcia

Abstract

High-quality teacher preparation is vital to ensure novice special education teachers are prepared for the multiple aspects of instructional planning and strategies. In order to gain an understanding of related preparation practices, the current study employed a cross-sectional research design to ascertain the viewpoints of teacher educators and preservice teachers. Data were collected via web-based surveys disseminated among teacher educators and preservice teachers affiliated with special education teacher preparation programs located in a state located in the Southern region of the United States. Quantitative data were analyzed with independent samples *t*-tests, and qualitative data were analyzed with three levels of coding. Quantitative data analyses revealed two statically significant findings with teacher educator-preservice teacher viewpoints. Qualitative data analyses revealed three themes for teacher educators and two themes for preservice teachers. Findings and implications for special education teacher preparation programs were discussed, along with study limitations and areas for future research.

Keywords: teacher preparation, instructional planning, instructional strategies, teacher educators, preservice teachers.

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Among current school contexts, novice special education teachers (SETs) must be skilled professionals with multiple aspects of instructional planning and strategies. While working among students with disabilities, novice SETs must know how to adapt teaching practices that address individual student differences (Mason-Williams, Frederick, & Mulcahy, 2015; Robertson, et al., 2017); including students who are supported with technology (Hasselbring & Williams Glaser, 2000) or specific assistive technology devices (Bausch & Hasselbring, 2004; Costigan & Light, 2010; Edyburn, 2013; Judge & Simms, 2009). Novice SETs must also know how to develop individualized education and transition plans in collaboration with others to jointly determine a student's needs, appropriate resources and services, and anticipated outcomes (Kamens, 2004; Kamens, et.al., 2003; Pellegrino, et al., 2015; Ricci, et al., 2017; Seabrooks-Blackmore & Patterson, 2013). Furthermore, novice SETs must be content experts in multiple subject areas, such as reading (Brownell et al., 2009; Leko & Brownell, 2011) and mathematics (Powell, 2015), and promote high-levels of content learning in an interdisciplinary manner (Kennedy, et al., 2015) while fostering the development of communication and language skills (More, et al., 2016).

High-quality teacher preparation is vital to ensure novice SETs enter school contexts sufficiently prepared for the multiple aspects of instructional planning and strategies (Leko, et.al., 2015). Teacher preparation programs must encompass "well-aligned and carefully structured coursework and field experiences" to prepare preservice teachers (PSTs) for the "multiple roles" required of novice SETs (Leko, et.al., 2012, p. 14). With this in mind, special education teacher educators must harmonize course- and field-based learning experiences to cultivate understandings for instructional planning and strategies among PSTs that generalize

into authentic school contexts (Leko et al., 2015; Leko et al., 2012; Markelz, et. al., 2017; McLesky & Brownell, 2015).

The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC, 2015) published a revised set of standards that provide a guide for high-quality SET preparation. These seven standards delineate 28 key elements that describe requisite knowledge and behaviors of novice SETs for learner development and individual learning differences, learning environments, curricular content knowledge, assessment, instructional planning and strategies, professional learning and ethical practice, and collaboration. Despite the articulation of a national set of professional standards, SET preparation has evolved substantially in response to trends associated with politics, teacher quality, and student demographics (Brownell, et.al., 2010; Cochran-Smith & Villegas, 2014), thereby losing a uniform focus. In an attempt to establish SET universals, Darling, Dukes, and Hall (2016) noted, "Teacher preparation is the core of the profession" and contended that SET preparation beliefs and practices required further clarification (p. 217).

A central component for student performance is effective instruction (Cleary, et al., 2018). Effective instruction requires instructional planning that considers the learning needs of all students and the use of specially designed strategies to individualize learning experiences (Turnbull, et al., 2016). Within the CEC's (2015) initial preparation standards, the Instructional Planning and Strategies standard and key elements focus upon how novice SETs "select, adapt, and use a repertoire of evidence-based instructional strategies" to promote learning among students with disabilities (p. 25). Although extant literature was replete with research on SET preparation (Cochran-Smith & Villegas, 2014; Cochran-Smith et al., 2015), there remains a strong emphasis on improving SET preparation practices (Billingsley, 2004; Brownell et al., 2010; Leko et al., 2015; Markelz et al., 2017; McLeskey & Ross, 2004; Shepherd, et al., 2016).

With this in mind, the purpose of the current study was to gain an understanding of SET preparation practices for instructional planning and strategies by examining the viewpoints of teacher educators and PSTs. Specifically, the current study addressed the following research questions:

Research Question 1: How do teacher educators and PSTs view preparedness for instructional planning and strategies?

Research Question 2: How do teacher educators cultivate understandings for instructional planning and strategies among PSTs?

Research Question 3: What concerns do PSTs have concerning instructional planning and strategies?

By examining the viewpoints of teacher educators and PSTs, the present study provides teacher preparation programs with information on the coherence of current SET preparation practices for instructional planning and strategies and identifies specific areas for improvement (Canrinus, et al., 2017).

Method

Context

We (i.e., the first and second author) conducted a cross-sectional study to understand the viewpoints of teacher educators and PSTs regarding SET preparation (Ruel, et al., 2016). Specifically, we ascertained viewpoints from teacher educators and PSTs regarding preparedness with the CEC's (2015) initial preparation standards. We invited the third author to contribute content expertise for special education instructional planning and strategies once we completed data analyses.

Research Sample

We used purposive sampling techniques to establish a research sample of teacher educators and PSTs affiliated with teacher preparation programs in a state located in the Southern region of the United States. We first identified all university-based SET preparation programs that were approved by the state's education agency (n = 55). Then, we consulted information published on each university's website and accessed course schedules that were publically available. Using this information, we constructed a database that included the names and email addresses of each SET preparation program director (n = 55) and teacher educators who specialized in special education (n = 283).

Data Collection

We created two separate web-based survey instruments using Google Forms to collect data among teacher educators and PSTs. Each survey instrument included closed-ended items that collected demographic information (e.g., gender, age range, etc.) and ratings for viewpoints of preparedness with each of the CEC's (2015) standards and key elements using a 5-point Likert scale (i.e., Not At All Prepared, Slightly Prepared, Somewhat Prepared, Very Prepared, or Extremely Prepared). Each survey instrument also included open-ended items for each standard with which teacher educators indicated how they cultivate understandings and PSTs described their concerns. We performed pilot tests with both survey instruments to establish reliability and validity (Ruel et al., 2016). Pilot testing took place among a group of 20 special education experts who were either faculty member colleagues or practicing SETs. Each expert completed both surveys and provided feedback for survey administration, organization, and content.

After making minor revisions with wording on our survey instruments, we collected data among teacher educators and PSTs simultaneously during a four-month period. With respect to

teacher educators, we sent an initial email explaining the purpose of the current study and included the web link to the teacher educator survey. We tracked responses in our database and sent monthly follow-up emails to encourage participation. With respect to PSTs, we contacted each SET preparation program director by email to explain the purpose of the current study and request permission to disseminate the PST survey among PSTs enrolled in their programs. Of these program directors, 35 did not respond to our email inquiry, four declined to share information with PSTs, and four indicated that their programs no longer offered SET certification. The remaining 12 program directors agreed to disseminate information about the study and the corresponding web survey link among PSTs.

Data Analyses

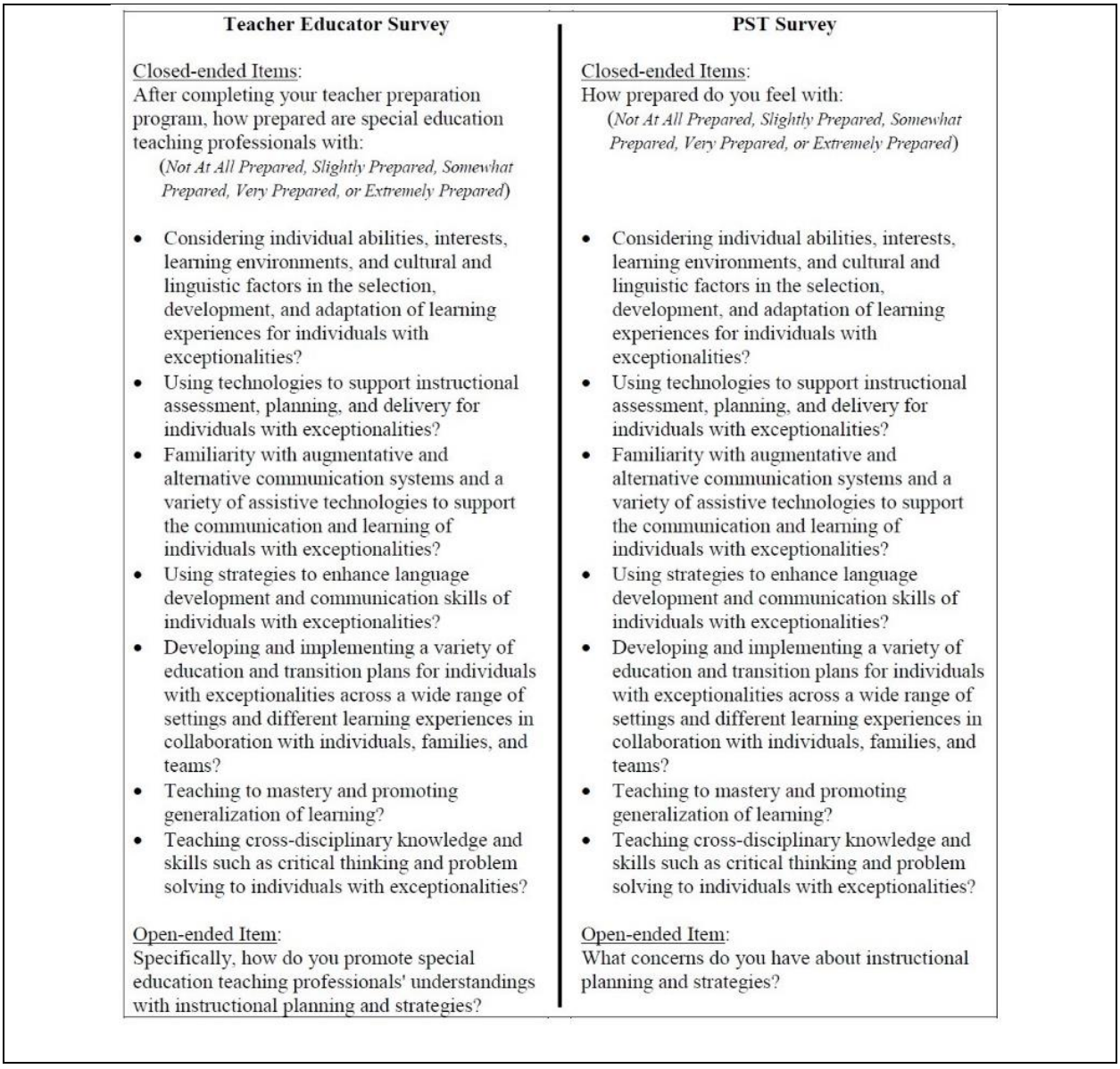
To answer the research questions for the current study, we retrieved and analyzed quantitative and qualitative survey data related to instructional planning and strategies (see Figure 1). First, we retrieved quantitative data from the seven closed-ended survey items and calculated Cronbach's alpha to determine internal consistency with the quantitative items. We inspected quantitative data to ensure all assumptions for normality were satisfied and performed independent samples *t*-tests using IBM SPSS Statistics software to conduct mean comparisons of viewpoints between teacher educators and PSTs (Muijs, 2011). We established statistical significance at $\alpha < .05$, $\beta = .20$, and effect sizes of small (.20), medium (.50), or large (.80) for statistically significant findings (Cohen, 1992).

Next, we retrieved qualitative data from the two open-ended survey items and analyzed data as two separate data sets by conducting three levels of coding (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). In the first level, we used open coding to label initial concepts in the data. In the second level, we used axial coding to confirm the accuracy of codes and group similar codes into themes. In the

third level, we reviewed codes within each theme to identify the presence of subthemes. We coded each data set independently and then met as a group to discuss and confirm accuracy with codes and themes (Saldaña, 2016). We also maintained a codebook for each data set that contained all codes, along with a description and data example of each code that emerged during analyses.

Figure 1

Survey Items for Teacher Educator and PST Surveys



Teacher Educator Survey	PST Survey
Closed-ended Items: After completing your teacher preparation program, how prepared are special education teaching professionals with: (*Not At All Prepared, Slightly Prepared, Somewhat Prepared, Very Prepared, or Extremely Prepared*)	Closed-ended Items: How prepared do you feel with: (*Not At All Prepared, Slightly Prepared, Somewhat Prepared, Very Prepared, or Extremely Prepared*)
• Considering individual abilities, interests, learning environments, and cultural and linguistic factors in the selection, development, and adaptation of learning experiences for individuals with exceptionalities? • Using technologies to support instructional assessment, planning, and delivery for individuals with exceptionalities? • Familiarity with augmentative and alternative communication systems and a variety of assistive technologies to support the communication and learning of individuals with exceptionalities? • Using strategies to enhance language development and communication skills of individuals with exceptionalities? • Developing and implementing a variety of education and transition plans for individuals with exceptionalities across a wide range of settings and different learning experiences in collaboration with individuals, families, and teams? • Teaching to mastery and promoting generalization of learning? • Teaching cross-disciplinary knowledge and skills such as critical thinking and problem solving to individuals with exceptionalities?	• Considering individual abilities, interests, learning environments, and cultural and linguistic factors in the selection, development, and adaptation of learning experiences for individuals with exceptionalities? • Using technologies to support instructional assessment, planning, and delivery for individuals with exceptionalities? • Familiarity with augmentative and alternative communication systems and a variety of assistive technologies to support the communication and learning of individuals with exceptionalities? • Using strategies to enhance language development and communication skills of individuals with exceptionalities? • Developing and implementing a variety of education and transition plans for individuals with exceptionalities across a wide range of settings and different learning experiences in collaboration with individuals, families, and teams? • Teaching to mastery and promoting generalization of learning? • Teaching cross-disciplinary knowledge and skills such as critical thinking and problem solving to individuals with exceptionalities?
Open-ended Item: Specifically, how do you promote special education teaching professionals' understandings with instructional planning and strategies?	Open-ended Item: What concerns do you have about instructional planning and strategies?

Results

Data collection efforts resulted in responses from 46 teacher educators and 31 PSTs. As shown in Table 1, the majority of teacher educator respondents were female and between the ages of 40-69 years. Almost all PST respondents were female and between the ages of 20-29 years. We have presented our findings from data analyses below by research question.

Table 1

Demographics for Teacher Educator and PST Respondents

Characteristic	Teacher Educators (*n* = 46)	PSTs (*n* = 31)
Gender		
Female	36	28
Male	10	3
Age		
20-29 years	1	30
30-39 years	7	1
40-49 years	13	--
50-59 years	9	--
60-69 years	14	--
70-79 years	2	--

Research Question 1

To understand how teacher educators and PSTs view preparedness for instructional planning and strategies, as well as the congruence between their reported viewpoints, we analyzed quantitative survey data. We calculated Cronbach's alpha for the teacher educator and PST survey instruments, which were $\alpha = 0.95, 0.96$, respectively. As shown in Table 2, teacher educators reported higher viewpoints of preparedness for every key element associated with

instructional planning and strategies than PSTs. After comparing means with inferential testing, we found that teacher educators and PSTs were congruent in their viewpoints of preparedness with the following five key elements:

- Supports the teaching and learning process among students with exceptionalities with technology.
- Knows of augmentative and alternative communication devices that support learning among students with exceptionalities.
- Implements strategies to foster communication skills and language development among students with exceptionalities.
- Works with others to develop and implement individualized education and transition plans for students with exceptionalities across a variety of contexts.
- Addresses cross-disciplinary knowledge and skills among students with exceptionalities.

Inferential testing also revealed the presence of statistically significant findings with the following two key elements:

- Considers individual differences among students with exceptionalities to select, develop, and adapt learning experiences, $t(75) = 3.35$, $p = .00$. Cohen's d was calculated at 0.76, which was considered a medium effect (Cohen, 1992).
- Promotes generalized and mastery learning among students with exceptionalities, $t(75) = 2.48$, $p = .02$. Cohen's d was calculated at 0.60, which was considered a medium effect (Cohen, 1992).

Table 2

Mean Comparisons of Viewpoints for Instructional Planning and Strategies

Survey Item	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*	95% CI LL	95% CI UL
Considers individual differences among students with exceptionalities to select, develop, and adapt learning experiences.			3.35	.00*	.25	.97
Teacher educators	3.80	.72				
PSTs	3.19	.87				
Supports the teaching and learning process among students with exceptionalities with technology.			1.35	.18	-.14	.73
Teacher educators	3.52	.94				
PSTs	3.23	.96				
Knows of augmentative and alternative communication devices that support learning among students with exceptionalities.			.58	.57	-.35	.63
Teacher educators	3.11	.99				
PSTs	2.97	1.14				
Implements strategies to foster communication skills and language development among students with exceptionalities.			1.54	.13	-.11	.83
Teacher educators	3.46	.94				
PSTs	3.10	1.11				
Works with others to develop and implement individualized education and transition plans for students with exceptionalities across a variety of contexts.			1.36	.18	-.15	.81
Teacher educators	3.46	.94				
PSTs	3.13	1.18				
Promotes generalized and mastery learning among students with exceptionalities.			2.48	.02*	.12	1.11
Teacher educators	3.87	.72				
PSTs	3.26	1.24				
Addresses cross-disciplinary knowledge and skills among students with exceptionalities.			1.34	.19	-.14	.71
Teacher educators	3.54	.81				
PSTs	3.26	1.66				

Note. CI = confidence intervals; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit; PSTs = preservice teachers
* $p < .05$

Research Question 2

To understand how teacher educators cultivate understandings among PSTs for instructional planning and strategies, we analyzed qualitative data retrieved from the teacher educator survey. Thirty-three teacher educator respondents addressed the open-ended question, which resulted in 642 words. Qualitative data analyses generated three themes: Required Coursework, Field Experiences, and Learning Activities.

Required Coursework

Teacher educator respondents expressed a myriad of ways in which they address instructional planning and strategies through required coursework in their respective SET preparation programs. For example, one respondent listed the general and specialized coursework required among PSTs who sought special education teacher certification, "[PSTs] take general education methods courses in all content areas and special education courses in inclusive classroom strategies, life skills classroom strategies, classroom management, and behavior management." Another respondent described an integrated coursework approach utilized in their SET preparation program: "We are beginning to integrate special education practices into planning across the content areas and identifying interventions and teaching methods that support the state curriculum."

Teacher education respondents also named specific courses in their SET preparation programs that address instructional planning and strategies within university classrooms and authentic school contexts. For example, one respondent stated:

> We offer a required course in Assistive Technology where preservice teachers actually use software to make picture schedules, communication boards, and apps for specific

> student needs. During the course, preservice teachers engage with simulated scenario situations at the university and field experiences in the public schools.

Similarly, another respondent noted that PSTs "take a class specifically designed to look at adaptive technology and are placed in settings where they can see these in action."

Within this theme, teacher education respondents also indicated specific pedagogical techniques that they use in the courses they teach to promote understandings with instructional planning and strategies. Pedagogical techniques included "modeling," "examples," "class activities," "direct instruction," and "situational lessons." Two respondents specified that they foster connections between "texts and research to field-based experiences" and "assessment data with learning activities." Additionally, one respondent explained that PSTs "receive guided experiences in the university classroom, followed by extensive experiences first in the general education settings and then in special education settings."

Field Experiences

Teacher educator respondents also acknowledged that field experiences were a vital component within their SET preparation programs that developed competence with instructional planning and strategies among PSTs. Field experiences encompassed "multiple observations," "field work," and semester-long "student teaching" placements. Respondents expressed that field experiences were opportunities for PSTs to "observe in their school placements and then practice what they have learned." Some respondents customized field experiences to have a specific focus, such as "lesson planning and implementation of the plan," "planning for students with high incidence disabilities in the general education classroom," "transition planning," and the use of "assistive technology in a variety of settings

to gain an understanding of how to enhance learning opportunities for students with special needs." One respondent described a project that PSTs complete while student teaching:

> [PSTs] do a project to collect data on the effectiveness of teaching and technology to make data-based decisions. They follow special education students to general education classes and other settings to encourage generalization of skills. They also construct measures to look at student progress across all domains of learning.

Learning Activities

Lastly, teacher educator respondents described a wide range of learning activities that they used to foster robust learning for instructional planning and strategies among PSTs. Respondents indicated that "parent panels" and "guest speakers" were effective learning activities for PSTs. Respondents also identified effective learning activities that were required course tasks, such as "course assignments," "case studies," "authentic assessments," and "projects." According to respondents, these types of learning activities provide opportunities for PSTs to apply "knowledge and skills" that "focus on levels of learning and working in a cross-disciplinary manner" through the use of "real or fictitious student data." For example, one respondent stated that PSTs "complete lesson plans and O&M [orientation and mobility] evaluation reports of students who are blind." Another respondent detailed their use of learning activities in a course required among all PSTs who sought SET certification:

> [PSTs] have multiple projects embedded across their coursework that address individualized instructional planning. Specifically, for AAC [augmentative and alternative communication] and other communication-focused strategies, I try to address it using scenario-based assignments and as part of their development of a BIP

> [behavior intervention plan] for students with little to no functional communication skills.

Research Question 3

To understand the concerns that PSTs have concerning instructional planning and strategies, we analyzed qualitative data retrieved from the PST survey. Eight PST respondents addressed the open-ended question, which resulted in 298 words. Qualitative data analyses generated two themes: Limitations with Practical Knowledge and Limitations with Practical Experiences.

Limitations with Practical Knowledge

PST respondents expressed concerns regarding limitation with practical knowledge. For example, one respondent shared a concern of holding a limited understanding of "the wide variety of different disabilities and being able to aid to all of them at once." Similarly, another respondent shared a feeling of being underprepared "to modify the same instruction to students with different disabilities." One respondent voiced that limitations with practical knowledge was a widespread issue:

> I do not feel very prepared, especially with the reading content material. I do not see a lot of instruction going on in our program to prepare us for the field. I also see a lack of proper special education instruction. For example, what is a 504 student? I hear that all the time in the field, but I never heard it in the university classroom before I started student teaching. I feel that I have to learn a lot of things that should have been taught to me prior to embarking on the journey of student teaching. Thank goodness I have a wonderful mentor that helps me fill in the gaps that have been left open.

Limitations with Practical Experiences

PST respondents also expressed concerns regarding limitations with practical experiences. One respondent shared, "I am not getting the experience I need to be successful before graduating." Without sufficient practical experience, PSTs indicated they were not equipped to "work with a lesson plan for the student" or implement "obvious or well-known techniques." One respondent emphasized the value of frequent and meaningful practical experiences in SET preparation programs:

> I have little experience with this population in the educational setting. So, I feel like once I have more opportunities to get involved in actual classrooms, I will be fine. It feels like this profession is very situational and requires much learning on your feet.

Discussion

Improving SET preparation is a priority (Billingsley, 2004; Brownell et al., 2010; Leko et al., 2015; Markelz et al., 2017; McLeskey & Ross, 2004; Shepherd et al., 2016) and was the central focus of the current study. We ascertained the viewpoints of teacher educators and PSTs regarding the preparation of novice SETs for instructional planning and strategies (CEC, 2015). Our findings have added new insights to this area of research and pointed to three implications for stakeholders affiliated with SET preparation programs, such as program administrators, staff members, and teacher educators.

First, we examined congruence between the viewpoints reported by teacher educators and PSTs concerning preparedness with the seven key elements associated with instructional planning and strategies (CEC, 2015). Our findings showed that teacher educators viewed preparedness higher than PSTs for every key element, which also included two statistically significant findings. Eliciting teacher educator-PST viewpoints provides SET preparation

program stakeholders with valuable information regarding the impact of learning on PSTs' thinking (Thomas, 2014), particularly since a lack of congruence with viewpoints may exist (Canrinus et al., 2017). Teacher educators should ascertain and compare viewpoints for preparedness regularly to verify that what is taught is learned and identify possible shortcomings with established preparation standards. By identifying "matches or mismatches" with viewpoints (He & Levin, 2008, p. 37), teacher educators are equipped to strengthen SET preparation curricula and practices that support PSTs' mastery of content that leads to improved future teaching practices (Pajares, 1992, 1993).

Second, we surveyed teacher educators to determine how they cultivate understandings among PSTs for instructional planning and strategies. Our findings presented a wide range of preparation approaches that described required coursework, field experiences, and learning activities. It was clear in our review of extant literature that high-quality SET preparation programs harmonize special education coursework at the university with related field experiences in authentic school contexts to promote the generalization of teaching skills (Leko et al., 2015; Leko et al., 2012; Markelz et al., 2017; McLesky & Brownell, 2015). However, McLesky and Brownell (2015) pointed out that current preparation practices predominantly focus upon developing PST's knowledge "*about* instructional practices" instead of how to "*use* instructional practices" in a systematic manner (p. 10). With this in mind, SET preparation program stakeholders must conduct comprehensive program reviews periodically to ensure and evaluate their effectiveness. If subsequent revisions are necessary, Fuchs, Fahsl, and James (2014) suggested using the following Backward Design approach:

> (1) Determine goals using the most current professional standards and certification requirements.

(2) Designate assessments to judge performance with identified goals.

(3) Design teaching and learning activities to support PSTs attain desired performance levels.

Sayeski and Higgins (2014) emphasized that SET preparation program reviews "cannot be a one-time process" and encouraged "periodic rebalancing . . . to remain relevant, focused, and productive" (p. 103). By doing so, SET preparation program stakeholders may discover innovative ways to address the extensive content and practices required among novice SETs (Kennedy et al., 2015).

Third, we surveyed PSTs to ascertain their concerns with instructional planning and strategies. These findings articulated concerns related to limitations with practical knowledge and experiences, which were much more telling than their reported viewpoints of preparedness with the seven key elements for instructional planning and strategies (CEC, 2015). With this in mind, SET preparation program stakeholders should regularly facilitate a variety of communication platforms, such as panel presentations, seminars, and workshops concerns (Cevher-Kalburan, 2014), to gain an understanding of the concerns PSTs have that may not be immediately apparent. Communication platforms should provide a safe and supportive space for PSTs to ask questions, express concerns, and share experiences. In this same manner, SET preparation program stakeholders may also facilitate communication platforms among current practitioners, such as school administrators and SETs, to gain insights concerning the daily work of professionals within the field (Young, 2018). SET preparation programs stakeholders should use information obtained from communication platforms during subsequent program reviews.

Limitations and Areas for Future Research

As with any research endeavor, there were methodological limitations with the current study that may affect generalizability of findings. First, we recognize that the number of teacher educator and PST survey respondents were low. With respect to teacher educators, we used purposive sampling techniques that were limited by accuracy of publically available information posted on each university's website. With respect to PSTs, a small number of SET preparation program directors agreed to disseminate the PST survey. Although small, we feel the respondents were representative of the desired populations and provided valuable insights that can lead to improved SET preparation practices. We recommend that future studies utilize other sampling techniques that increase sample sizes and encourage greater participation.

Second, we limited participation to individuals associated with teacher preparation programs approved by a single state education agency. However, we determined this limitation was necessary due to differences with teacher certification requirements. We recommend that future studies replicate our methodology to ascertain the viewpoints of teacher educators and PSTs on a state-by-state basis. These studies should then compare findings from individual state analyses to identify patterns and trends.

Third, we employed a research design that relied upon self-reported data. In order to reduce the potential for response biases, we used multiple strategies to enhance the reliability and validity of our findings. We recommend that future studies employ research designs that permit more carefully controlled comparisons between teacher educator and PSTs, as well as more in-depth and longitudinal examinations of SET preparation practices.

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Developing Instructional Capacity and Competence among Preservice Teachers: Voices of Literacy Teacher Educators

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Abstract

High-quality literacy teacher preparation is critical for K-12 student success and an important topic. Teacher educators must develop instructional capacity and competence among preservice teachers, and the current study sought to discover how literacy teacher educators promoted understandings with curriculum, instructional approaches, and resources among preservice teachers. Using Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, we retrieved relevant survey data and examined reported preparation practices qualitatively. Our findings were congruent with preparation practices reported in extant literature for developing instructional capacity and competence among preservice teachers. Findings also revealed an imbalance with preparation practices, from which recommendations for literacy teacher educators were made.

Keywords: literacy, instructional capacity, instruction competence, preparation practices, teacher educators

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High-quality literacy teacher preparation is critical for K-12 student success (Hollins, 2017; International Literacy Association [ILA], 2015; Lacina & Block, 2011) and has recently been deemed as a topic of great importance (ILA, 2018b). In 2015, ILA examined requirements for literacy teacher preparation and determined that further research was needed, particularly with identifying preparation program features that promote literacy teacher effectiveness. Subsequently, ILA and the National Council of Teachers of English recognized research-based preparation program features that are necessary for cultivating well-prepared literacy teachers:

- coursework that develops content and pedagogical knowledge among preservice teachers;
- frequent opportunities for preservice teachers to apply learned knowledge within authentic contexts;
- learning experiences that develop behaviors and thinking patterns among preservice teachers for engagement with continuous professional learning; and
- the use of ongoing assessments to evaluate readiness, progress, and benchmarking accomplishments of preservice teachers, as well as overall program effectiveness. (ILA & NCTE, 2017).

Teaching is complex and requires proficiency with a wide variety of professional practices (Labaree, 2000). With respect to instructional practices, literacy teachers face numerous challenges with providing equitable, inclusive, and individualized instruction for all aspects of literacy among an increasingly diverse student population (Alvermann, 2002; Frankel, et al., 2013; Gambrell, et al., 2011; Roe, 1992; Schwartz & Gallant, 2009). In order to navigate the complexities associated with teaching and learning literacy, preservice

teachers must experience rigorous teacher preparation that develops competence with "the theory-to-practice decision-making process" (Wickstrom, et al., 2006, p. 27). In knowing that preservice teachers often possess naïve beliefs about teaching (Butaud & Raymond, 2015), teacher educators must guide preservice teachers to become reflective practitioners who inform their instructional practices with theory (Hodges, et al., 2016), data from a wide variety of assessments (McKenna & Walpole, 2005), deep knowledge about students (Vaughn, et al., 2015), and input from students themselves (Groff, 2014). Thus, literacy teacher educators must be mentors to preservice teachers and support their development of reflective teaching by explicitly demonstrating and modeling effective instructional practices; cultivating deep understandings of literacy skills and processes; and providing feedback that is respectful, encouraging, and growth-oriented (Wold, et al., 2011).

From an instructional perspective, literacy teachers must have deep understandings of "the elements of a balanced, integrated, and comprehensive literacy curriculum and have developed expertise in enacting that curriculum (International Reading Association [IRA], 2010, p. 9). A considerable amount of literature published within the past decade describes ways in which literacy teacher educators develop instructional capacity and competence among preservice teachers (e.g., Dharamshi, 2018; Fang, 2014; Kavanagh & Rainey, 2017; Kosnik, Menna, Dharamshi, & Beck, 2018; Le Fevre, 2011; Many & Aoulou, 2014; Marri et al., 2011; Martin, Chase, Cahill, & Gregory, 2011). Our goal for the current exploratory study was to contribute to this body of research using the elements delineated in a set of internationally recognized professional literacy standards for novice teachers of all grade levels (IRA, 2010). Specifically, we sought to discover how literacy teacher educators

promoted understandings with curriculum, instructional approaches, and resources among preservice teachers.

Review of Literature

ILA is an internationally recognized professional standards that describe the behaviors, knowledge, and skills desired among novice literacy professionals (ILA, 2018a; IRA, 2010). At the time of the current study, there were six professional standards: (1) Foundational Knowledge, (2) Curriculum and Instruction, (3) Assessment and Evaluation, (4) Diversity, (5) Literate Environment, and (6) Professional Learning and Leadership (IRA, 2010). Within each standard, specific corresponding elements were outlined, along with specific examples of how competence may be demonstrated for each professional role (i.e., education support personnel, classroom teacher, reading specialist/literacy coach, teacher educator, and administrator). The current study focused upon the elements associated with the second standard, Curriculum and Instruction, for classroom teachers. The Curriculum and Instruction standard stated that preservice teachers "use instructional approaches, materials, and an integrated, comprehensive, balanced curriculum to support student learning in reading and writing" (p. 8). The following review of literature provides a brief description for each element associated with this standard, as well as specific literature-based examples of preparation practices.

Curriculum

The first element within the Curriculum and Instruction standard specified that preservice teachers, "use foundational knowledge to design or implement an integrated, comprehensive, and balanced curriculum" (IRA, 2010, p. 20). Preservice teachers must learn ways to align curriculum with requisite standards (e.g., state or national standards) and base

implementation of curriculum on the interests, experiences, and prior understandings of their students. Preservice teachers must also learn to collaborate with other professionals to meet the individual needs of all students and evaluate their implementation of curriculum to ensure learning goals are met.

One way in which literacy teacher educators develop competence with aspects of curriculum among preservice teachers is through authentic tasks in coursework. For example, Rule, Montgomery, and Vander Zanden (2014) executed a series of lessons in a curriculum methods course that demonstrated how to integrate aspects of literacy (i.e., reading and writing) into content area instruction (i.e., social studies) to foster social-emotional development (i.e., compassion) among young students.

Literacy teacher educators also develop competence among preservice teachers with this element through field-based experiences. For example, Rogers, Cooper, Nesmith, and Purdum-Cassidy (2015) designed a field-based learning activity for preservice teachers to plan and implement a curriculum that integrated reading (i.e., children's literature) into a content area (i.e., mathematics) among actual third- and fourth-grade students. As literacy teacher educators, Rogers et al. empowered preservice teachers to make their own decisions regarding curriculum with input from the teacher in their assigned classroom. By doing so, preservice teachers were able to practice making curricular decisions based upon their specific classroom contexts and students' learning needs.

Instructional Approaches

The second element within the Curriculum and Instruction standard specified that preservice teachers "use appropriate and varied instructional approaches, including those that develop word recognition, language comprehension, strategic knowledge, and reading–writing

connections" (IRA, 2010, p. 20). Preservice teachers must develop a repertoire of instructional approaches and learn how to select, use, and differentiate specific instructional approaches based upon intended purposes, research-based rationales, and students' needs. Preservice teachers must also learn how to evaluate the effectiveness of selected instructional approaches, as well as how to augment instruction with a variety of resources to enhance student learning.

One way in which literacy teacher educators develop competence with this element is by combining university-based classroom learning with field-based experiences. For example, Gillett and Ellingson (2017) sought to develop preservice teachers' understandings with running records and described two different approaches they use based upon the format of their courses. With both approaches, preservice teachers first receive explicit and guided instruction in the university-based classroom from a designated expert (i.e., the literacy teacher educator or a current school district literacy professional) on how to use running records. To promote deeper understandings, explicit and guided instruction were supported with helpful resources, such as audio recordings of students reading, explanatory professional development videos, and closely related professional texts. Next, preservice teachers left the university-based classroom setting to complete multiple running records with actual students in local schools under the guidance of a classroom teacher. Afterwards, preservice teachers worked with a designated expert to analyze data from their running records and plan follow-up instructional approaches based upon the learning needs of each student.

Resources

The third element within the Curriculum and Instruction Standard specified that preservice teachers "use a wide range of texts (e.g., narrative, expository, and poetry) from

traditional print, digital, and online resources" (IRA, 2010, p. 20). Preservice teachers must learn how to use research to guide their selection and use of digital, online, and print resources. Furthermore, preservice teachers must learn how to create a classroom library of such resources that is accessible and inclusive for all students.

There are a number of ways in which literacy teacher educators develop both personal and professional competence among preservice teachers with traditional print, digital, and online resources. For example, Kerry-Moran (2016) used traditional print books during course activities to develop reading expression among preservice teachers. Kerry-Moran also noted the value of using traditional print books to model use of effective read-aloud instructional strategies and techniques. Similarly, Larson (2013) designed a series of course tasks to familiarize preservice teachers with tools and features associated with digital books. Consequently, these course tasks simultaneously cultivated preservice teachers' understandings of how to incorporate digital books into instruction effectively. In this same manner, Damico and Pano (2016) described a classroom activity that required preservice teachers to independently read and evaluate information from various online sources concerning the controversial topic of climate change. Through participation in this activity, preservice teachers developed their own systematic approach to critically read and evaluate online texts and learned how to impart these skills among their own students at the same time.

Theoretical Framework

According to Bandura (1971), the fundamental concept of social learning is that learning, "is a continuous reciprocal interaction between behavior and its controlling conditions" and emphasized "the important role played by vicarious symbolic and self-regulatory processes" (p. 2). Bandura (1971, 1977) developed the model of Social Learning

Theory by taking the concepts of classical and operant conditioning presented in behaviorist learning theories and combining them with concepts associated with observational learning and mediating processes.

Bandura (1971) posited, "Virtually all learning phenomena resulting from direct experiences can occur on a vicarious basis through observation of other people's behavior and its consequences for them" (p. 2). Through observations, an individual encodes behavior and may imitate observed behaviors later (Bandura, 1971, 1977, 1989). When an individual imitates a behavior, they receive either negative or positive reinforcements from others, which may affect future behavior imitations. Mediational processes are concerned with the cognitive functions that occur during observational learning. Bandura (1989) defined four mediational processes:

- Attentional processes determine notable behaviors when an individual's attention has been aroused.
- Retention processes encode notable behaviors into an individual's memory.
- Behavioral production processes transform behaviors stored in an individual's memory into appropriate actions.
- Motivational processes evaluate positive and negative reinforcements experienced from enacted behaviors to determine future use.

Since Bandura's (1971, 1977) Social Learning Theory posited that learning can occur through both direct and vicarious experiences, Bandura, Adams, and Beyer (1977) examined the role of self-efficacy in both types of learning situations. Their findings revealed that direct experiences led to "higher, more generalized, and stronger" levels of self-efficacy among learners then vicarious learning experiences (p. 136). This finding, along with the tenets of

Bandura's Social Learning Theory, provided the theoretical framing for our analysis of the ways in which literacy teacher educators promoted understandings with curriculum, instructional approaches, and resources among preservice teachers.

Methods

The methodology for this qualitative study is discussed through context, data collection, and analysis.

Context

In a previous cross-sectional study, we examined the viewpoints of literacy teacher educators concerning the preparedness of preservice teachers in relation to the ILA's professional standards for novice classroom teachers (Sharp, Raymond, & Piper, 2018). We designed an electronic survey instrument that included a combination of closed- and open-ended questions related to the elements and standards. With the closed-ended questions, respondents rated how they viewed levels of preparation among preservice teachers for each element associated with all six standards (i.e., Not At All Prepared, Slightly Prepared, Somewhat Prepared, Very Prepared, and Extremely Prepared). With the open-ended questions, respondents described how they addressed elements associated with all six standards in their preparation practices.

After we developed the survey instrument in our previous study, we conducted a pilot test among 20 individuals. Pilot test participants included literacy teacher educators, higher education leadership faculty, and literacy leaders within K-12 who provided feedback regarding the clarity and functionality of the electronic survey. Based upon this feedback, we made a few minor revisions to wording on the survey instrument to enhance readability.

Once we finalized the survey instrument, we created a database of literacy teacher educators who were affiliated with the 67 teacher preparation programs accredited by the state's education agency. We identified literacy teacher educators by consulting the website for each teacher preparation program and other publically available information, such as class schedules. Through our web search efforts, we identified 457 literacy teacher educators. We invited each literacy teacher educator to participate in the previous study via email during a designated 4-week period and sent one reminder at the beginning of the final week to encourage participation. When the survey period closed, 65 literacy teacher educators had completed the survey (see Sharp, Raymond, & Piper (2018) for a full reporting of quantitative findings).

Data Collection and Analysis

To achieve the goal of the current study, we retrieved qualitative data collected in our previous study from the open-ended question, "Specifically, how do you promote literacy professionals' understandings with instructional approaches, materials, and curriculum to support student literacy learning." We analyzed data by element (i.e., curriculum, instructional approaches, and resources) with open and axial coding (Saldaña, 2016; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). We first used open coding to break down data and begin labeling discrete concepts and categories. We then used axial coding to make connections between concepts and categories, as well as identify the presence of any sub-categories (see Table 1 for examples). Throughout the coding process, we used the constant comparative method to search for similarities and differences within and across the data (Bernard & Ryan, 2010; Merriam, 2009; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Reliability and validity were further established through the maintenance of a

written codebook and frequent research team meetings that were held to ensure intercoder agreement (Saldaña, 2016).

Table 1

Elements, Categories & Sub-categories, and Concepts

Elements	Categories & Sub-categories	Concepts
Curriculum	Content-based (Broad)	• Integrate content areas • Comprehensive curriculum analysis
	Content-based (Narrow)	• Teach lesson planning • Use assessments to drive instruction
	Standards-based	• Align instruction with state standards
Instructional Approaches	General Instructional Strategies	• Small groups • Deliver mini-lessons
	Reading Instructional Strategies	• Read literature aloud • Use shared reading
Resources	Types	• Children's literature texts • Text sets
	Evaluation Techniques	• Developmentally appropriate texts • High-quality texts

Findings

In the current study, there were 65 respondents, from a possible pool of 457 identified literacy teacher educators, which achieved a low response rate. However, approximately 85%

of respondents (n = 55) indicated that they had five or more years of experiences with preparing literacy professionals. Thus, we determined that the research sample for the current study consisted primarily of knowledgeable and seasoned literacy teacher educators. The following sections present the findings for the elements of curriculum, instructional approaches, and resources.

Curriculum

Within the element of curriculum, respondents indicated that they develop competence among preservice teachers by addressing content- and standards-based curriculum planning. According to respondents, content-based curriculum planning included both broad topics (e.g., how to create an integrated curriculum, how to conduct a comprehensive curriculum analysis) and narrow topics (e.g., individual lesson planning, sequencing, and assessments for a unit of instruction), whereas standards-based curriculum planning focused upon how to align instruction with the mandated state educational standards. One respondent emphasized that preservice teachers must be, "able to connect coursework with real-world application of instructional approaches and base it all on state curriculum standards."

Findings revealed ways in which respondents addressed curriculum among preservice teachers within the university classroom. For example, one respondent shared that they place a heavy emphasis on "extensive hands-on practice with lesson planning and implementation." Similarly, another respondent explained that they require preservice teachers to "develop balanced literacy units." In this same manner, respondents also described ways in which they attempt to make connections between the university classroom and field-based contexts. For example, one respondent made arrangements for preservice teachers to, "conduct observations

in classrooms where balanced literacy programs are being implemented" and then facilitated follow-up class discussions concerning "high-quality examples" of their observations.

Instructional Approaches

Within the element of instructional approaches, respondents indicated that they develop competence among preservice teachers by addressing general and reading instructional strategies. According to respondents, general instructional strategies encompass a wide range of teaching practices appropriate for any curricular area. These teaching practices included small group instruction, mini-lessons, cooperative learning strategies, instructional scaffolds, and differentiation. In contrast, respondents noted that reading instructional strategies encompassed specific teaching practices for balanced literacy components. These teaching practices included read-alouds, shared reading, and guided reading.

Our findings reflected a myriad of ways in which respondents addressed general and reading instructional strategies among preservice teachers within the university classroom. These included:

- instructor modeling of "skills-based instruction with specific phonemes and graphemes while using children's books, worksheets, and games;"
- "hands-on practice" with balanced literacy components;
- "small group" cooperative learning games; and
- classroom discussions.

Findings also demonstrated ways in which respondents tried to make connections between content learned in the university classroom and teaching practices in field-based contexts. Respondents noted that preservice teachers complete "lots of field experiences working with children in schools," so they incorporated assignments that required preservice

teachers "to reflect on what they have learned in class and what they are seeing in the K-12 classrooms." One respondent acknowledged that the great efforts they made with addressing the element of instructional approaches "equips [preservice teachers] with resources and strategies for use in clinical teaching and future classrooms."

Resources

Within the element of resources, respondents indicated that they develop competence among preservice teachers by addressing types of resources available to support instruction, as well as how to select suitable resources. The types of resources that respondents referred to were individual children's literature texts, text sets, professional texts, and digital media. With these resources in mind, respondents specified that they also show preservice teachers how to use specific evaluation techniques to identify developmentally appropriate, high quality, and varied resources.

Our findings reflected a small number of ways in which respondents addressed resources among preservice teachers within the university classroom. One respondent noted that their own use of "varied and thoughtfully-selected materials" influenced how preservice teachers could select quality resources for their future classrooms. Another respondent explained that they first "share a wide range of materials and resources" with preservice teachers and then task preservice teachers with locating and selecting "a wide range of materials for their own use." Although respondents expressed "the belief that materials themselves do not teach," it was not clear how respondents made connections with resources among preservice teachers between the university classroom and field-based contexts.

Discussion

Teaching is a complex, multifaceted profession (Labaree, 2000). As schools are impacted by accountability (Graue, et al., 2017; Oldham, 2018) and classrooms become more diverse (Alvermann, 2002; Frankel et al., 2013; Gambrell et al., 2011; Roe, 1992; Schwartz & Gallant, 2009), much attention has been given to teacher preparation and teacher quality (Adnot, et al., 2017; Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2001; Darling-Hammond & Youngs, 2002; Goldhaber, et al., 2018). With respect to literacy teachers, preservice teachers must develop competence with "the theory-to-practice decision-making process" (Wickstrom et al., 2006, p. 27) and learn how to "unite their training, professional knowledge about students' needs and interests, as well as the social dynamics of classroom interactions" (Block, et al., 2002, p. 181). Additionally, preservice teachers must be able to effectively demonstrate that they can meet the learning needs of all learners through appropriate lesson accommodations, adaptations, and modifications (Dee, 2010). It is evident that high-quality literacy teacher preparation is vital for K-12 student success (Hollins, 2017; ILA, 2015; Lacina & Block, 2011).

Effective literacy teachers know how to "use instructional approaches, materials, and an integrated, comprehensive, balanced curriculum to support student learning in reading and writing" (IRA, 2010, p. 8). Thus, preservice teachers must learn ways to: (a) implement an aligned, standards-based literacy curriculum that considers the interests, experiences, and prior understandings of their students; (b) select, use, and differentiate specific instructional approaches and evaluate their effectiveness; and (c) select, use, and provide all students with access to a variety of quality digital, online, and print resources. As mentors, literacy teacher educators must employ preparation practices that promote instructional capacity and

competence among preservice teachers to support their development as skilled novice literacy professionals (Grossman, et al., 2009; Wold et al., 2011). In the current study, we invited a sample of knowledgeable and seasoned literacy teacher educators to describe the preparation practices that they use to develop preservice teachers' understandings with curriculum and instruction and used Bandura's (1971, 1977, 1989) Social Cognitive Theory as a theoretical lens with which to examine and determine the significance of our findings.

Our findings revealed that literacy teacher educators foster preservice teachers' understandings with: (a) content- and standards-based curriculum planning; (b) general and reading instructional strategies; and (c) types of resources, including how to select suitable resources. Literacy teacher educators reported a diverse collection of course-based learning activities that occurred within the university classroom and field-based learning activities that took place in authentic contexts, such as K-12 schools. Thus, our findings were congruent to preparation practices that were described in extant literature.

In terms of quantity of preparation practices, our findings uncovered a variety of preparation practices that literacy teacher educators use to address the elements of curriculum and instructional approaches. However, we noted that there was a shortage of preparation practices that literacy teacher educators use to address the element of resources. Moreover, our findings did not reveal explicit ways in which literacy teacher educators provide preservice teachers with course-based training or field-based learning activities focused on differentiating instruction in response to individual student needs.

While it is critical for teacher educators to be mindful of practices that support preservice teachers' development, the findings also assert that teacher educators must consider the role of learning and implementation of instructional practices as rooted in the social

learning theory. Promoting a high-quality literacy learning environment will increase preservice teachers' understandings of literacy education.

Implications

Based on these findings, we encourage literacy teacher educators to engage in a comprehensive self-analysis of their own preparation practices to ensure that preservice teachers are sufficiently prepared as competent novice literacy teachers. One area we encourage literacy teacher educators to examine carefully are ways in which they prepare preservice teachers to address differentiated instruction in the classroom. Literacy teacher educators should ensure that learning experiences implemented in the university classroom and field-based contexts throughout the entire program work in harmony to promote preservice teachers' growth with differentiated instruction. Conducting a self-analysis may reveal gaps and areas of teacher preparation that literacy teacher educators need to address more evenly. More importantly, we encourage literacy teacher educators to examine the effectiveness of their preparation practices. As Kosnik and Beck (2008) noted, "What was taught [to preservice teachers] was not always what was learned" (p. 124).

Limitations and Areas for Future Research

As with any research endeavor, there were three major limitations with the current study. First, sample size was small and limited to literacy teacher educators who were affiliated with teacher preparation programs in one geographic area which limits the generalizability of the findings.Follow-up studies could be conducted that utilize larger sample sizes and include participants from multiple areas, regions, and countries. Second, analysis was limited to data collected from one survey that was electronically disseminated and may have affected the extent to which respondents reported information. For example,

survey participants may have disregarded the survey due to spam filters or the time commitment for completion. Future studies should use research designs and data collection methods that gain more prolific insights from literacy teacher educators, such as distribution of hard copies of the survey at professional conferences, focus groups, and individual interviews. Third, our analysis was exploratory and only considered the preparation practices reported by literacy teacher educators. We did not examine the extent to which preparation practices impacted preservice teachers' understandings. Future studies should examine preparation practices in more detail to identify specific preparation practices that promote higher levels of efficacy among preservice teachers. Based on these limitations we strongly encourage teacher education stakeholders not to generalize our findings beyond the sample population in this study. Rather the voices from these teacher educators should be viewed as a springboard for a similar study with a larger population.

Conclusion

Fostering instructional capacity and competence among literacy teachers is of primary importance in an era of accountability and diversity. Schools contend with ever-changing challenges and pressures that influence curriculum, instructional approaches, and resources. Literacy teacher educators play a vital role in preparing novice literacy teachers to navigate these challenges and pressures effectively. As literacy teacher educators design learning experiences for preservice teachers, it is critical that they reply upon preparation practices that bridge learning in the university classroom to authentic school contexts. With this in mind, literacy teacher educators should also stay connected to practicing literacy teachers and how they attend to curriculum, instructional approaches, and resources in their classrooms. By doing so, literacy teacher educators position themselves to learn about novel and innovative

teaching practices associated with curriculum and instruction, as well as areas that may require more attention during teacher preparation.

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A Descriptive Analysis of PETE Master's Programs in the United States And their Alignment with Advanced Teaching Standards

Jamie Gilbert

Abstract

Research regarding physical education teacher education (PETE) programs in the United States is narrowly focused, placing predominant emphasis on undergraduate programs. The purpose of this study was to provide a descriptive analysis of PETE master's programs in the United States and examine their adherence to SHAPE America's advanced standards and four guiding principles. A non-experimental, cross-sectional descriptive research design, and two-phase approach were used to collect data. A survey yielded descriptive statistics to analyze program demographics (n=13). Phone-based semi-structured interviews collected data from program affiliates (n=4) regarding adherence to advanced standards and four guiding principles. Data analysis revealed four dominant themes emerging from participant data: (1) Leadership Development; (2) Inquiry-Based Learning; (3) Curriculum Mapping; and (4) Enrollment Management. Findings explained programs integration and prioritization of advanced standards and four guiding principles, with direct alignment varying by program. Additionally, admission and licensure requirements have been altered to maximize enrollment potential.

Keywords: physical education teacher education, PETE.

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Research shows that undergraduate accreditation requirements have placed a significant focus on the structure and content of undergraduate Physical Education Teacher Education (PETE) programs in the United States (Mawer, 2014). Several studies outlining features that comprise undergraduate PETE curricular structure, program demographics, and programs' adherence to teaching standards (Ayers & Housner, 2008; Hetland & Strand, 2010; Taliaferro, Ayers & Housner, 2017; Wiegand, et al., 2004) combine to encompass this strong undergraduate curricular focus. Studies by Ayers and Housner (2008) and Taliaferro et al. (2017) outlined continuous development of PETE undergraduate program standard adherence, program descriptions, and formed the preliminary basis for this study. To produce a graduate-level replica to Ayers and Housner's (2008), and Taliaferro et al's. (2017) studies, this research focuses on PETE master's curricular structure, faculty demographics, and programs' incorporation of advanced standards. Compared to undergraduate counterparts, less is known about PETE master's degree programs in the United States, including curricular alignment with advanced standards and research regarding the relationship of continuing education to expertise in teaching (Hooper & Butler, 2013). Much of the existing research surrounding PETE master's programs, while rich in valuable information, places a narrow focus on the curricular structure of one program (Bulger, et al., 2017; Dauenhauer et. al, 2015; Dauenhauer, et al., 2017; Davis & Hawkins, 2014; Ramsey, et al., 2009), and PETE graduate student socialization (Richards, et al., 2018).

PETE Standards

SHAPE America (Society of Health and Physical Educators) oversees the development of standards for what teacher candidates (TCs) should know and be able to do upon completion of an accredited PETE program (SHAPE America, 2015) and is one of the

national authorities on physical education in the United States. Programs designed for initial licensure must use SHAPE America's initial PETE standards to meet accreditation requirements. Programs providing advanced-level (e.g., master's degree, post-initial licensure) training should use SHAPE America's advanced standards as a guiding framework, and provide evidence that candidates meet underlying elements of the standards for the standard to be met (SHAPE America, 2015).

Advanced Standards and Guiding Principles

Advanced PETE standards have three focus areas and four foundational guiding principles and were designed for the licensed educator to progress from the skills and knowledge required from one standard to the next. Professional knowledge (Standard 1) acts as a foundation. The master's TC must possess and apply foundational content knowledge into professional practice (Standard 2). Professional leadership (Standard 3) outlines expectations for advanced skills, knowledge, and dispositions to develop the teacher as a professional leader (NASPE, 2009).

Professional knowledge (Standard 1) is based on the idea that advanced TCs in physical education (PE) enter the program understanding content knowledge, application, and assessment that form the preliminary base for instruction (NASPE, 2009). Professional practice (Standard 2) focuses on validating teachers' ability to integrate and apply pedagogical skills, professional knowledge, and dispositions acquired during initial preparation. Teacher leadership (Standard 3) refers to skill demonstrated by practicing teachers whose leadership impact extends beyond their classrooms (Danielson, 2006). To determine programs utilization of SHAPE America's advanced standards, focus was placed on the four guiding principles

which serve as an anchor to the three advanced standards: focus on learning rather than teaching, integrated knowledge base, the importance of inquiry, and the role of leadership.

Purpose

This study provides a descriptive analysis of PETE masters programs in the United States, and addressed the following questions: (1) What is the descriptive profile of PETE master's programs including instructor background and curriculum content? (2) Do PETE master's programs align curricula with the SHAPE America advanced teacher standards for professional knowledge professional practice, and professional leadership, and/or the four guiding principles used to inform these standards? Research in this area is necessary to make a significant addition to essential findings in PETE master's program literature, gain a greater depth of knowledge of the profile of existing PETE master's programs in the United States, and assess PETE master's programs' incorporation of and adherence to SHAPE America's advanced standards.

Method

This study employed a non-experimental, cross-sectional descriptive research design (Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen, & Walker, 2013). The quantitative survey was utilized to analyze descriptively the demographics of PETE master's programs. A reflective qualitative component was utilized to analyze PETE master's programs' use of the four anchors established as guiding framework for advanced standards. An inductive approach to semi-structured telephone interviews was used (Goddard & Melville, 2004).

Participants

Twenty-seven program affiliates from colleges and universities offering a PETE master's degree were recruited to participate using a multiple step sampling procedure. As an

initial step in sampling frame construction, the researcher accessed an extant list of programs from a database of colleges and universities offering a bachelor's degree in PETE (Ayers & Housner, 2008), and from a search of programs listed at www.gradschools.com. The final list of graduate programs was formed for the specific purpose of this study and included 27 United States colleges and universities offering master's degree programs in PETE. Of the 27 programs, 15 (56%) program representatives agreed to complete the survey. Thirteen (48%) of those respondents replied with usable survey data. Two additional participants began completion of the survey but neglected to follow through. Of the 13 respondents, 11 (40%) completed the survey in its entirety. Four of the 13 respondents agreed to participate in semi-structured phone interviews. All semi-structured interview participants were professors directly affiliated with PETE master's programs.

Instrumentation

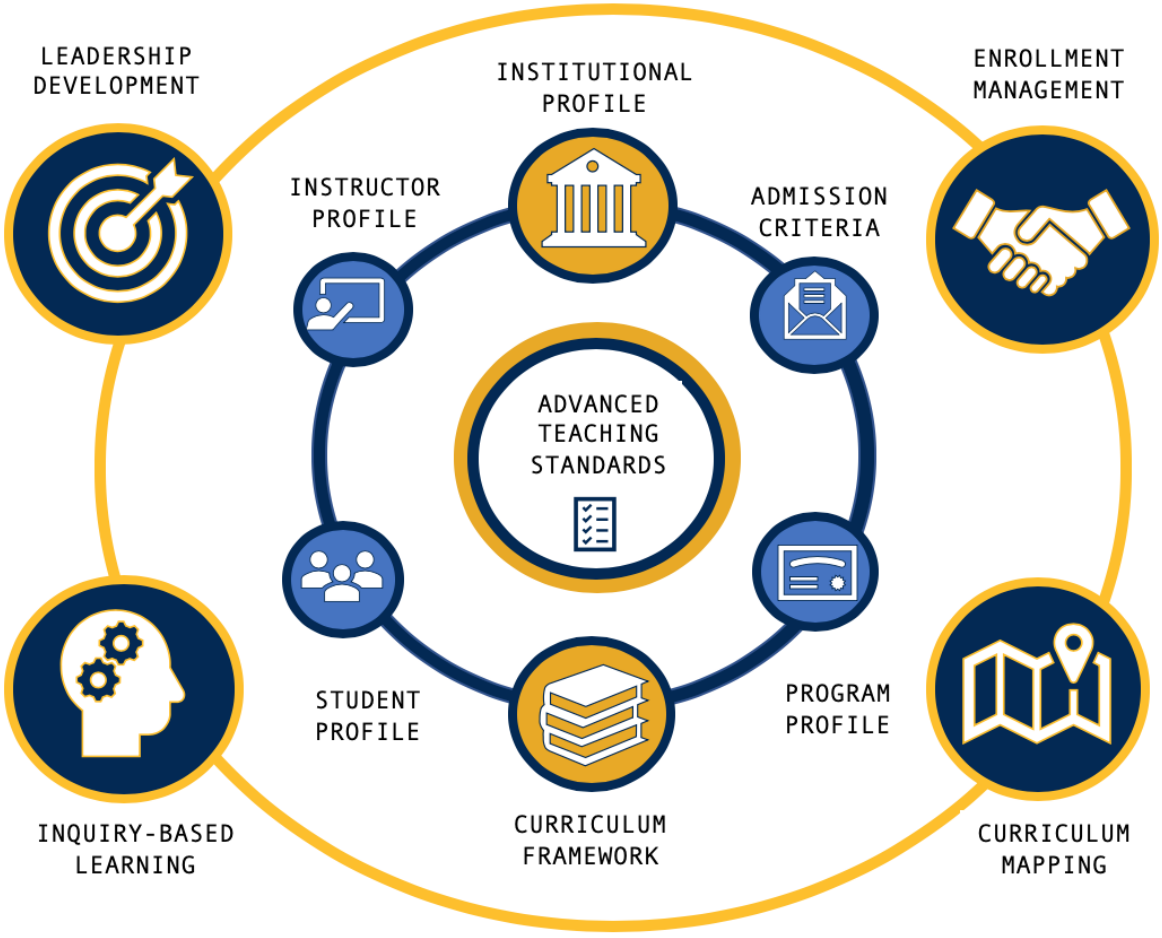
Data were gathered in a two-phase approach. A survey was used to gather demographic profile information about programs offering a master's degree in PETE. The 29-item survey was based on existing instruments (Ayers & Housner, 2008; NASPE, 2008; SHAPE America, 2015), and developed for the purpose of this study. To determine programmatic use of each element tied to advanced standards 1-3, participants were given a detailed description of each advanced standard and guiding principles. Next, they were asked to indicate using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 'not a priority' to 'high priority' the level of priority their program gave to each guiding principle throughout its entire curriculum (Allen & Seaman, 2007). The purpose of interviews was to collect data applicable to each program's adherence to the advanced standards by examining use of the four guiding

principles. Interviews consisted of six questions attempting to ascertain program's curricular alignment with the advanced standards from the distinct perspective of program affiliates.

Results and Discussion

Data results and discussion are divided into two focal segments and included several subthemes. Merging results and discussion lends to greater clarity for the reader. Inner yellow circles of Figure 1 depict survey results, with Curriculum Framework and Institutional Profile as predominant themes. Student and Instructor Profile are subthemes under Institutional Profile. Program Profile and Admission Criteria are subthemes under Curriculum Framework. Outer blue four major themes from the semi-structured interviews.

Figure 1: Data Themes



Survey

The survey contained two focal categories of institutional profile and curriculum framework. Under these focal categories, subcategories of instructor profile, student profile, admission criteria, and program profile emerged.

Institutional Profile

Institutional profile includes student population, university Carnegie classification, private or public affiliation, geographic region, and developed environment (See Table1). The student population included on-campus and distance learning and ranged from 4,000-36,000 students. The overwhelming majority reported a Carnegie classification of doctoral university (53.85%) or masters granting college or university (38.46%). PETE master's degree programs were offered at predominantly doctoral and masters granting universities. The majority of the respondents (84.62%) indicated that their university offered a master's degree and a bachelor's degree in PETE, and approximately one-third (30.77%) listed the additional availability of a doctoral degree. Of the 13 responses, PETE master's programs ranged from 30 to 39 credit hours (M=31.48, SD=2.62).

Eleven (84.62%) of the participating universities were public, and the remaining two (15.38%) identified as private. The southeast (30.77%) and Middle Atlantic (23.08%) geographic regions comprised slightly over half of the useable data (53.85% combined). Heartland and rocky mountain regions each made up 15.38% of usable data with the east-central and New England regions each making up 7.69%. Just over three quarters (76.92%) of universities were located in either rural (38.46%) or urban (38.46%) settings. The remaining universities (23.08%) reported a suburban location.

According to Boyce, Lund, and O'Neil (2015), approximately 96% of institutions offering PETE doctoral degrees (23 in total according to 2011-2012 data) also offer undergraduate PETE programs. Programs offering initial licensure in physical education totaled 96% according to 2011 – 2012 data. Programs offering initial licensure included undergraduate programs, standalone graduate programs, and 5-year programs. The previous findings lend themselves to the belief that if institutions offering initial licensure offer doctoral level PETE programs, that the master's programs may mirror these offerings.

Table 1
Institutional Profile; Classifications, Student Population, Demographics (N=13)

Institution	Student Population	Carnegie Classification	Private/Public	Geographic Region	Developed Environment
1	28,776	Doctoral	Public	East Central	Rural
2	36,000	Doctoral	Public	Heartland	Rural
3	8,300	Master's	Public	Southeast	Urban
4	15,000	Doctoral	Public	Mid Atlantic	Rural
5	4,462	Master's	Private	Mid Atlantic	Urban
6	6,500	Master's	Public	New England	Suburban
7	10,000	Doctoral	Public	Southeast	Rural
8	14,551	Doctoral	Public	Southeast	Suburban
9	7,500	Baccalaureate	Public	Heartland	Rural
10	12,000	Doctoral	Public	Rocky Mountain	Suburban
11	4,000	Master's	Private	Mid Atlantic	Suburban
12	32,000	Doctoral	Public	Rocky Mountain	Urban
13	7,300	Master's	Public	Southeast	Urban

Student Profile

Over half of the respondents indicated their students were enrolled full-time, and 9 programs (69.23%) indicated the availability of graduate assistantships. Of the respondents reporting graduate assistantship availability, half (50%) of those listed other duties as teaching

physical education, teaching before and after-school programs, assisting with labs in schools, teaching physical education in a satellite school, and various instructional responsibilities as additional graduate assistant responses.

In a multi-response question, just over half (62.5%) of respondents indicated teaching basic instruction courses as part of graduate assistant duties and responsibilities. Similarly, 62.5% of institutions stated that research was part of their graduate assistant duties. These findings show that though some PETE masters TCs are gaining valuable experience teaching K-12 students as part of graduate assistantships, those performing other duties may lack the practical experience set forth as a measure for meeting advanced standard criteria. Furthermore, findings indicate that the vast majority are entering master's degree programs without initial licensure, further complicating meeting the requirements of the advanced standards, as advanced PETE Standards are used in the national recognition process to review advanced-level programs. Advanced level programs are defined as "master's degree, post-initial licensure" by SHAPE America (2015, p. 1). Furthermore, SHAPE America explicitly states that institutions offering master's degrees meant for initial licensure should use the initial "PETE Standards for national recognition review" (SHAPE America, 2015, p. 1). When the master's degree is offered in a broad field such as kinesiology, curriculum, or general education, the appropriateness of SHAPE America's advanced standards should receive careful consideration.

Instructor Profile

Eleven participants responded with useable data in the instructor profile portion of the survey (see Table 2). The number of faculty delivering instruction in the participating PETE masters programs varied from a low of two individuals to a high of eight with a relatively

even representation by gender across all programs. The majority of programs were taught by primarily Caucasian faculty of both genders, showing a lack of diversity by race/ethnicity across full-time faculty (92.7% Caucasian, 5.5% Asian). One program did indicate that one instructor fell into the race category of "other," but did not indicate that race in their reply. This echoes Ayers and Housner's (2008) and Taliaferro et. al (2017) findings of an overly representative population of Caucasian faculty in PETE (respondents reported employing a 92% Caucasian faculty). However, the trend shows an increase in non-Caucasian faculty; 9% in 2005–2006 to 11% in 2008–2009 and 15% in 2011–2012 (Boyce & Rikard, 2011; Boyce, et al., 2015; Taliaferro et. al, 2017).

Table 2

Instructor Profile; Race, Gender, Status, Higher Education Credentials (N=11)

Institution	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
No. of Instructors	6	5	3	3	8	5	6	5	3	2	5
Gender											
Male	67%	20%		67%	37.5%	80%	67%	60%	67%	50%	67%
Female	33%	80%	100%	33%	62.5%	20%	33%	40%	33%	50%	33%
Race											
Caucasian	100%	80%	100%	100%	100%	60%	100%	100%	100%	100%	80%
Asian		20%				20%					20%
Other						20%					
Faculty Status											
Full-Time	83%	80%	100%	100%	75%	100%	83%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Part-Time	17%	20%			25%		17%				
Highest Degree Earned											
Doctorate	83%	40%	100%	100%	87.5%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Master's	17%	40%			12.5%						
Bachelor's		20%									
K-12 Teaching Experience (Full Time)											
Yes	67%	80%	67%	67%	25%	100%	67%	80%	100%	100%	40%
No	33%	20%	33%	33%	75%		33%	20%			60%
Years Teaching in Higher Education											
Mean	7.5	9.4	13	9	15.4	10.2	10.5		12.6	21	17
Range	14	10	14	8	25	31	17		18	18	39

In a 2014 study describing their current practices, many teacher educator interviewees reported falling back on their own experiences as classroom teachers to inform their work with preservice students (Goodwin et al., 2014). Goodwin et al's. (2014) findings also showed that teacher educators often feel unprepared in their role, but still offer valuable insight into methodical thinking about what represents a high-quality teacher education program.

Curriculum Framework

Of 13 participating programs, almost half (*n*=6) utilized the cohort system. All 13 programs (100%) are designed for coursework to be completed in the fall, spring and summer terms. The only curricular aspect applicable to all 13 (100%) programs was a research requirement. Participating program affiliates did not indicate that a specific line of research was required.

Content threaded throughout courses included technology and its application to PE, administration research and statistics, teaching methods, motor learning, special education, sport pedagogy, coaching, and health. Specific themes or courses stranded in program coursework included adapted sport and PE, technology, and foundational knowledge. It is important to note that participants were able to select multiple course content offerings. Course content specific to curricular models, standards-based assessments, school-based physical activity, supervision, and hands-on experiences were incorporated less across programs (See Table 4). Based on instructors' areas of expertise (See Table 3), findings may lead to the conclusion that coursework in PETE master's programs appears to be aligned with expertise of faculty as opposed to being based on the advanced standards. Areas in which instructors were highly specialized played a greater role in program coursework according to participants.

Table 4

Concepts Threaded Throughout PETE Master's Coursework
Note: Participants may choose more than one option (N=13)

Coursework Themes	Institutions Offering
Adapted Sport and PE	81.82%
Foundational Knowledge	81.82%
Technology in PE	72.73%
Field Experiences	63.62%
Multiculturalism and Diversity	45.45%
Hands on Practicum	36.36%
Instructional Models	36.36%
Curricular Models	36.36%
School Based Physical Activity	36.36%
Standards Based Assessments	36.36%
Supervision	36.36%

Admission Criteria

Only 2 of 13 programs (15.4%) required an initial teaching license in physical education or another discipline as a requirement for admission. The remainder resulted in initial teaching licensure. Three of 13 (23%) programs that reported no licensure requirement also stated that teaching licensure had been a requirement for admission in the past but has since been eliminated. This may be due to a rising need to maintain and increase program enrollment (Ayers & Woods, 2019; Bulger, et al., 2016). The mean number of students attending full time was 52.69 and mean for part-time attendance was 47.31. This may be due to the availability of graduate assistantships which typically require full time attendance, in the majority of programs. Interestingly, full time attendance and lack of requirement for initial teaching licensure means that the masters TC is not currently a practicing PE teacher. SHAPE America explicitly outlines that its advanced standards are intended for post initial licensure, and those who are currently an

active practitioner (SHAPE America, 2015). Though lack of current practice does not equate to lack of licensure, many programs have intentionally designed course assignments and schedules to benefit those currently teaching in field.

In response to the option to elaborate on the elimination of teaching licensure as a requirement, one respondent indicated, "While this [teaching licensure] is preferred, we have adjusted our admission criteria to not require this [certification]. Although our program is not an initial certification program, we have added a post-baccalaureate track that allows students to earn certification through a combination of UG [undergraduate] and MS-level [masters level] coursework. Background in physical education, sport pedagogy, physical activity, and education is preferred, but not required." None of the program representatives indicated that previous teaching experience was a requirement for program admission. It should be noted that licensure and experience are separate. Licensure refers to the certification to teach upon completion of the requirements of a bachelor's degree teacher-training program. Experience refers to the act of teaching in the classroom or gymnasium setting.

Program Profile

Approximately one-third of respondents (36.3%) indicated that their masters in PETE program was accredited on a national level (NCATE/CAEP/TEAC), 36.3% indicated state level accreditation, with the remaining programs (27.4%) not accredited on any level. The overwhelming majority (90.91%) of respondents indicated familiarity with SHAPE America's advanced standards. It should be noted that familiarity on average, the length of time to complete the program varied from a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 6 semesters (*SD*=4.92). In a multi-response question, 70% of respondents indicated that their program was based on state teaching standards, 40% reported their program was based on SHAPE America's advanced teaching

standards, and 20% were based on SHAPE America's initial teaching standards. Each program participant was asked to rate the priority of the elements that composed each of the three advanced standards.

A standard is considered met if all underlying elements are met (SHAPE America, 2015). For Standards 1 (Professional Knowledge) and 2 (Professional Practice) participants rated the majority of the elements as high to essential prioritization in their PETE master's programs (see Tables 5 & 6). One component of Professional Practice discusses reflection, and systematic inquiry about teaching and 63.6% of participants indicated high or essential prioritization of this element. Reflection and inquiry into planning, instruction, and assessment, are essential for continued teacher enhancement (Metzler, 2015).

Table 5
Prioritization of Standard 1; Professional Knowledge (N=11)

Elements	Not a priority	Low Priority	Medium Priority	High Priority	Essential
Knowledge of Content in Movement and Pedagogy	9.09%	9.09%	18.18%	36.36%	27.27%
Knowledge of how to represent content knowledge to make it comprehensible to learners (i.e., pedagogical content knowledge).	9.09%	9.09%	18.18%	18.18%	45.45%
Knowledge of processes and methods of systematic intentional inquiry about learning and teaching in physical education.	18.18%	0.00%	0.00%	36.36%	45.45%

The results from the prioritization Likert scale and the theme of inquiry-based learning in the qualitative portion point to the fact that the master's degree programs participating in this

research do prioritize and implement Professional Practice and inquiry into practice. Standard 3 (Professional Leadership) is the only standard that dropped below the majority of high to essential prioritization (See Table 7). According to Wenner and Campbell (2017) and York-Barr and Duke (2004) the importance of teacher leadership in schools may be second only to classroom instruction. What constitutes a teacher leader remains widely diversified, as teacher leaders hold many titles, including a coach, mentor, and department chair (Wenner & Campbell, 2017).

Table 6

Prioritization of Standard 2; Professional Practice (N=11)

Elements	Not a priority	Low Priority	Medium Priority	High Priority	Essential
Teaching reflects integration of planning, instruction and assessment as a unified process to achieve long- and short-term outcomes/goals.	9.09%	9.09%	9.09%	27.27%	45.45%
Teaching reflects differentiation of instruction based on personal and cultural characteristics of learners.	9.09%	9.09%	9.09%	36.36%	36.36%
Teaching reflects systematic inquiry about the practice and the learners served.	10.00%	10.00%	10.00%	30.00%	40.00%

According to the qualitative findings of this study, the Professional Leadership advanced standard, and the Role of Leadership guiding principle have been incorporated by program

affiliates to help to diversify master's TCs role in and outside of the physical educator further supporting the importance of teacher leadership. The findings from the quantitative portion of this study indicate a lower prioritization than the qualitative portion. This finding lends itself to reexamine the role of teacher leadership in PETE master's degree programs. Interestingly, findings from this study indicated that advanced standards are not a foreign concept; programs are familiar with and incorporating principles of advanced standards but are not basing the entire program on these standards.

Table 7

Prioritization of Standard 3; Professional Leadership in PETE Master's Programs (N=11)

Elements	Not a Priority	Low Priority	Medium Priority	High Priority	Essential
Conducts inquiry into professional knowledge and practice and communicates results of inquiry to the profession and community.	18.18%	9.09%	18.18%	27.27%	27.27%
Continues personal development through contributions to the growth and professional learning of others.	18.18%	9.09%	27.27%	18.18%	27.27%

Semi-Structured Interviews

When four professors affiliated with PETE graduate programs were interviewed regarding their use of SHAPE America's guiding framework to inform the advanced standards, four relevant themes of leadership development, curriculum mapping, inquiry-based learning, and enrollment management emerged. Emergent subthemes under each main theme will be outlined following each preceding larger theme. Two of the four participants were affiliated with

PETE master's programs requiring initial licensure for admission. The remaining two programs had no initial licensure requirement.

Leadership Development

Developing teachers as leaders means that the teacher must assume a range of roles to support success in their profession and school. Leadership roles may be formal or informal, alone or shared, and facilitate school, field, and personal improvement. PE teachers and TCs have a responsibility to promote positive health behaviors and outcomes in schools (Goc Karp et al., 2017), lending graduate expectations to focus on developing the practitioner instead of creating effective novice teachers. According to interview participants, K-12 student progress occurs after the teacher continues to progress and develop as a professional. Masters in PETE courses that intertwine leadership development and leadership initiatives in existing courses were a commonality among 3 out of 4 of interviewees. Participant three responded, "I am not sure that we do [focus on leadership]."

Leadership Strands

Several recent studies (Bulger et al., 2017; Deuahnauer et al., 2017; Goc Karp et al., 2017; Sundaresan, et al., 2017; Zhang, et al., 2018) described the importance of reforming PETE undergraduate and graduate plans of study to incorporate the knowledge, skills and proficiencies essential for a teacher leader CSPAP in K-12 schools. Participant four indicated that one course in their curriculum "is going to focus on leadership and advocacy, and how physical educators can be intentional in how they matriculate through a career and develop as leaders." Participant two named leadership requirements for courses in the PETE master's curriculum ranging from sharing leadership-based projects "with their [PETE master's candidate's] school administrator, or their school board, alternatively, they could decide to take the initiative and share the

outcomes of that project or take it to a greater extent onto their community or even state conference." The program of participant one offered an "assessment course meant for leadership." Meaningful assessment is quickly becoming central to K-12 physical education programs. In December 2015, the authorization of Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) identified physical education as a component of "well- rounded education," a term that has replaced "core academic subjects."

There is a need now, more than ever, for teacher leaders who create and implement well-rounded and meaningful pre and post formative, summative, and standards-based assessments covering the cognitive, psychomotor, and affective domains of learning (Sundaresan et al., 2017). The importance of teacher leadership and its relationship to high quality K-12 student assessment is echoed by participant one stating "you are [PETE masters students] taking data, evaluating it and making day to day decisions" based off of those outcomes. A second university offered a course focused on "guiding a group through curriculum development" and establishing deadlines, dates, and goals. These findings show that there is an awareness of the importance of leadership in PETE, and some masters programs have modified curriculum to meet this need.

Classroom Leadership

According to Fairman and MacKenzie (2015), teachers have a responsibility to be a leader in direct and indirect roles. Participant two stated that leadership focusing on the student (K-12) as a learner requires much "more of a leadership focus [for the teacher]." Programs have shifted from giving teachers the next set of skills to giving them a strong focus on leadership in teaching. The focus on the *importance* of leadership in teaching was a consensus among all interviewees. Participant four's emphasis of this leadership focus is "on bettering oneself as a [master's degree] learner to impact your professional practice and what it is that you do on a day

to day basis with your learners." Poekert, Alexandrou and Darbiann (2016), stated that teacher leadership is increasingly presented as a useful answer to guide teacher learning, school improvement, and policy reform, and noted that leadership development is positioned in the framework of classroom, school, and community.

Leadership Outside of Teaching

Broadening expectations placed on PE teachers have made it essential for educator preparation programs to provide training for teachers to perform leadership functions inside and outside of instruction (Dauenhauer et al., 2017; Erwin, et al., 2014). Participant two's vision of leadership outside of teaching means taking leadership skills to the next level and facilitating the teachers' desire to grow professionally and building "capacity [for leadership] within the spheres of influence, within their communities and beyond." Courses at participant one's university have been "designed for people who would take leadership roles [relevant to physical education] in special associations." Participant two more specifically stated that outside leadership may take shape in the form of becoming a national board-certified teacher, becoming a master teacher, and having teachers "think about their school and community stakeholders involved, their administrators, and look for ways that they could communicate the value of their physical activity and value of physical education outside of their classroom."

Bagley and Margolis (2018) referred to this as hybrid teacher leadership (HTL). HTL focuses on teaching K-12 students and leading outside of the classroom, most notably leadership in the form of professional development and administration. A master's degree is one way to enhance marketability, participate in professional development, and evolve as a dynamic and

reflective practitioner (Arum & Roksa, 2011; Ott, et al., 2015; Petrie & McGee, 2012).

HTL ties directly to the findings of the leadership from this study, and the leadership focus of SHAPE America's advanced standards. It is imperative for PETE master's programs to include a strong leadership focus in the curriculum to develop the advanced TCs as teacher leaders. An additional focus for three interviewees was on building a plan to focus on how they [PETE masters TCs] can develop leadership across their career. The leadership development findings discussed in this section intertwine directly with the guiding principle of the roles of leadership. Note that the small sample size (n=4) may show the prioritization of leadership in the questioned programs. The strong focus, however, may be widespread among PETE master's programs not interviewed for this research. Focusing on building higher capacity for leadership focus in the curriculum lends itself to the next critical topic in the interview findings, curriculum mapping.

Table 8
Summary of Theme 1: Leadership Development

Participant	Representative Quote
P2	"...emphasis then is on bettering oneself as a learner in order to impact your professional practice and what it is that you do on a day to day basis with your learners."
P1	" Leadership is something that we talk about in regard to you are"
P3	"...take it to the next level and share that project with their school administrator, or their school board - and even yet best - they could decide to take the initiative and share the outcomes of that project, or take it to a greater extent onto their community or even state conference..."
P4	"...how would the build capacity within the spheres of influence, within their communities and beyond?" "... legally to justify what it is that their program does ... how it meets national standards... build that leadership plan for themselves of how they are going to develop across their career"

Curriculum Mapping

Curriculum alignment refers to a coherent well-organized curriculum intentionally created to facilitate learning aligned across courses and program completion. Program structure is the home base of the master's program.

Curricular Structure

PETE master's program curricular structure covered all course offering formats. All participating programs offered some online component, including a blended "unique advanced laboratory, follow up course" followed by a face-to-face laboratory setting within a designated time period. Participant three stated that they "don't see that [online program delivery] changing in the next five years." Online student enrollments increased for the 14th straight year in 2016-17, with more than 31% of all college students taking at least one distance education course — and all evidence suggests the uptick has continued (Bednar, 2018; Seaman, et al., 2018).

Participant one's program offered initial PE certification, stating that "we [they] were getting many students who wanted initial certification." PETE specific coursework and requirements varied by program. Participant one's program offered "gradual courses in education followed by 12-15 [credit] hours in physical education," while a second program offered a "master of arts in education with about 12-15 [credit] hours [in physical education]." Additionally, participant one stated that that their university offers a "fifth-year program that leads to a Master of Arts in education with a physical education component." The shift from training practicing teachers to master's program offering initial certification may be viewed adversely. Students may enter the program with little to no knowledge of pedagogical processes, physical education principles and research, and basic terminology in education. While there is no

exact formula to measure the concepts discussed, this topic may be one for further investigation in the future.

Curricular Theme

Curricular themes unique to each university emerged. Participant two's university "decided to go ahead and create this new master's program with the focus on leadership in education, and adult education," while participant one's university positioned themselves toward "the health science approach instead of strictly physical education." Another new curricular theme from participant four included "interdisciplinary approach or multi-disciplinary approach."

The consensus among four interviewees was to design curriculum focused on creating exemplary master teachers. Participant three's curriculum "take(s) into consideration [taking] a look at an integrated body of knowledge that we think exemplifies the master teacher." For recent graduates, connecting professional preparation and the workforce can be a sizeable task (Ensign, et al., 2017). In some instances, once enthusiastic career expectations conflict with the reality of the daily requirements placed on teachers (Ensign et al., 2017). Interestingly, over 40% of novice teachers exit the profession within the first five years (Perda, 2013). This can be linked to the importance of retaining practicing teachers past the five-year mark and beyond. The induction years are a crucial time for developing teaching practices. It is important to introduce varying new experiences and aid in developing the functions of effective teaching. Positive professional development experiences are crucial at this juncture (Ensign et al., 2017). In addition to positive professional development experiences, many teacher educator interviewees reported utilizing their experiences as classroom teachers to inform their work with preservice students. (Goodwin et al., 2014). The positive professional development experience during PETE master's program may be a link to retaining novice teachers past the first five-year mark. These

positive experiences can be achieved in the master's program by offering masters level TCs the chance to expand and restructure their knowledge and areas of expertise, thus bringing relevant and useful new information to the K-12 curriculum.

Program Diversification

Program diversification is any means of diversifying the existing program to enhance the marketability of students. Participant one stated, "the market is so saturated and difficult to get a teaching job they want to diversify [to] get them [students] onboard with a master's degree in PETE and include for example an 8-10 credit adapted certification." Examples of program diversification present in this research included making program graduates marketable to teach on the college level, experience in grant writing, and pay boosts upon obtainment of the master's degree, while other programs have "developed different standards for students who have an interest in becoming an athletic director or school district administrator."

Table 9

Summary of Theme 2 from Semi-Structured Interviews: Curriculum Mapping

Participant	Representative Quote
P1	"...They take a few undergraduate courses and then they take a series of graduate courses. …. 18 hours in physical education... no requirement for any undergraduate physical education courses…"
P2	"Reflection is a component of our physical education program"
P4	"...designed to allow practicing teachers, or professionals in the field to work through professional course work that's really designed to allow them to apply content in their practice - in their school or community based physical activity setting." "...unique advanced laboratory follow up course setting..." "The summer work that they do - 3 credit hours of the bonded work - is followed up with a 1- credit hour advanced lab in either the Fall or Spring semester."
P3	"...developed... different standards... have an interest in becoming an athletic director, or …. some sort of school district administrator, or ... opportunity to learn about those particular issues."

Inquiry-Based Learning.

Analysis of teaching and learning refers to helping pre-service and practicing PE teachers improve teaching skills through practice, analysis, and reflection. Data analysis can provide a picture of students' current knowledge, what they need to know, and what can be done to achieve learning goals (Maass & Engeln, 2018). Maass and Engeln (2018) stated it is essential to provide high-quality inquiry-based learning in professional development on a large scale. High stakes performance assessments, such as edTPA support this implementation of best practices and are quickly becoming consequential with teaching licensure in many states (Metzler, 2014). These performance assessments require teachers to show intentionality and reflection in planning, teaching, and assessing K-12 students. This large-scale professional development may occur

through master's coursework. Greater understanding of how student engagement with genuine inquiry-based approaches is needed to design more meaningful experiences for students (K-12) in physical education (Enright & O'Sullivan, 2012; Kretchmar, 2000), and for developing a curriculum to enhance physical education and experiences beyond the classroom (O'Connor, Jeanes, & Alfrey, 2016).

Effective Teaching

According to participant one, "focus [is placed] on effective teaching techniques [because] little or no experience [took place] in [previous] teaching preparation." Participant one additionally cited program goals to "expose the students to as much as we [instructors] possibly can in a limited amount of time, in a limited number of courses to try to enhance the learning related to the field [PETE]."

Some master's programs are tasked with the duty of preparing candidates who have no teaching certification or experience. Participant three noted that "[we] do our best to bring them [students] up to speed and also introduce them to advanced methods of teaching physical education which we go into in broad depth." The expectation for master's PETE students' performance according to participant four is "much higher than it [expectation] is for the undergraduate students." One way that programs have ensured the production of effective teachers is through a rigorous focus on reflection and assessment. Participant one cited that "students coming in [to the program] [with] teaching experience - reflection concerning what is happening, what works, what doesn't work, the impact it has on the students and students' performance," and "are students learning [and] can you document this learning?"

Models-based instruction in PE can be a valuable instructional tool; however, models-based-practices should work in conjunction with a thoughtful and thorough program (Landi, et

al., 2016). Participant two cited the use of Models Based Instruction as a critical component that "is all about reflection." This instructor conveyed the importance of teaching in the field using a models-based approach followed by reflection for future changes in teaching practice, stating "then they [PETE masters TCs] reflect on parts that are going well and parts that aren't going well, and make adjustments." The focus shifts from lesson planning that typically occurs during undergraduate coursework to effective teaching in graduate coursework. Participant four noted that "it [teaching] is more than the lesson plan, going in and teaching and walking away, [teaching requires an] assessment of what exactly happened in that lesson." Assessment justification and reflective commentary is a critical part of high stakes performance measures that are rapidly becoming consequential with earned teacher certification in many states (Metzler, 2014).

Course Assignments to Reflect Inquiry-Based Learning

During technology coursework, participant four noted that "learners are asked to identify instructional problems that might be solved with an innovative tool and establish a plan for implementing that technology within a unit of instruction then evaluate the effectiveness of it using reflective writing and evaluating the student outcomes and teacher outcomes."

Additional requirements embedded within PETE master's curricula took creating active practitioners through assessment and reflection into account. Examples cited by participant one included "talks, discussion posts, reflective assignments built into each classes' work requires them [students] to think critically about their professional practice." Moreover, candidates are asked to reflect on their teaching practice. Participant two noted that "[masters] candidates are asked to reflect, whether it is on special topics, contemporary issues, or whether it is on particular examples [given in] coursework." Coursework specific to assessment took place in

participant three's program and utilized a broad-spectrum approach in general education. Participant three stated "I try to read widely in regular education, so it is not driven down to just physical education." The purpose of supervision coursework in participant two's program is for "[students to] learn how to observe and watch teaching and giving feedback. So, the emphasis is on promoting student learning."

An action-based research component was unique to one university. Initially designed for social issues and employed in 1946 by K. Lewin, action-based research is a valuable method for executing change through planning, acting, observing, and reflecting (Keegan, 2016). Keegan's (2016) research found that action research was effective in helping PE teachers enhance student learning. The action-based research component discussed by participant four manifested itself as a project requiring the examination of the context "in which they [PETE masters TCs] are in and then be reflective about it," focusing on the question of "is there a particular problem that they may be focusing on to improve." Participant four also noted that "we [faculty] wanted to bring that [action research] back in [to the program]." Overall, participant four outlined the purpose of action-based research on a larger scale was to "take [findings] back to their schools, or community setting, and do action research type of project where they [PETE masters TCs] identify a problem, come up with a plan for implementation, and then evaluate the effectiveness of that plan." Keegan's (2016) research found that action research was effective in helping PE teachers enhance student (K-12) learning.

Finally, formally organized culminating requirements were an essential part of inquiry-based learning in PETE master's programs. Culminating requirements included in participant two's program were "a comprehensive exam with us in physical education before they graduate," "emphasis on learning and learners because it does challenge the student or the professional

learner to think about what practices they can improve upon in themselves (participant four)" and lastly, research requirements in the form of a master's thesis.

Data Driven Effectiveness Through Evidence-Based Practice

Evidence of effectiveness in participant two's program was collected by "allowing teachers to provide video documentation… opens the doors for a lot of new possibilities in teacher education" through video analysis, and supervision coursework where students "[acquire] the training and be able to get the data-driven observation." Since video documentation is becoming a critical component of initial certification through high stakes performance assessment (Metzler, 2014), it is important that those programs offering initial certification in the PETE master's program prepare students to analyze video documentation of teaching to refine their practice. Also, field systems analysis (FSA) can be used separately for quantitative evidence of teachers' strengths and areas in need of improvement (Davis & Hawkins, 2014). The goal of video documentation for participant two's program was to make candidates aware of "formal and informal assessments, discipline, management, and leadership." The findings from the video documentation showcased students' ability to identify and display "interesting growth" within themselves "because of those assignments [video analysis]." Two of four respondents indicated assessment and evaluation related courses within their PETE master's program. These assessment courses take a "data-driven approach…to teach people how to do assessments; how do you assess your students and documenting student learning." Participant four's assessment course focused on the use of assessment data in student evaluation and the "second part of the course focused on how you use the data; so, thinking about the kinds of information and the different types of assessments will leave you and reflecting on the data." Using data to improve teaching allows teachers to inform their instruction, ultimately producing

more effective practitioners. Participant four noted that "teachers that are in the field [are] looking at data points [and] then making decisions and speculating, diagnosing and prescribing what might be next steps."

Table 10

Summary of Theme 3: Inquiry-Based Learning

Participant	Representative Quote
P1	"... our best to bring them up to speed and also introduce them to advanced methods of teaching physical education which we go into in broad depth." "... level of expectations for their performance is much higher than it is for the undergraduate students."
P4	"...take back to their schools, or community setting, and do action research type of project where they identify a problem - come up with a plan for implementation - and then evaluate the effectiveness of that plan."
P3	"…data driven approach in today's educational context...course that is going to be an assessment and evaluation... to teach people how to do assessments."
P4	"... submit video artifacts ...things that a teacher has to be aware of.... Formal and informal assessments, discipline, management, leadership."

Enrollment management

Enrollment management includes student recruitment and retention. Programs also stated features unique to their program are used as a marketing tool to recruit new students. These combine to form the broad category of enrollment management.

Recruitment

All interviewees stated that their universities were deliberate about recruiting students. Participant four stated that "[We are] intentional about providing promotional information to prospective students through a very targeted and automated system; [We are] working with

academic affairs and various online communication platforms for students inquiring about programs." Programs' recruitment efforts focused on incentivizing for enrollment through signature features unique to the program, outside tools available for recruitment, and the challenges faced in student enrollment.

Examples of incentivizing for recruitment include an incentive for student referral, accelerated bachelor's to master's programs, blended programs, and course offerings for non-degree seeking students. Participant four noted that "[those] who refer somebody to the program, and they actually apply, then there will be some incentive for that person too." Participant three's program offers an "accelerated bachelors to master's program, assisting bachelors and PETE students in their junior semester." Participant four also noted the importance of their "free webinars that might allow them [students] if they were to register and take some of the segments and chunks of our content that would allow them to work towards a degree in a little bit more self-paced manner."

Migrating programs toward the online format presented itself as a recruiting tool utilizing distance learning to appeal to the busy practicing educator. Participant two cited that their program is "transitioning solely online from an economic standpoint [and the] university sees that to be a stronger recruiting tool; when it comes to master's programs distance learning, people from all around the world can be able to take teacher certification courses from anywhere." The consensus among participants was that more online [PETE] programs pop up as a way to incentivize the PETE master's program for students considering an advanced degree. At present, countless students access online educational resources with the use of mobile devices, often substituting this for traditional learning interactions (Anshari, et al., 2016). Using online learning has aided professors in increasing efficiency and teaching effectiveness (Park & Lim,

2015; Puzziferro & Shelton, 2014). Over the past two decades, online education has quickly grown (Allen & Seaman, 2015). According to the United States Department of Education (2013), the number of American college students taking an online course is 32%, and those enrolled in a fully online program is 25% (Berry, 2018). Expanding and fine-tuning this online focus in PETE master's program is critical in recruiting and retaining students. According to Berry (2018), Zimmerman and Nimon (2017), and Ke and Hoadley (2009), graduate students who feel connected to peers and faculty have a higher likelihood of engaging academics and are less likely to withdraw from the academic program. These findings greatly impact PETE graduate programs, as all program affiliates surveyed indicated at least some online and distance component in their programs.

Unique Recruitment Features

Unique features of PETE master's programs were fundamental in recruiting prospective students. Participant one noted unique feature of "meetings and hands-on; [I] have people come to my office, sit down, and show me exactly what the program looks like. [Our] strategy is to give that personal touch to students [to let the know that] we have a place for them. [I] personalize as much as I can." Participant two' uses "that [leadership] in some of the recruitment and marketing materials that program graduates go for." Lastly, participant four reiterated the importance of "growing [their program] into a neat mentor-mentee opportunity for the professional learning community to grow in that way we help to attract student with the summer bachelor's program."

Specific recruitment initiatives mentioned by participant four included "looking for ways to connect with Academic Innovation or online tools to help us build some of those professional development credits for teachers in the state and surrounding states," striving to appeal to

students outside of the traditional market, and online education. Enrollment management quickly presented itself as a component in need of attention and expression in PETE master's degree programs. Online and blended course offerings may offer one solution to continued interest and enrollment. The role of leadership guiding principle presented itself yet again relative to enrollment management. The role of leadership was mentioned by participant four noting the "importance of building a mentor/mentee component into their PETE master's program." Additionally, current students are expected to express themselves as leaders in the field by conveying what they have learned during master's coursework to fellow PE teachers and administrators through course projects and action research projects.

Table 11

Summary of Theme 4: Enrollment Management

Participant	Representative Quote
P4	"...intentional about providing promotional information to prospective students through a very targeted and automated system." "... worked with the Office of Academic Innovation, and WV online to build in a communication plan for those who inquire about the program."
P4	"...offering maybe some courses for non-degree seeking students. So, some free webinars that might allow them if they were to register and take some of the segments and chunks of our content that would allow them to work towards a degree in a little bit more self-paced manner."
P3	"...very good retention in this program...we take care of our students ... try to get to know them as best we can... we want them to be successful."
P2	"...constantly looking for ways to appeal to students outside of the market that we have traditionally reached…"
P2	” We do use that (leadership) in some of recruitment and marketing materials that program graduates go for”

Limitations and Future Directions

Between 11 and 13 professors teaching in or affiliated directly with PETE master's programs in the United States completed the survey portion of this research. Thirteen participants completed the survey in its entirety, and 11 completed all portions with the exception of the final 3 questions inquiring the prioritization of advanced standards. Results may not apply to additional existing PETE master's programs within the United States, as each program may be comprised of diverse aspects that make each program unique. Additionally, the evaluation of qualitative data summarizes findings from 4 out of 13 responding universities offering a master's degree in PETE, further narrowing external validity. Some programs indicated the availability of initial certification, creating a need to incorporate initial standards in master's degree programs instead of advanced standards. Programs offering a master's degree in PETE should continue to focus on meaningful incorporation the advanced standards, guiding principles, and utilize initial standards for initial licensure only. Programs should strive to continue and refine the Role of Leadership standard focus to relate explicitly to serving as a PE teacher leader. Though not all programs offered a leadership-specific track, all agreed on the importance of incorporating leadership initiatives for the master teacher. This component should continue to evolve with the PETE master's curriculum.

Data-driven teaching effectiveness through evidence-based practice presented itself as integral to producing advanced physical education teachers. Data-driven effective teaching is imperative in master's programs as more states continue to tie objective teacher assessment through edTPA, National Board Certification, and other subject-specific, performance-based assessments. Many programs are taking on a significant online/blended format to meet the needs of an ever-changing student population, indicating a need to align standard and objectives that

may be met via distance learning. The task of PETE master's professors and curriculum planners should be to seek out meaningful ways of incorporating advanced standards, guiding principles, and initial standards (as necessary) to facilitate online learning relevant to teaching physical education in the K-12 setting. Enrollment management quickly manifested as a prevalent theme. This recruitment and retention focus resulted in programs offering initial certification to candidates and admitting candidates without teacher certification and tied directly to the lack of adherence to SHAPE America's advanced standards. Additionally, a full to partial online component to PETE master's degree programs is becoming widespread from an enrollment management standpoint. Based on recent research and participant feedback, this online trend is a component that will continue to grow with time as a principal focus of programs as they strive to create master physical education teachers.

Conclusion

Some PETE master's programs participating in this research have not been designed intentionally around SHAPE America's advanced standards. Most programs do align with and utilize aspects of SHAPE America's advanced standards in curriculum design. No program required teaching experience for enrollment, while some required initial teacher certification in PE or another discipline. Some programs that did not require certification for admission did offer initial certification as part of their master's degree program. This lack of requirement for teacher certification means that masters' level programs offering initial certification should base their curriculum on initial teaching standards (SHAPE America, 2015), as initial stands are meant for programs training effective novice teachers. SHAPE America's advanced standards were designed with the licensed practitioner in mind, are intended for master's TCs possessing the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of a licensed educator (SHAPE America, 2015).

Lastly, the focus on leadership was predominant. This leadership focus, while tying directly to the advanced standard of Focus on Leadership, was utilized from an enrollment management standpoint. Programs offering leadership opportunities and initiatives beyond initial certification such as health science, adapted, or administrative cognate or certification, PETE master's programs incentivize candidates to complete their curriculum to enhance marketability upon graduation. The focus on enrollment management, though not a question posed to interviewees, presented itself as a vital portion of the findings. Enrollment management is the backbone of sustainability and advancement for programs and should continue to be an important focal point for institutions and instructors (Bulger et. al, 2016). Essential to program sustainability and success is the need to recruit students outside of typical demographic areas (outside of state/region).

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Contributions of Culturally Responsive Elementary School Teachers in the Education Process

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Abstract

In this study, contributions of culturally responsive elementary teachers in the education process are examined. It has been found that having culturally responsive competencies could create positive results in individual, school and societal levels. Within this context, culturally responsive elementary teachers would make a great contribution in the educational process and for education stakeholders, especially for themselves. In addition, culturally responsive elementary teachers would be able to use their individual and professional capacity more effectively since their sociological readiness would be greater. Culturally responsive elementary teachers could also increase students' motivation for school and learning.

Keywords: multicultural education, cultural responsiveness, elementary education, teaching and learning.

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There are important cognitive and affective factors in the shaping of individuals. Culture, which is one of these factors, consists of abstract views, values and perceptions of the world, which provide information about the behavior of people and reflect these behaviors (Haviland et al., 2008). According to Turhan (1997), culture is a material and spiritual whole with all kinds of information, interests, habits, value judgments, attitudes, opinions, thoughts and behaviors that are present in society. In this context, it can be said that culture gives an individual an identity and that the individual's thoughts, attitudes and reactions are determined by the cultural framework and social norms. In fact, Macionis (2015) emphasizes the impact of being culturally responsive to human life and the fact that actions set against cultural backgrounds are meaningful depending on culturally responsiveness. In this context, it is thought that it is necessary to be culturally responsive and sensitive to the characteristics of individuals within the education process.

As individual's cognitive and affective characteristics develop under the influence of their cultural backgrounds and experiences, culture is accepted as one of the natural components of the learning process (Karatas & Oral, 2019). The fact that the individual's mental development is based on specific experiences as a result of interactions with other people in the cultural framework is one of the basic assumptions of socio-cultural learning theory and it is suggested that the social and cultural environment is an important factor in the realization of individuals' learning (Schunk, 2014). Vygotsky draws attention to cultural and social processes in the period of knowledge building and meaning formation of individuals. In addition, logic, symbolic thinking, concepts, thought patterns, signs, numbers and words are expressed under the socio-cultural conditions of the tools that people use when building a world in which they live together (Aydin, 2012). In this respect, it is important to consider cultural components in designing an effective learning-teaching process for individuals and it is important that culture is at the center of shaping an educational context. On this basis, the learning-teaching process is a culturally

responsive pedagogy. It is emphasized that within the thought of 'education for all', education should be organized in a more inclusive way which emphasizes the cultural differences of students (Karatas & Oral, 2016). Phuntsog (1999) mentions that a culturally responsive pedagogical approach provides an intellectual environment of respect for the diversity of all learners, creates a safe learning environment where everyone will respect each other, integrates culturally responsive teaching practices into all learning disciplines and adapts the curriculum according to the principles of social justice and social equality.

Culturally responsive teaching is considered to be a powerful approach that contributes to an increase in an individual's participation in classes, an improvement in their academic performance and an increase in their level of success (Byrd, 2016). However, culturally responsive teaching is not only an approach that will contribute cultural responsiveness to students in the classroom, but also a social aspect that will enable the development of feelings of citizenship and social justice, and the voluntary participation of social change and equality (Bassey, 2016). In this context, culturally responsive pedagogy is not only an application that is confined to the classroom, but has an individual contribution as it is an approach that contributes qualified transformation to social interaction in addition to class environment. In this respect, teachers should be equipped with knowledge and skills that are culturally responsive in order to strengthen an understanding of culturally responsive pedagogy in the education process.

The Culturally Responsive Elementary School Teacher

For the reliable cognitive and affective development of the student, the components of school systems should be culturally responsive. Teachers, who are an important component of the school system, could increase the quality of learning-teaching process if they are aware of the cultural experiences of students and the environmental conditions in which they grow. Teachers who are not aware of the effects of a cultural environment or context on the learning of students are not be able to design an effective learning-teaching process (Hutchison, 2006). In this regard,

teachers should have an understanding of and some certain competencies related to culturally responsive pedagogy.

According to Gay (2002), teachers are expected to have certain culturally responsive competencies: a) being aware of their cultural identity and prejudices; b) a tendency to learn the world views of groups that are different from their own culture; and c) the development of culturally responsive teaching methods. Phuntsog (1999) emphasizes the key points of field experts in the context of the characteristics of teachers in culturally responsive education. These are as follows: to provide motivation for all learners; to create a safe learning environment where everyone respects each other and cultural differences are not denied; to integrate culture-based teaching practices into disciplines; and to provide transitions to social justice and socially equal principles in the curriculum. Jackson (1994) proposes culturally responsive teaching to the teacher: building trust; having cultural literacy; knowing various teaching methods and techniques; using effective inquiry techniques; providing effective feedback; analyzing teaching materials; and being able to establish a positive home-school relationship. In light of the principles of social justice, Brown (2007) stresses the following points for teachers in terms of realizing the classroom practices that overlap with the cultural backgrounds and experiences of students within the framework of respect for pluralistic understanding and differences:

- To be aware of racist thoughts and prejudices,
- To learn about the cultural backgrounds of students,
- To understand the social, economic and political status of students,
- To develop classroom management skills that are culturally responsive
- To demonstrate loyalty in approaching a culturally responsive pedagogy in the teaching process.

When teachers acquire knowledge about cultural differences and diversity, and they take steps to make their lives more culturally responsive, they can experience cultural diversity in the classroom. This is because the efficiency of the learning-teaching process is dependent on the knowledge, skill and proficiency levels of the teacher. It has been found that teachers who are culturally responsive have a much better understanding of teaching. Students' academic achievements, motivation, cultural awareness and critical thinking-questioning skills increase in mathematics, science, social studies and history courses where teaching activities are designed and conducted based on culturally responsive pedagogy (Aronson & Laughter, 2016; Fulton, 2009; Hubert, 2013; Leonard, 2008; Milner, 2011). In this context, teachers should take the cultural background and experiences of the students into consideration in the teaching process. Senemoğlu (2004) states that the quality of education in children in the early years has a significant impact on the future success of children and their thoughts about school, lessons and their general attitudes. Therefore, it has been said by Senemoğlu that elementary teachers play an important role in shaping the future of children and having a healthy personality. In this respect, it is important to consider the social context of students during the primary school period and to make cultural resources an instrument to develop their sense of belonging to a school, to be motivated and make learning easier and to learn to develop their academic skills (Conglin, 2010).

In order for future elementary school teachers to have an understanding of cultural differences on achievement and to reflect this situation on the education-teaching process, it is important that teacher training programs have the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes towards culturally responsive pedagogy. However, instructors who are the practitioners of the teacher training programs are also expected to internalize this culturally responsive pedagogy. The role of the instructor in teaching pedagogical knowledge and skills that are culturally responsive is truly important for teacher candidates. An instructor's culturally responsive pedagogy, knowledge, skills and tendencies should act as a model for teacher candidates to

contribute to their academic development (Prater & Devereaux, 2009). According to Darling-Hammond, Frech and Garcia-Lopez (2002), the aim is that instructors need to design experiences that will enable teacher candidates to explore issues related to diversity, such as social, cultural, linguistic, religious and so on. In this sense, instructors are an important component at the point of educating teacher candidates to be culturally responsive.

In this research, the opinions of instructors and reflections of elementary teachers in Turkey who are culturally responsive in the education process are investigated. It is thought that the findings obtained from this research will contribute to the vision of educating culturally responsive elementary school teachers. In addition, it is foreseen that educational stakeholders will provide a better understanding of the individual and social impact of culturally responsive pedagogy. Finally, it is considered important that prospective teachers, who will build the society of the future with their knowledge and skills, develop basic values such as democracy, human rights, equality, respect for differences, and social justice. At this point, it is believed by educators that it is necessary to accelerate attempts to educate not only the elementary teacher candidates, but also candidates from all branches of teaching with culturally responsiveness. With this purpose and scope, the following questions are posed:

- What kind of contributions does aquiring culturally responsive teaching skills add to teachers?
- What are the contributions of culturally responsive classroom teachers for their students?
- What are the contributions of being a culturally responsive elementary teacher to the society?

Research Methods

Research Design and Participants

In this research, a phenomenological design is preferred because the aim is the in-depth exploration of how culturally responsive elementary teachers contribute to the education processes. In this phenomenological design, the researcher investigates how participants impose meaning on facts and actions, and try to learn about the experiences of the participants concerning the phenomenon with 'how' and 'why' questions (Gliner, et al., 2015). The instructors who participated in the study were selected by criterion sampling. Criterion sampling provides a better understanding of a subject and the opportunity to study it in depth, and to identify situations where it is of importance (Johnson & Christensen, 2004). In this context, while identifying instructors to be included in the research, consideration was given to those holding a BA or MA degree in the department of elementary teaching or, even if they had a BA or an MA degree from a different department, a background of academic study and experience in the field of elementary teaching was deemed important. This criterion was introduced because of the wealth of knowledge and experience of the instructors related to the investigated phenomenon. In this context, data was gathered from three female and six male instructors working at four Turkish universities in elementary teaching degree programs. Two of the instructors were associate professors, three were assistant professors, and four were research assistants.

Data collection

In the data collection process of the research, the interview method from qualitative research methods was adopted. In order to obtain the basic structure and reality that underlies opinions and experiences, the interview was considered as the primary data collection method (Merriam, 2002). In this context, research data was collected from instructors through semi-

structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews, which are frequently used in qualitative research, provide researchers with the opportunity to identify the main framework of the subject and to ask questions within their own subjects. This is, at the same time, providing a flexible structure that allows them to add questions, according to new situations, which may arise during the interview (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). A semi-structured interview draft form was created by the researcher in accordance with the purpose and scope of the research. In the draft interview form, opinions of experts in the field of education and two elementary teachers were taken into consideration and necessary corrections made. In the last part of the semi-structured interview form, questions about how the elementary teacher, who is culturally responsive, reflected on the education process were posed. The effects of teachers who are culturally responsive on the subject in terms of teachers, students and society was sought.

At the commencement of the data collection process, permission was obtained from the relevant institutions to interview the participants. Then the purpose and scope of the research was clearly explained to the participants before the start of the interviews. In addition, it was confirmed that any data obtained from the interviews would only be used for a scientific study and that personal data and raw data would not be shared with any other person or institution. The interviews were started after the verbal and written approval of the participants. In the first five to ten minutes of the interviews, questions were asked to identify the participants. Following this, questions in a semi-structured interview form were directed for approximately 25 to 50 minutes and the necessary data obtained for the research. During the interview process, the researcher adopted a detailed, sensitive and inquisitive attitude to reveal deeper meanings in the views of the participants. Depending on the approval of the participants, the interviews were recorded by voice recorder with notes also being kept. The data obtained from those participants who did not allow the use of a recording device was noted in the interview process.

Data analysis

In the analysis of the qualitative data, a descriptive analysis method was used to analyze the data obtained through interview. Descriptive analysis is a type of qualitative data analysis, which includes summarizing and interpreting data according to predetermined themes. The main purpose of this type of analysis is to provide a systematic presentation of raw data obtained by encoding and transforming it into themes (Yildirim & Simşek, 2011). In this context, in the framework proposed by Robson (2007), the analysis of the data was started by first deciphering the data with the first codes related to the data being produced. A separate file in the computer was opened for each interviewer. As a whole, data were read several times and semantic patterns were researched in detail in order to prepare for coding and theming after tallying and editing of the data. After this, items that could be a theme were put together and themes were determined. At this point, whether or not the themes and the coded parts were associated with the whole data set were checked, and the codes and themes were then reviewed. In the last stage of the data analysis, the analysis was terminated by the creation of thematic networks, the relationship among the themes, and the interpretation and integration of the themes. While the themes were named, care was taken to remain compatible with the aim and theoretical framework of the research and also to make the themes as sensitive and comprehensive as possible to the data. In addition, the visualization of the relationship between the themes obtained from the data is presented and outlined in the relevant sections. Finally, the findings of the participants are presented and explained with participants coded P.1, P.2, P.3 etc.

Validity and Reliability of Research

In order to increase the credibility of the data obtained from the study, care was taken to allocate sufficient time for data collection in order to understand and analyze the investigated phenomenon. In addition, data was collected from people who could provide rich and appropriate data for the purpose of the study. However, the choice of the criterion sampling

method in the selection of the participants of the study was seen as a different factor that would enable the findings of the research to be applied and conveyed by stakeholders in different fields. On the other hand, in an ethical dimension of the study, participants were informed about its purpose, the protection of the participants' privacy, the known risks and benefits related to participation in the study, as well as assurances being given.

In the process of data acquisition, the interviews continued until repetition of data to be attributed to the findings and the satisfaction level of the data was reached. However, in order to prevent misunderstandings that may arise from any subjective assumptions of the inferences and comments made about the outcomes of the study, participant confirmation was obtained on the themes and findings. The findings of the research process are presented in an objective manner and are supported by direct quotations. In order to increase the consistency of the research, to review and critically evaluate the processes from the research design to the writing of the themes, field experts were contacted and corrections made in line with their recommendations. While presenting and interpreting the findings, a rich and intense description emerges with the raw data being shared with readers within the framework of the specific themes, by making direct quotations from the views of the instructors for the transferability of the research findings.

Results

In this section, the data obtained from the instructors is presented in the light of the findings of culturally responsive elementary teachers.

Reflections of the Culturally Responsive Elementary Teacher

All of the instructors interviewed stated that a culturally responsive elementary teacher will have positive reflections on the education process and stakeholders, especially on themselves. However, they also stated that they do not find the elementary teachers' degree program sufficient enough in terms of prospective teachers gaining knowledge and awareness in a way that is culturally responsive.

In Terms of Reflection to the Teacher. The instructors think that the fact that elementary teachers gain cultural awareness, and that they are aware of the culture of the possible places they will work and also the characteristics of the individuals within that culture, will provide many personal and professional benefits for the elementary teachers. In addition, the fact that elementary teachers will not be exposed to cultural shock related to the places where they will work, and will know about the living conditions of the locals, indicates that elementary teachers will accelerate the process of adaptation to the culture and locality. On the other hand, the fact that elementary teachers are aware of the dominant cultural characteristics of the society where they will work will also contribute to the provision of sociological readiness, thereby avoiding any strife or anxiety. Excerpts from the views of the instructors regarding this idea are presented below:

> P.2: He (the teacher candidate) won't begin with prejudices, in other words, he is at the stage of accepting everyone with their diversity. Therefore, when it comes to professional life, he will not be confronted with such confusion. He won't be confused about what to do. Yes, there can be such a difference. I think they're going to be a little more ready.

> P. 5: Sociologically, she (the teacher candidate) knows how to behave, at least in society, especially at least in having advance information concerning the structure of the society and its customs and culture or of how to talk. The lady knows how to be in relationships, that according to her, at least in social life, and has done good mental coding according to the society.

> P. 1: When the individual, who is a graduate from Istanbul University or Inonu University, is assigned to Sirnak, there is a fear. The individual does not know Sirnak culture, that area, the way of life, or the local traditions. This will be prevented if undergraduate programs provide information on these subjects.

> P. 9: According to the region, the level of readiness increases. I think the conditions in Eastern or South East Anatolia are more discussed, or what is the most extreme disadvantage of children (teacher candidates) to feel the level of readiness. Being aware of the conditions, his/her attendance level allows him/her to tolerate the distance he/she will take in a year, or maybe two weeks in a year. That will help.

In Terms of Reflection to Students. The instructors anticipate that an elementary teacher who is aware of the cultural characteristics of his/her students, and who is culturally responsive, will first consider the student unconditionally. The teacher will attempt to create a democratic/free educational environment and will contribute to the development of a sense of belonging to the school and the education process, thereby preventing the alienation of the student to either school or the education process. The views of the instructors regarding this situation are as follows:

> P.3: For children to be taught, the following situations may occur. They will find themselves unfamiliar with their own culture, or rather outside ones will not find them. At the same time, this is not a deficiency or a redundancy and is a normal situation they will accept and adopt, so good communication will be created.

> P. 2: The teacher should be able to not only make cognitive transmission but also sensory transfer. He needs to communicate with the children. Cultural differences are mostly associated with the South East Anatolia Region with various ethnic cultural religious beliefs. I think the children here will perceive themselves as precious when they learn something about themselves. Because our cultural characteristics constitute our identity and our culture is to be appreciated, trying to learn actually means that our identity is loved and appreciated. In other words, I think that me as a person is appreciated and will create a more positive relationship between teachers and students. I believe this will have a positive impact on academic outcomes, especially if the child loves the elementary school teacher.

> P. 6: Cultural elements of cultural values; these cultural elements certainly need to know the elementary teachers. They certainly need to know because you think the simplest. When you contact a parent, imagine that you go to an elementary teacher. For example, an elementary teacher in Bodrum goes to the Black Sea region. Although there are differences in culture, despite the fact that both sides are similar in geographical factors. So, what will he do? The teacher's sensitivity needs to be increased. The teacher needs to be able to recognize these cultural differences. What does that mean? These will really contribute positively, which is positive for students, since when this awareness is raised, cultural factors and cultural elements are created.

After completing the process of adaptation to the culture of the place where the teachers are culturally responsive, they think that the professional efficiency of the teachers will increase. In addition, while the teacher is planning the learning/teaching process, the students will use the concepts that they are familiar with during lessons and gain culture-specific motifs in classroom activities. Therefore, they think that this situation will contribute to the formation of a qualified

academic climate, to increase the motivation of students to learn and to increase the academic success. Excerpts from the views of instructors of this opinion are as follows:

> P. 8: As we say in the principles of teaching, from known to unknown, from concrete to abstract. So, this is the simplest example. Now when we talk about a subject, we must first give examples of the culture from the child's own environment, so that the child learns the distant culture and learns the distant environment…Or let the child know what's abstract, and learn the unknown. For instance, there is a plan to visit Anitkabir. We're working in Muş. Visiting the Mausoleum is a tragi-comic situation. What are we going to do with the child? Behold, there is a bridge that connects the Murat River, and it is famous, you will see it this visit. If we know the elements in that culture, it is more effective in teaching and learning if we use it in lectures.

> P.4: To accept this cultural diversity as a mosaic and to accept different opinions, there may be different beliefs, different ideas, different cultures, and especially to bring people closer to each other, providing an education within the framework of love and tolerance. This, of course, increases motivation efficiency in terms of both students and teachers.

> P.7: The school, especially in the classroom, has a positive climate. A combination of quality of education and success increases with this. We have to give this education in a quality manner at the undergraduate degree level. Of course, it is clear that such training will succeed. Individuals who are different in terms of individual differences will actively participate in lessons as well as the perception of this awareness by the teacher. The teacher will enjoy taking classes. It always affects positively and provides positive gains.

In Terms of Society Reflection. The instructors predict that they will serve social integration in the long term with the activities that elementary teachers who are culturally responsive will perform in the classroom and with strong communication with parents outside the classroom. Another point that instructors make is that if the elementary teacher is the head of an educational process that is culturally responsive, they will create social peace, by creating social and cultural exclusion and by preventing certain individuals and groups who terrorize educational phenomena. A number of the lecturers' opinions are presented below:

> P.3: Now we have a great wound that is bleeding; events in the south east. Teachers in the south east always have this problem when they go. The student that I taught has experienced it. They even generated a movie entitled, 'Two Languages a Suitcase'. Emre acting in that film was my student. Now you know the problem the student is experiencing. He does not speak Kurdish, and the students do not speak Turkish. If only he knew a little Kurdish… if he tried to teach Turkish in that way, I wonder would he not have been more successful. It's misunderstood by some people…very misinterpreted by most people. Should the elementary teacher learn Kurdish now? No, I don't think that way. Perhaps if

this had been carried out years ago, there wouldn't be many children in the south east who couldn't speak Turkish.

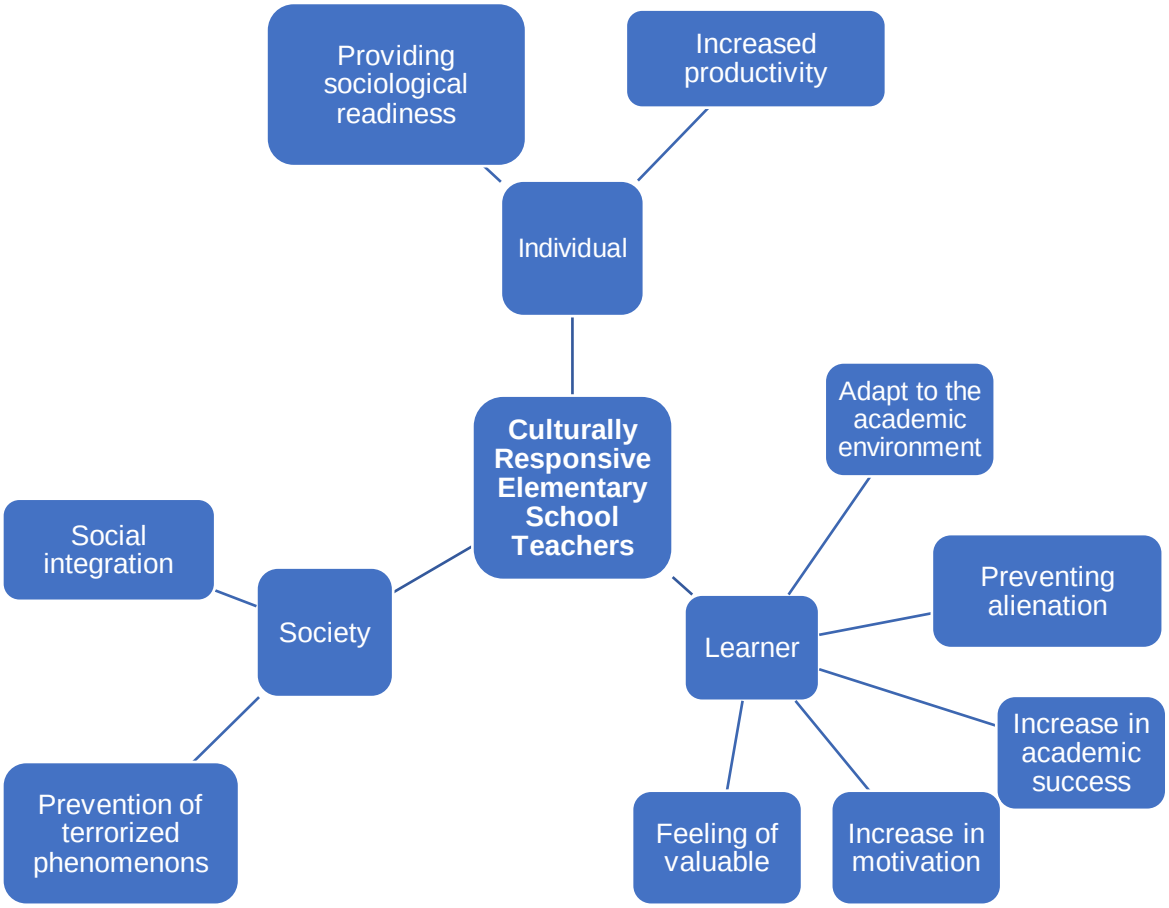
P.6: It will contribute to social peace. This is because both the students and the people in that town will respect the teacher, seeing that the teacher that goes there respecting their culture, and refers to them. It will make a multi-dimensional contribution to social peace. It will make a positive contribution to the union of the country.

P.9: If we say Kurdish, does the child misunderstand? If you don't say this, he greatly misunderstands or thinks something else in his mind. Relax! You're our child, you're our son. Say these words. You see what happens. If it is approached in this way, I think that we can genuinely contribute to the problems of society.

The visual content of the theme network, obtained as a result of the interviews with the instructors within the scope of this theme, is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Reflections of Culturally Responsive Elementary School Teachers



As a result of the findings of the research, it can be seen that teachers who are culturally responsive are expected to have positive contribution in their professional readiness and professional efficiency. In the same way, it is stated that the development of the cognitive and affective characteristics of the students for whom they provide educational services will contribute positively to the realization of the social integration of society and the elimination of separatist activities.

Discussion and Conclusion

The culturally responsive teachers who are performing this pedagogy affect the educational process in the short and long term. According to the findings obtained in this research, in case of prospective teachers achieving knowledge, skills, awareness and competence towards cultural responsiveness, there are many benefits, in particular for them; including for the learning-teaching process and for their stakeholders when they begin to teach as teachers.

Teachers are like the intersection of the point of cultures. To be able to perform the role and responsibility of cultural diversity within a class by blending and synthesizing cultures, they must be aware of their own prejudices regarding cultures and have knowledge of the cultures represented within the class. In fact, considering the components which cause cultural differences, such as language, beliefs, socio-economic levels, gender and so on, it is highly likely that students in the classes in which the teachers teach will have different social and cultural experiences. Having education in a culturally diverse classroom is considered as a situation that concerns the individual and professional capacity of the teacher. In this context, it can be seen as an important requirement for prospective teachers to be ready for education which is culturally responsive during their undergraduate training (Barnes , 2006; Fairbanks and et al., 2010; Guo et al., 2009; Lenski, et al. , 2005). This means that the trainee or the teacher is prepared to be cognitive, affective and behavioral in terms of the required qualifications, behavior and level of performance as a prerequisite for teaching in a class of students with different cultural

responsiveness (Karatas & Oral, 2017). In this context, a teacher who is culturally responsive in terms of individual and professional aspects can adapt quickly to the school and students where they will teach without experiencing any cultural shock. It can also minimize any sense of confusion, fear or uneasiness that may occur. In fact, Karatas (2018) found that prospective elementary teachers fear being appointed as teachers to places with different cultural characteristics from their own cultures when they graduated, and that the levels of readiness for teaching in elementary classes having cultural differences are low. In this respect, it is important to enable them to gain a socio-cultural perspective and to develop their intercultural communication skills in order to prepare better prospective elementary teachers. Banks (2008) emphasizes that prospective teachers need to gain a socio-cultural perspective and that student teachers should be aware of the cultural influences that their students live under and think about their sociocultural boundaries. At this point, the teacher may be quicker solving problems they may face during the education process in a socio-cultural context. Otherwise, teachers who cannot play an active role in solving problems are likely to become stressed and have a sense of occupational burnout as a result of their cultural and environmental pressures (Celik & Ustuner, 2018). Banks (2008) states that if teachers learn about cultural diversity themselves and become more culturally responsive, they may become more powerful in the education process. Therefore, if the professional capacity of the teacher develops, they can perform the role better and may have a positive attitude towards his/her profession.

Within the scope of this research, it has been found that classroom teachers who are culturally responsive will accept their students unconditionally. They will make an effort to create a democratic free educational environment and will contribute to the development of belonging to the school and the education process by preventing student alienation to school and the education process. The education process is accepted as a socio-cultural activity. The formation of the teaching and learning process in this field is seen as important for the quality of

education with the input of personal, contextual and situational components. In an understanding of culturally responsive teaching, teaching activities are organized and realized by taking into consideration previous achievements, individual and cultural strengths and the intellectual competences of students. At this point, teachers have a responsibility to maintain cultural diversity in the classroom environment with a culturally responsive pedagogical approach and to do the best they can for all students (Goodlad, 1994). In fact, the knowledge, behavior and skills to be given in accordance with the cultural identity and values of the students are considered as important factors in the development of cultural, national, regional and world identity/belonging in individuals. At this point, elementary teachers should use the concepts that students are socially and culturally familiar with and organize culture-specific motifs when planning the learning-teaching process. In this context, students will be encouraged to increase their motivation to learn and to increase their academic success. For their students another reflection of culturally responsive elementary teachers is that students can be seen as a development of the consciousness of being democratic and receiving acceptance and respect for others. In order to do this, it is necessary that teachers who educate generations should have an understanding of social justice, break down their prejudices, and not discriminate, as well as strengthening their intercultural awareness, cultural diversity, human rights, democracy and equality of opportunity (Kaya, 2014). According to Slavin (2003), teachers are expected to create a positive learning and communication environment with an empathic approach while avoiding prejudiced communication, and that each student should have a high opinion of their cultural heritage, history and civilization. When these expectations become a reality, a democratic educational environment will be created and students will be aware of other students' cultural responsiveness and contribute to the development of an awareness that each and every culture should be respected and accepted.

Education focused on cultural responsiveness is an approach based on the principles of equality and pluralism. This approach advocates that the educational process takes place in a democratic environment, because it refuses to ignore cultural differences in the educational process and approves cultural diversity. In this sense, in the event that a culturally diverse class environment is considered valuable and strengthening, students will respect and accept each other with social justice and equality being created by elementary teachers in the classroom. This would be the basis for the development of many emotional properties, such as preventing prejudices among children, exhibiting empathetic tendencies regarding differences, developing self-confidence and courage and so on (Gay, 2010; Karatas, 2018). According to Lynch and Hanson (1998), as students' self-identity, cultural understanding, prejudice and stereotypes are shaped during their school period. It is emphasized by them that teachers should have positive perceptions about cultural diversity and should adopt pedagogical approaches to enhance cultural responsiveness. According to Acar-Ciftci and Aydin (2014), in a learning environment where cultural differences are not taken into consideration, students experience cultural contradiction and cultural discontinuity and they feel unfamiliar with school. Gay (1994) states that students feel like outsiders in the school environment and that if their identities are not affirmed or supported, this will prevent them from concentrating on academic tasks. In addition, stress and anxiety, accompanying a lack of support and affirmation, indicate that this will cause a decrease in their mental attention, energy and effort. In this sense, the experience, cultures, and perspectives of these students can be marginalized when their dreams and prospects are not reflected in the teaching process. In this respect, in schools where education is given, it is necessary to recognize the cultural responsiveness of individuals to discover the essence and meaning of cultural experience, to recognize and respect different cultural responsiveness and to create opportunities.

Elementary teachers, who have an understanding of culturally responsive teaching, lead students to connect emotionally with each other. In the short term, effective interaction in a classroom atmosphere is expected to contribute to social peace and integration and, in the long term, it is expected to bring psychological benefit to the general public. In light of these research findings, a culturally responsive elementary teacher has an effect, not only on the individual and academic development of their students, but also on social integration and empowerment. Schools are considered not only as places of education, but also as social institutions where the change and transformation of society take place. They are seen as places where all students are provided with educational experiences to reach their full potential as socially aware and active people at local, national and world levels (Banks, 2013). Kostova (2009) suggests that students should be prepared to live together in harmony in a multicultural society in schools, and to adopt the educational process in a way that will provide the basis for integration and tolerance. In this respect, with a culturally responsive education process, a culturally responsive elementary teacher can provide an important contribution in terms of maintaining social justice, and maintaining and implementing equality within society. Without this, the cultural differences within the society can become arguments that serve separation and this separatism may bring about unwanted consequences. In the long term, social conflict and social inequality can be created and social peace can be lost. In this sense, the role and responsibility of elementary teachers who are culturally responsive are great in order for an acceptance of cultural diversity as richness, and not seeing social unity and integrity as a threat. A teacher who accepts cultural responsiveness, as an adoption of the concept of education that will increase and improve the socio-cultural consciousness of students, will be reflected in society in a positive way.

As a result, considering the importance of cultural responsiveness for human life, it is necessary to pay more attention to a culturally responsive approach, and this approach ought to become an important value that should be included in the education system. This is because there

are many personal and social benefits in education which are culturally responsive and which reflect on teachers' educational process and the social dimension. In order to ensure these benefits and ensure their continuity, attention should be paid to the training of elementary teachers in order to be culturally responsive in the process of undergraduate education program. Teacher training programs should be designed on the basis of the principles of social justice and multicultural education, strengthening the cultural knowledge databases of prospective teachers and increasing culturally responsive pedagogical skills. Teacher trainers are expected to take the initiative in addressing the importance of cultural responsiveness in relevant courses, approving cultural differences, raising awareness about cultural differences, applying cultural references of prospective teachers, and conducting a learning-teaching process with an understanding that will improve intercultural sensitivity. Finally, the knowledge and skill levels of teachers who are currently teaching cultural responsiveness should be increased through in-service training.

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The Artistry of Teaching

Stanley D. Ivie

Abstract

We live in an age rife with evaluations. Everyone is busy evaluating everyone. Teachers evaluate students; administrators evaluate teachers; the public evaluates administrators. Testing agencies are having a field day creating instruments for evaluating everyone and everything. The circle feeds on itself. In my 45 years of teaching experience, my most treasured evaluation came from a six-year-old boy who came to class one evening with his mother. During the class period, he sat quietly next to his mother working with pencil and paper on something placed upon his desk. At the end of the class, he came to the front of the room and presented me with a picture of myself standing in front of the classroom waving my hands in the air. Below the picture he had written, "You are a good teacher and funny." They say a picture is worth a thousand words. I like to think the little boy captured the spirit of my teaching. The following article is a venture into the spirit of teaching. Hopefully, it can assist thoughtful teachers in developing their own classroom artistry.

Keywords: teaching, science, art, zone, flow, aesthetic fusion, bonding, love, artistry

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Is teaching more like the sciences or is it more like the arts? Are empirical and quantitative studies the only legitimate ways of gaining knowledge about teaching and learning or are intuitive and experiential approaches of equal value? The past 100 years of educational research have given priority to scientific studies. Wittrock's (1986) massive compilation, *Handbook of Research on Teaching,* running 1,000 pages with 35 contributing authors, reflects educators' commitment to scientific inquiry. The volume, however, fails to mention the concepts of intuition, aesthetic fusion, bonding, and love anywhere in its pages. Why are researchers so reluctant to talk about the artistry of teaching?

Studying an activity and performing an activity are two very different things. Doctors may memorize *Gray's Anatomy* from cover to cover, but there is no substitute for actually dissecting a human body. The visceral does not come with a neat roadmap taped inside. The same is true of teaching. Study all the theories and methods you like, it is quite a different matter to step in front of a classroom filled with children. The weight of the group suddenly settles on your shoulders. Though schooling, teaching, and learning can all be studied from the outside using empirical and quantitative methods? Nothing can substitute for the rush of adrenaline the teacher feels when the bell for class to begin rings. A military battle plan may be the best ever designed until the first shot is fired. Then everything breaks down and Sergeants begin to improvise. The same is true of teaching. Madeline Hunter, herself, may have written your daily lesson plan, but all of that goes out the window the first time the teacher looks down at bewildered faces. Logic will only take educators so far. Sooner or later they will be called upon to use their intuition.

Teaching and learning revolve around what can be called the aesthetic trinity of fusion, bonding, and love. It is just that simple and just that complex. Everything else is subterfuge. Calling the role, making assignments, checking papers, testing, and assigning grades are all part of the bureaucratic requirements of today's schooling. The mania surrounding standardized

testing profits no one except a handful of testing agencies. When was the last time you heard of someone being awarded the Pulitzer Prize for having made a high SAT score? Years ago John Dewey expressed serious reservations about the value of testing. He was fond of telling a homespun story about how pigs were weighed back on the family farm. First, he said, we balanced a long pole on a big rock. Second, we caught the pig and tied him to one end of the pole. Third, we stacked big stones on the other end of the pole until the pig and the stones were perfectly balanced. Finally, we untied the pig and took a guess at how much the stones weighed. All measurement is at best conjecture. How often have children been shortchanged because someone guessed wrong about the weight of the stones?

Aesthetic Fusion, Bonding, and Love

Aesthetic Fusion

Professional athletes like to talk about being in the zone and experiencing flow. Artists and educators, on the other hand, prefer to speak of aesthetic fusion. All three groups have similar experiences in mind. What do athletes mean when they tell us of being in the zone and achieving flow? When someone is in the zone, he or she is at peak performance. The whole activity generates the feeling of effortless action. Some athletes talk about being outside of themselves and watching their bodies perform. The gymnast, Nadia Comaneci, was awarded a perfect 10 on the uneven bars at the 1976 Olympics in Montreal. Her movements were like watching poetry in motion. Bob Beaman, who had been jumping 27 feet (plus inches), jumped a remarkable 29 (plus inches) at the 1968 Olympics in Mexico City, setting a new world record for the long-jump. Serena Williams accomplished her professional goal when she won at Wimbledon in 2015. Her serves and returns were both powerful and graceful. All three of these athletes were in the zone when they made their spectacular accomplishments. When an athlete is in the zone and experiences flow, he or she becomes one with the activity. All of his or her actions come together to form an aesthetic whole.

Bill Russell, who played for the Celtics, speaks of moments in a game of basketball when it was almost like having a mystical experience. Cooper (2009) quotes Russell as writing in his autobiography, "It was almost as if we were playing in slow motion. During those spells I could almost sense how the next play would develop and where the next shot would be taken.' Russell goes on to add, "My premonitions would be consistently correct, and I always felt then that I not only knew all the Celtics by heart but also all the opposing players, and that they all knew me.'

The motion picture, *The Legend of Bagger Vance*, offers a thoughtful interpretation of the idea of flow. The story unfolds around a golf tournament. The hero of the story, Jonah (Matt Damon) is trying to recover his swing. A mysterious stranger, Bagger Vance (Will Smith) shows up to help Jonah with his game. A key scene in the film is when the great golfer, Bobby Jones, steps up to the tee. Bagger Vance tells Jonah to watch carefully Bobby Jones. Bagger Vance delivers a prosaic talk on becoming one with the field. He tells Jonah to get out of his head and to trust in the wisdom of his hands. To play golf like Bobby Jones, who is a master of the game, Jonah has to become one with the field by tapping into the flow of the game.

Though Csikszentmihalyi (2002) conducted pioneer research on the phenomenon of flow in singular activities such as athletics, music, and the arts, he has only expressed his thoughts on teaching and learning in a left-handed way. One educational innovation, however, has managed to catch his attention—the Key Learning Community in Indianapolis. Csikszentmihalyi believes it reflects his thoughts on education. "Perhaps the most intriguing application of flow theory," says Schmidt (2010), "has been the school's Flow Center." The Center is equipped with a variety of games, puzzles, and challenging activities. "The mission of the flow room is to help students realize that they can become engaged in activities that are educational." Csikszentmihalyi (2002) has complemented the teachers at the Key School, saying, "They have tried very self-consciously also to include flow into their teaching methods and, I think, very successfully."

Being in the zone is one of the characteristics of great teaching, though it cannot be called up at will. To achieve flow in a classroom, the teacher has to establish an atmosphere of trust with his or her students. A touch of humor is always a good way of making students feel relaxed and open to new experiences. It is said that everyone enjoyed being a guest on the Jack Benny (comedy) Show. Jack himself was always the brunt of all the jokes. The same is true of good teaching. When learning situations are in the zone, there is an open flow of ideas and experiences between the teacher and his or her students. Fear of failure has been left at the classroom door. Everyone is caught up in the spirit of allowing the dialogue about worthwhile ideas move freely in whatever direction it may chooses. The whole classroom is characterized by a pervasive feeling of unity and oneness.

What determines the personality of a classroom filled with students? Teachers have less power to shape the character of their classrooms than is generally recognized. Teaching in some respects is like playing the game of poker. You play with the hand that is dealt you. Face cards represent the dominant individuals in the group. It is good to be holding the Queen of Hearts. She is a positive force in the classroom, explaining the teacher's motives to the other members of the class. No classroom is complete without its Joker. Jousting with the Joker is always entertaining for the other members of the class. Being in the zone and experiencing flow are not ends in themselves. They are merely steppingstones along the path leading to aesthetic fusion, which is one of those intangible rewards that keep teachers teaching and learners learning.

Do you remember the movie, *Little Big Man*? Dustin Hoffman was given a powerful role playing the part of an old Indian. Hoffman, speaking of his part, recalled there were times in the making of the film when he was not just playing the part of an old Indian but that he was indeed the old Indian. An aesthetic fusion had taken place between the actor and the character in the script. Equestrians tell us when a horse has been properly trained it can read the mind of its rider and move correctly without physical commands. Steve Reeves had such a relationship with his

horse. The reason he was dumped over the bar, according to Steve, was he lost concentration for a moment and the horse stopped. Rubinstein, the pianist, was once asked how Chopin might have played one of his own pieces. Rubinstein went to the piano and played the piece. Later he said it was not the way he usually played it, but he felt very sure it was the way Chopin would have played the piece. When the artist is successful in achieving aesthetic fusion, says Broudy (1962), "the whole picture, poem, or play feels like something—the feeling seems to be in the work of art itself" (pp. 218-219).

Sarason (1999) believes the classroom is like a theatre where the teacher creates an ambience for his or her audience, the learners. Teachers are the "vehicles by which the script (the curriculum) becomes a source of interest" (p. 11). Sarason (1999) stresses the importance of recognizing, "the fact that teaching is an art, a performing one, requiring of the teacher imagination . . . the sources of which are both cognitive and intuitive" (p. 155). Not only is teaching a performing art, but it contains a mystical side as well. Eisner (2013) informs us that, "Artistry is the ability to craft a performance, to influence its pace, to shop its rhythms and to modulate its tone so that its parts merge into a coherent whole. You come to feel a process that often exceeds the capacity of language to describe."

Mathews (1988) called Jaime Escalante *The Best Teacher in America.* Escalante came to national prominence when his high school students in East Los Angeles were successful in passing the AP test in calculus. Escalante's classes accounted for one out of every four Mexican American students taking the AP calculus test in the United States. Escalante's notoriety resulted in his becoming the subject of the motion picture, *Stand and Deliver.* The story of Escalante's success at James R. Garfield High School provides an excellent example of how learning can reflect aesthetic fusion. Escalante used his Latin American background and knowledge of Spanish to build relationships with his students. Mathews (1988) says, Escalante "turned the family spirit of East Los Angeles into an academic tool" (p. 290). Though his teaching

techniques were frequently quirky and harsh, his students came to know he had their best interests at heart. Escalante "ate with them. He agonized with them over divorce and neglect and violence or rejoiced with them at marriages and births in their families" (p. 287). What does Escalante's experience tell us about the artistry of teaching? Mathews (1988) offers the following advice to school administrators: "leave good teachers alone" (p. 292). Don't try to persuade them to give up their personal style in favor of one of the latest fads.

Bonding

Bonding, says Berger (1988), occurs "between mother and newborn in virtually every species of mammals" (p. 97). In humans, however, bonding is less immediate and instinctual than it is among other species. The bond between parent and child "begins to grow or atrophy from the first days of pregnancy, throughout infancy, and many years of childhood, and beyond" (p. 98). Bonding is a pivotal experience in the life of every human being. Unfortunately, says Knittle (2017), "Not all parents bond with their infant children during this critical time after birth." Perhaps as many as 40% of all infants do not form strong bonds with their parents. This can have devastating effects later on in life (Knittle, 2017). If bonding does not occur shortly after birth, the person's need for intimacy and affection can never truly be filled.

Bonding is one of the most powerful experiences that can take place inside a classroom. Without it everything else is a waste of time. Do you remember Robin Williams' portrayal of a teacher in *The Dead Poets Society*? Williams had just instructed his students to tear out the introductory chapter to their poetry book. At first the students couldn't believe what they were hearing. No teacher had every given them such instructions before. Williams tells his students it is all crap. Tear the pages out! Soon the students are ripping out the pages with glee. Once the task of tearing out the pages is finished, Williams seats himself on a desk in the middle of the room and instructs his students to huddle around. He then delivers an emotionally stirring talk on the value of poetry and how it contributes to enrichment of experiences flowing into our lives.

Everyone, Williams informs his students, has a chance to add a line to the great conversation shaping who we are and how we think. The bonding session ends with Williams posing the question, "What will be your line?"

Bonding is closely related to the psychological processes humans use in acquiring values, identification and imitation. We identify with persons who we admire and respect. Who were your childhood heroes or heroines? Sports figures and rock stars rank high on today's list. We wish to be like persons who demonstrate skills and qualities we desire to find in ourselves. Who children seek to be like can tell us a great deal about their development. Emotionally healthy children tend to model up. Emotionally troubled children, on the other hand, tend to model down. Teachers, says Getzels (1963), can become significant figures in the lives of children. "Where values are concerned, it is not so much what people say the child should do that matters as the kinds of models the significant figures provide that is important. One cannot so much teach values as offer appropriate models for identification" (p. 160). Years ago, when the author was teaching high school, he was standing in the hall having a conversation with the math teacher, who was known for being a very exacting teacher. During the conversation, one of the math teacher's students came up and stood next to him. The math teacher turned to the student and asked, "Can I help you with something?" "Oh, no," the student replied, "I just like to hear you talk."

Marva Collins was a very exacting teacher. She first came to national prominence in connection with the private school she founded in the slums of Chicago. CBS News, 60 Minutes, visited her several times, and her school became the subject of the movie, *The Marva Colllins Story,* staring Cicely Tyson. Collins' (1990) style of teaching was graphically depicted in her book, *Marva Collins' Way.* She was offered the position of Secretary of Education by two different presidents, which she declined in order to pursue her passion for teaching. Collins is an example *par excellence* of teacher and student bonding.

Tamarkin (1990), who was Collins' co-author, describes Collins' teaching in the following way, "She had an exuberance, an energy about her that was both captivating and contagious" (p. 12). The spirit of teaching flowed naturally out of her. Collins was in constant motion in the classroom, patting students' heads, touching their shoulders, praising their efforts. Collins gave each child individual attention. "She didn't just teach them. She nurtured them" (p. 12). An incredible bond developed between Collins and her students. "One had to watch Marva's students in the classroom to see the full effect of her energy and her conviction that children can learn" (p. 180).

Collins (1990) was fond of telling her students on the first day of school, "Say goodbye to failure, children. Welcome to Success. You will read hard books in here and understand what you read" (p. 21). Then she would read part of Emerson's essay of "Self Reliance," explaining it meant one should be proud of himself or herself. Collins saw her role as one of inspiring her students to become educated citizens of the world. "I tried to introduce my children to a world that extends beyond the ghetto of Garland Park. Until you reveal a larger world to children, they don't realize there is anything to reach for" (p. 58). By teaching a curriculum featuring classical literature, Collins hoped to elevate her students' horizons. "I encouraged them to become universal people, citizens of the world" (p. 141).

Current literature has extolled the virtues of student-centered learning. Collins (1990), however, favored teacher-directed instruction. "Everything works when the teacher works. It's as easy as that, and as hard" (p. 187). The teacher is the most important factor in the classroom. If a child senses that his or her teacher does not care, "then all the textbooks and prepackaged lesson plans and audio-visual equipment and fancy, new, carpeted, air-conditioned building facilities weren't going to get that child to learn" (p. 26). Collins' instructional style is a good example of the principle that the teacher is the curriculum. All knowledge flows from the teacher. The teacher can only share with the students his or her level of understanding of any given subject.

Education is a humanizing enterprise. That is why it is foolhardy to believe that teachers can be replaced or displaced by computers.

Eisner (2013), who was one of the most scholarly contributors to contemporary educational literature, recognized the common humanity present in teaching. He argued that, "the satisfaction of teaching extends beyond the academic. Indeed, the most lasting contributions come from rescuing a child from despair, restoring a sense of hope, soothing a discomfort." Memories from such occasions are more enduring than those coming from academic achievements. "They address the human needs that we all of share." Cohen (2012) seconds Eisner when he writes, "educators are loved by their students for both their personal and scholarly abilities." Personal qualities form the basis for success as an educator. Further, "these qualities are an outcome of personal inner work" (p. 4).

Love

Erich Fromm's (1970) *The Art of Loving* provides a classical statement of the importance of love for individual and social wellbeing. From birth until death, humans have a natural craving for love. A baby will very quickly learn to read its mother's feelings. If a baby is well-loved by its mother, it will lean into the mother's breasts. If, on the other hand, the baby senses that it is not really wanted, it will lean away from the mother. The greatest gift life has to offer is a loving mother. The need for love and affection follows us throughout our lives. Love is the wellspring from which all human activities take nourishment. Fromm (1970) tells us, "Without love, humanity could not exist for a day" (p. 15).

Love is a central factor in the instruction of the young. It is the bond welding teachers and students together. Teaching and learning are more than filling minds with facts and figures about the world. It is the art of connecting each new generation to the larger human community. "While we are teaching knowledge," Fromm (1970) reminds us, "we are losing that teaching which is the most important one for human development: the teaching which can only be given

by the simple presence of a mature, loving person" (p. 98). In earlier times, the teacher who was most valued was the one who best embodied outstanding spiritual qualities. Though the preservation of knowledge is important, the teacher's primary function should be "to convey certain human attitudes" (p. 98). Teaching and learning need to keep alive the vision of mature life. If schools fail to perform this function, "our whole cultural tradition will breakdown" (p. 99).

Loving, caring, and trust are like the holy trinity of character development. Noddings (2005) made caring the center piece in her philosophy of education. Teachers need to establish caring relationships with their students. "When I care, my motive energy begins to flow toward the needs and wants of the cared-for" (p. 4). It is difficult for many Americans to conceptualize a humanistic view of education. They have been sold a bill of goods for so long that testing and accountability are necessary to save the nation. "The present insistence on more and more testing—even for young children—is largely a product of separation and lack of trust" (p. 11). What our society should really aim at is competence. When teachers and students share in a caring relationship, they are creating the conditions necessary for competence.

What are the qualities of a great teacher? The best teachers, Rubin (1985) argues, "exercise a considerable amount of personal judgment" (p. 159). They count heavily on intuition and inspiration as signposts for guiding their classroom activities. Eisner (1998) writes, "Artistry and intuition are enormously important aspects of all forms of teaching" (p. 209). In the hands of a skilled teacher, instruction seems to flow from some mysterious inner source. Epstein (1981) believes great teachers manifest a "love of their subject, an obvious satisfaction in arousing this love in their students, and an ability to convince them that what they are being taught is deadly serious" (p. 12). Rubin (1987) says of great teachers, "What they taught their pupils wasn't nearly so important as that they taught it—for if they considered it worth-while to know things…then clearly those must be reputable and meritorious objectives for a young person to

know" (pp. 12-13). Whitehead (1960) reminds us that, "A certain ruthless definiteness is essential in education. I am sure that one secret of a successful teacher is that he has formulated quite clearly in his mind what the pupil has got to know in precise fashion" (p. 47).

The motion picture *Conrack,* staring Jon Voight, provides an interesting illustration of how love can transcend ethnicity, poverty, and cultural isolation. Love is the universal elixir facilitating mental and physical growth. Voight was on a personal crusade to raise the intellectual horizons of African American children living on an island off the coast of South Carolina. Since his students found it impossible to pronounce his last name, Conrad, they all settled on Conrack. Voight used a wide variety of non-traditional techniques in order to awaken a spark of curiosity in his students. He marched them up and down the beach reciting facts about sports heroes and significant persons in history. On Halloween he took his students to Beaufort to participate in trick-or-treat, which brought down the wrath of the superintendent of schools. Voight's creative instructional techniques, of course, cost him his job. Before Voight left the school, the principal paid him the biggest compliment a teacher can receive, "You loved the babies."

Nothing is more important in the life of a classroom than love. This statement is supported by the school founded by Pestalozzi, who was a Swiss educational reformer living in the early years of the 19th century. Pestalozzi created a theory of instruction known as Object Teaching, which featured the use of sense impressions to help children develop categories of thought. Pestalozzi's success in the classroom attracted educators from Europe and the United States. Herbart, the German philosopher and educator, visited Pestalozzi and wrote a critique of his methods. Calvin Stowe delivered a report to the Ohio legislature in 1837 describing Pestalozzi's achievements (Rippa, 1988). The spirit animating Pestalozzi's school is clearly reflected in the comments made years later by Vuillemin, who had been one of Pestalozzi's pupils from 1805 to 1807. Vuillemin describes how Pestalozzi's students felt about their teacher. "We loved him; yes, we all loved him, for he loved us all; we loved him so much that when we

lost sight of him for a time we felt sad and lonely. We could not turn our eyes away from him" (Rippa, 1969, p. 101). Pestalozzi grasped the importance of developing the whole child. He was fond of saying: "Make it your aim to develop the child. Do not merely train him as you would train a dog" (Rippa, 1969, p. 101).

Rafe Esquith is a contemporary example of an educator who has a feel for the artistry of teaching. In the prologue to his book, *Teach Like Your Hair's on Fire,* Esquith (2007) reveals he believes teaching can happen in an aesthetic "zone" similar to the way it occurs in sports. Central to his thinking is the belief that the emotion of fear that governs most classrooms needs to be replaced by trust. Teachers must build a bond of trust with their students. Esquith highlights his passion and love for working with students in a classroom setting. His book contains a developed outline of a wide variety of the materials and experiences he has worked out with his students over the years. Of particular interest his creation of a Shakespearean theatre. In all of his instructional units, Esquith encourages his students to play an active part in their own learning.

Conclusion

Years ago, I was interviewed by a local superintendent for a teaching position. During the interview, he asked me if I had experienced any differences in the personalities of my classes. I told him they were like night and day. One class was shy and timid, almost to the point of being boring. Another group was strong-willed and belligerent. The superintendent smiled and replied, "You would be surprised how many teachers have never had that experience." Why are many teachers unable to tune into the energy flowing from their students? The answer in a word is a lack of sensitivity. Teacher preparation programs need to do a better job of identifying and counseling insensitive candidates into other careers. Corporation executives and computer "nerds" are notoriously insensitive. Look at Steve Jobs! The medical profession is stacked high with prima donnas. A few more would hardly be noticed. Teaching, on the other hand, is a very different profession. Sensitivity is a categorical imperative for anyone seeking to become a

teacher. Insensitivity is not hard to detect; it stands out like a wart on someone's nose. One day a student came by my office to have a friendly chat. He told me he had a fiancée who lived back in his hometown. He said he was planning on marrying her so he could study her behavior. Laughingly, I told him if I were his fiancée I would toss him out on his ear. A fiancée wishes to be loved, not studied. Whatever happened to my insensitive student? He is probably out in the public schools studying other people's children.

What background experiences are the most helpful in preparing sensitive teachers for the nation's schools? The student teaching experience makes the answer abundantly clear. Women who have raised children win the contest hands down. They have learned how to read children's thoughts and actions as well as how to flow with the shifting moods within the classroom. What are the least helpful backgrounds for someone wishing to become a teacher? Careers cultivating rigid temperaments or fixed standards of performance such as those found in large corporations or the armed services do not lend themselves readily to the give and take of classroom life. Different professions forge different habits of mind, which are all too often hard to break. The classroom is the ultimate proving ground for those mental habits that will survive.

What are the conditions and experiences that lend themselves most readily to becoming an artful teacher? Certainly, allowing the richness of classroom experiences to flow freely into our lives must be assigned a top spot on any list. Educators need to free themselves from the confines of established traditions. Teachers, like Shelly's Prometheus, should be encouraged to break free of their bonds—to flow with the rhythms of life and learning. One way of clearing the cobwebs out of our mental closets is to adopt a new metaphor for thinking about teaching and learning. The mind is not a computer, and the body is not a mechanical robot. If physicist cannot predict the path of a lowly electron, why should we suppose any personality test can forecast the destiny of a complex human being? It is time educators gave up on the illusion that teaching is or can become a science. Rather, educators should follow Gage's (1978) advice and admit teaching

is more like the arts than the sciences. "As a practical art, teaching must be recognized as a process that calls for intuition, creativity, improvisation, and expressiveness—a process that leaves room for departures from what is implied by rules, formulas, and algorithms" (p. 15). Although Gage acknowledges that the practice of teaching is clearly an art, he retains the hope that the artistry of teaching might lend itself to being studied scientifically.

What does practical experience tell us about selecting different methods of instruction? Don't become enamored with flashy, new doctrines. Trust in your own judgments. Throw away your copies of Skinner, Hunter, and Coleman. They only lace teaching and learning into a straightjacket. When the author was an undergraduate student, he was enrolled in a class in educational psychology. The professor of the class was a true-blue behaviorist whose fondest dream was that one day he would be allowed to require all of his students to purchase a pigeon. He believed the key to unlocking the secrets of effective teaching and learning lay in reinforcing a pigeon's pecking behavior. Similarly, Hunter's Seven Steps of Effective Teaching will not lead us to the promised-land, artistry in teaching. Slavin, (1986) in his evaluation of Hunter's model, says, "program effects on student achievement were minimal." Additionally, "already competent teachers do not benefit much from the training in Hunter's model." Coleman's Common Core of State Standards is based on the assumption that everything worth learning can be measured and assigned a number. The most important experiences in life—love, goodness, friendship—cannot be measured by the yard or sold by the pound. Ravitch believes that not only are Coleman's doctrines pedagogically unsound, but that they represent an inherent danger to our democratic society. Strauss (2014) cites Ravitch as saying, "I fear the Common Core and testing will establish a test-based meritocracy that will harm our democracy by parceling out opportunity, by ranking and rating every student in relation to their scores" (p. 11).

Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote a famous essay on Self Reliance. He advised us to trust our own thoughts and feelings. His message contains profound meaning for today's educators. The

key to becoming an artistic teacher resides quietly inside of each and every one of us. Whose advice to follow once we have shut the classroom door? We have only to get in touch with our own thoughts and feelings. Teaching and learning are far more than achieving a set of behavioral objectives. Teaching is a projection of the teacher's total personality. Emerson (2015) quotes Palmer as writing, "'teaching cannot be reduced to technique; good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher.'" Just as personalities differ, so too do teaching styles. The methods utilized by Escalante, Collins, and Esquith are not likely to work as well for others. There is truth in the old saying: One man's wisdom cannot be inherited by his son. There is no universal book of rules governing the artistry of teaching. Here the words of Frost (1916) seem as sacrosanct as any, "Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—I took the one less traveled by, And that has made all the difference."

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