

ArATE Electronic Journal
Volume 7, Number 1
March, 2016

Editor:

Nancy P. Gallavan, Ph.D.; University of Central Arkansas

Editorial Board Members and Manuscript Reviewers:

Karina Clemmons, Ed.D., University of Arkansas, Little Rock

Susan Grogan, Ed.S.; Harding University

Misty LeCour, Ed.D.; Kaplan University

Patricia E. Murphy, Ed.D., Arkansas State University

Stephanie Pepper, Ed.D., Arkansas Tech University

V. Carole Smith, Ph.D.; Arkansas Tech University

Lynn Walsh, Ph.D.; Arkansas Tech University

Articles and Authors:

One State's Evolving Professional Development System: Arkansas' Early Care and Education Path of Change and Growth

Beverly Boals Gilbert, EdD, Arkansas State University

Kyoung Jin Kim, PhD, Ball State University

Guang-Lea Lee, PhD, Old Dominion University

Su-Jeong Wee, PhD, Purdue University Calumet

A Clinically Intensive Teacher Preparation Program and Its Effectiveness for Teacher Preparation

Anne Lindsay, PhD, University of Arkansas at Little Rock

Katina M. Leland, EdD, University of Arkansas at Little Rock

Value-Added Reflection: Promoting Higher Order Thinking, Inquiry, Learning, and Change

Kathleen Shahan, EdD; University of Arkansas at Monticello

Preservice Teachers' Perceptions of Literacy, Learners, and Learning

LaToshia Woods, PhD; Arkansas State University

**One State's Evolving Professional Development System:
Arkansas' Early Care and Education Path of Change and Growth**

Beverly Boals Gilbert, EdD, Arkansas State University

Kyoung Jin Kim, PhD, Ball State University

Guang-Lea Lee, PhD, Old Dominion University

Su-Jeong Wee, PhD, Purdue University Calumet

Abstract

Though several federal and state initiatives have been enacted to improve the quality of early childhood care and education in the United States, states continue to struggle to develop an early childhood professional development system that integrates standards and policies from early childhood agencies and programs. This study focuses on the professional development system of the state of Arkansas to gain an understanding of a structured and systematic approach through a customized professional development program and state registry system. This professional development model provides age- and developmental-specific training for teachers working with three different developmental levels. The age-specific training model and organizational structure used to document and track early childhood practitioners' completed professional development training hours are closely examined. This study affirms the need for a structured, systematic approach to staff qualifications and on-going professional development at both state and national levels. The findings of this study can be used to make improvements and changes necessary to enhance existing state-wide credentialing programs for providers, teachers, and caregivers.

Introduction

Of the 18.5 million children under age 5 living in the United States, 11.6 million (63%) experience some type of regular early care and education (ECE) program (Johnson, 2005). With a large number of children attending ECE programs, provision for high-quality early childhood experience has become a focus of national policies (Brennan, 2007). Research confirms that qualified, professional, and well-compensated teachers and care providers are the cornerstone of high-quality ECE programs (Barnett, 2003; Demma, 2010; Helburn & Howes, 1996; Torquati, Raikes, & Huddleston-Casas, 2007; Whitebook & Sakai, 2003). Accordingly, the need for high-quality early childhood professional development has greatly expanded across the United States (Olsen, Donaldson, & Hudson, 2010).

In an attempt to improve the quality of ECE teachers, the US government has paid great attention to teacher professional development defined as activities that increase teacher knowledge and advance the effectiveness of instruction (Neuman & Cunningham, 2009). The goal of professional development is to further teachers' understanding of strategies for supporting children in meeting challenging academic content and achievement standards. Teachers are able to focus on increasing pedagogical skills and incorporating new knowledge and skill (Bennett, 2006) as well as practicing instructional and intervention practices (Buysse, Winton, & Rous, 2009) through a coherent and systematic program of learning experiences. Those experiences must be grounded in theory and research; outcomes based; structured to promote linkages between theory and practice; and responsive to each learner's background, experiences, and the current context of her/his role (LeMoine, 2005). Research has shown that teacher professional development makes a significant impact on children's holistic development (National Association for the Education of Young Children [NAEYC], 2005).

Federal initiatives have been introduced in an effort to develop an effective early childhood professional development system. For example, the Early Childhood Educator Professional Development Program annually funded between \$10 million and \$15 million from 2001 to 2007 (U.S. Department of Education, 2014). The 2007 Head Start reauthorization instituted requirements for ongoing professional development and suggested that each employee has an individual professional development plan (Whitebook, Gomby, Bellm, Sakai, & Kipnis, 2009). The Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 included grants to states for the purpose of creating early childhood professional development systems in all sectors of the field (Ochshorn, 2011). In addition, Teacher Education Assistance for College and High Education provides up to \$4,000 per year to teachers completing or who plan to complete coursework that is required to begin a career in teaching (Federal Student Aid, 2015).

Even with such efforts, many states still struggle with successful implementation of an early childhood professional development system that integrates policies across various types of early childhood programs (Demma, 2010). The majority of existing early childhood professional development efforts at the national, state, and local levels have been criticized due to the decentralized and fragmented nature of the ECE system (Cho & Couse, 2008). As diverse as the ECE services (e.g., private, federally funded, and cooperate early childhood centers) are, ECE teachers who work in multiple sectors operate under a variety of auspices and funding streams. Accordingly, the education and training of ECE teachers varies greatly, including both entry level requirements and expectations for annual ongoing training. For example, this range for annual training hours begins with zero clock hours in California and Hawaii to 30 clock hours in Maine (National Child Care Information Center [NCCIC], 2008).

Moreover, consistently collected and analyzed data in current professional development research are lacking (Demma, 2010). Tracking the progress and accomplishment for teacher preparation and continued education is crucial as it helps a state gather data on its teacher workforce; understand the makeup of that workforce; facilitate accessibility; create appropriate professional development reforms; and evaluate current policies and identify any new initiatives needed to reform the professional development system at the state level (Bueno, Darling-Hammond, & Gonzales, 2010).

Considering all issues addressed earlier, the Arkansas Department of Human Services, Division of Childcare and Early Childhood Education initiated an effort for the creation of an organized state recognition and documentation system of professional development. Arkansas State University, Department of Childhood Services, was given the task of developing and implementing the system, which became *the Arkansas Early Childhood Professional Development System*. This system is one example of a state system designed to provide well-organized professional development training and monitor program to improve overall individual and program quality by including enrollment of individuals into the professional recognition system referred to as the registry.

Looking into a case of one state's professional development training system can provide information and directions for improvement of ECE professional development within our own agencies, states, or governing bodies. Thus, the primary purpose of this study is to present ways that the state of Arkansas has successfully carried out its professional development training for its in-service teachers using the example training model, the *Arkansas Early Care and Education Specialist Certificate*. The aims are to pursue improved development and implementation of high quality early childhood professional training, curriculum, and programs using this state as an example.

Arkansas Professional Development

Traveling Arkansas' Professional Pathways (TAPP)

To ensure that professionals can successfully fulfill their job duties and remain current in their knowledge and skills, it is important that policies specify the levels and content of training, preparation, and ongoing development required of individuals employed within the profession (OECD, 2011). One must know what is expected to successfully meet and fulfill those expectations. In Arkansas, depending on program types, required training hours are different. For example, the Department of Human Services, Arkansas Minimum Licensing Requirements for Childcare Centers (2011) mandated 15 clock hours of professional development training annually. ECE centers that follow the higher quality standards of the Better Beginnings rating system, a voluntary system within the state, required 20 hours annually. Arkansas Better Chance state-funded programs required 60 hours for licensed or certified teachers as did the Arkansas Department of Education for all licensed and certified public school teachers as of 2015.

The state of Arkansas has developed a structured, systematic program geared toward promoting teacher qualifications and professional development sponsored by the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education in the Department of Human Services of Arkansas. This program, Traveling Arkansas' Professional Pathways (TAPP), is the current professional development system, formerly known as the Arkansas Early Childhood Professional Development System (AECPPDS). TAPP is a coordinated system based upon research and best practices that ensures the delivery of high quality professional development opportunities as a part of career pathway development that meets the diverse needs of the professionals that the system serves. The two main components of the system are (1) Spectrum and (2) Registry (http://humanservices.arkansas.gov/dccece/dccece_documents/tappdescription.pdf)

Spectrum

The Spectrum (Career Lattice) details ten levels of career development based on training, education, experience in the field, and professional activity. It provides an organized structure and system for identifying childcare professionals at different levels (e.g., basic/foundation, intermediate, and advanced) and in different positions (e.g., administrative and instructional) to support professionals based on their different educational levels, knowledge, direct experience with young children, and completed professional development options. Individuals can move forward to reach professional career goals and can use the spectrum as a guide in selecting the training best suited to her or his needs in achieving advanced levels of recognition **as well as** meeting annual requirements. Table 1 shows the range of training made available to ECE teachers, assistants, and providers.

Table 1. Range of Training Available to ECE Teachers, Assistants, and Providers
Spectrum (Career Lattice)

Basic/Foundation Level	Intermediate Level	Advanced Level
Practitioners who are developing an understanding and/or beginning to seek	Practitioners who are frequently and/or consistently seeking knowledge and	Practitioners who have knowledge, ability to modify, evaluate, and

knowledge and skills.

skills.

synthesize; and/or are fostering growth, exercising leadership and promoting advocacy.

Awareness	Certificate	Associate
*Introduction to Child Care *Early Care and Education Direct	*Arkansas Childrens' Program Administrator Certificate and Credential *Best Care *Caregiver Certificate *Early Care and Education Specialist Certificate	*Associate of Arts *Associate of Applied Science *Associate of General Studies/Liberal Arts *Associate of Science

Orientation	Credential	Baccalaureate
*Arkansas Children's Program Administrator Orientation *Child Care Orientation Training *Family Child Care Provider *Secondary Child Care Guidance, Management, and Services	*Arkansas Child Care Apprenticeship Program *Child Development Associate *National Association for Family *Child Care Accreditation	*BS or BA in Early Childhood Education

	Endorsement	Masters
NA	*Early Care and Education Curriculum Endorsement *Early Childhood Mentor Endorsement *Pre-K Early Literacy Learning in Arkansas Endorsement	*MS or MED in Early Childhood Education

	Technical Document	Doctorate
NA	*Certificate of Proficiency *Technical Certificate *Technical Diploma	*PhD or EdD in Early Childhood Education

Registry

The Registry is designed to insure quality professional development, continuity, and accessibility for early childhood practitioners and includes three major components: (1) an inclusive and collective list of ECE professionals referred to as the practitioner registry; (2) a trainer approval process referred to as the trainer registry; and (3) a state-wide schedule of all approved professional development and trainings including location, time, and date of offering referred to as the training registry. The first component, practitioner registry, tracks the professional development of all individuals in the system and documents completed trainings through an individual transcript accessible to each registered professional. Each individual within the system receives a level or ranking based on specific criteria as described in the Spectrum. As of 2014, there were 45,948 practitioner records. Detailed information regarding each level can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Number of Practitioners in Registry by Level

Levels	Number	Active Number	Attendees FY 2013-2014
Incomplete	3,586	2,546	326
Entry	18,211	11,192	4,270
Foundation 1 (15 hours of training including orientation)	6,500	4,374	1,809
Foundation 2 (30 hours)	3,842	2,742	1,372
Foundation 3 (45 hours or 3 semester hours of coursework)	12,066	9,519	7,212
Intermediate 1 (requires a CDA, 135 hours, or 9 semesters of coursework)	1,015	950	742
Intermediate 1 (requires 18 semester hours of coursework)	66	59	50
Intermediate 3 (requires an associate degree)	125	118	80
Advanced 1 (requires a bachelor's degree)	365	318	216
Advanced 2 (requires a master's degree)	181	165	104
Total	45,948	31,983	16,181

The second component, trainer registry, verifies and maintains a list of approved trainers within the state. The registry is based on a self-declared trainer application and specific criteria that must be met for trainer approval. For approval as a trainer, education and experience must be verified; then a trainer level is assigned by registry staff. Based on identified criteria such as experience as an administrator and educational level, specialty trainers are identified and approved only for specific professional development programs offered by the state.

The third component, training registry, maintains information on all professional development opportunities that have been registered and identified as appropriate and acceptable within the state system. A complete listing of all state-wide trainings, their locations, dates, and times is updated constantly (http://professionalregistry.astate.edu/train_register/trainsearch.asp).

The Registry collects and tracks a teaching professional's educational progress; alerts individuals and programs to acceptable professional development opportunities; helps individuals track the number of training hours completed each year; and provides a transcript or documentation of training and education. Therefore, it helps individuals determine their ranking within the organizational structure and aids growing professionals in tracking completed training hours and professional progress.

Early Care and Education Specialist Certificate

This paper primarily focuses on one of the training programs within the Spectrum (Career Lattice), the Early Care and Education Specialist Certificate (hereafter ECESC), an intermediate level professional development training offered throughout the state from 2003-2012. This certificate program was selected for inclusion due to the unique content and organizational structure of the curriculum. This professional development program was the only one within the registry, which was sequential and developed knowledge and skills in a hierarchical manner, scaffolding from one level to the next: it began with basic child development information, was followed by age-specific training, and finished with portfolio engaging the candidate in activities and experiences focusing on professionalism.

Goals of the ECESC

According to the National Registry Alliance (<http://www.registryalliance.org/>), a comprehensive professional development system (1) is accessible and based upon a clearly articulated framework; (2) includes a continuum of training and ongoing support; (3) defines pathways that are tied to licensure, leading to qualifications and credentials; and (4) addresses the needs of individual, adult learners. Following these guidelines, the following goals of the ECESC were set up: to (1) enhance the participant's general knowledge base of child growth and development followed by a focus on age-specific development and needs; (2) increase the participant's skills and expertise to improve daily interactions with children and families; (3) increase recognition from peers and employers for the participants' accomplishments; (4) earn the training hours necessary to meet state licensing requirements; and (5) participate in training that is applicable to the specific child development hours required by licensing.

Composition of the ECESC

As identified in Table 3, the ECESC training consisted of 60 hours of non-college credit work beginning with 20 clock hours of basic child growth and development training. Participants then selected a specialty area from one of the following: infant/toddler, preschool, school-aged, or family childcare, for the next 20 hours. The final 20 hours required completion of the individual professional development portfolio previously addressed. Because of the observed value of the CDA portfolio, a portfolio was also selected to allow individuals to demonstrate increased individual professionalism and advocacy. Participants were given three areas in which evidence of growth and activity is required: community, parents/guardians, and individual growth. Through the portfolio, participants showed their growth and leadership as they presented their individual plan for increasing professionalism and as they reflected on how their thinking changed throughout the training and documentation process (Goethals, Howard, & Sanders, 2004).

Table 3 ECESC Training Program

Types of Training	Hours	Content
Child Development	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Development: The Basics • Physical Health, Safety, Fitness, and Well-Being • Growing in Emotional, Social, and Moral Competence • The Young Child's Unique Ways of Thinking and Learning • Learning to Talk-Talking to Learn
Specialty Training	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infant/Toddler • Preschool • Family Day Care • School-Age
Individual Professional Experiences & Opportunities	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional Development Portfolio

Participants were given a five-year-period to complete this ECESC training. Again, it must be noted here that completion of the ECESC was voluntary. ECESC was not a required training program but one of many options. Within the state and at Arkansas State University, it was believed that individuals choosing to complete the entire program including the portfolio, were making a commitment to themselves and the profession, as well as making an overt statement about their own professional and personal goals within the field of ECE.

One Continuing Education Unit (CEU) credit was given for every 10-clock hours of completed training. Once all requirements were met and documented, a completion certificate was provided and participants were awarded six CEU credits for this training approved by the TAPP. As this program was state-funded, all training was provided at no cost to participants.

Since the ECESC was launched in 2003, over ten thousand participants completed the specialty training. The specific number of completions each year is presented in Table 4.

Table 4 ECESC Completers

Year	Completions
2003-2004	1,715
2004-2005	1,478
2005-2006	1,301
2006-2007	1,624
2007-2008	972
2008-2009	1,593
2009-2010	1,671
2010-2011	87
2011-2012	56
Total	10,497

Ensuring ECESC Completion Rates

To ensure participants' successful completion, several strategies were implemented. First, an adviser was assigned to each participant and was available by phone and/or email to answer questions, provide suggestions, and offer clarification with respect to the completion of the 20 hours of individual professional development portfolio. The adviser periodically or upon request, reviewed content materials and created small group discussions, group dialog and interaction opportunities, and when helpful or necessary, follow-up assignments. Second, the assignments provided participants with opportunities to take the material presented back to the classroom where specific strategies might be implemented with children. Those experiences might possibly be shared in future training sessions. Third, the presentation strategies used the knowledge of adult learner needs as a basis for implementation and as a mean of achieving content mastery. In addition, to determine individual levels of understanding, each training module began with a pre-test and concluded with a post-test. This approach not only allowed the trainer to have a better understanding of where the participants were in their knowledge level, but it also allowed the participants to see immediate benefits and gains in learning outcomes based on a comparison of pre- and post-test scores. Lastly, at the end of each module, participants completed voluntary pre- and post-surveys assessing content knowledge changes as well as obtaining feedback regarding the training quality and delivery.

Continuum of Effective Teaching

ECESC was designed to improve basic understanding of children's growth and development, to promote quality of care and education with individual age groups, and to increase the professionalism of individuals within the state working in early childhood education or related fields where a Bachelors degree do not require. After a nine-year period in which ECESC was focused in multiple state-wide offerings, it was determined by the leaders of Arkansas State University Childhood Services that an expansion of the training program was needed. This decision was made for a number of reasons including an increase in the knowledge of child care providers with respect to child growth and development, as well as the rural nature

and limited population of the state. It was believed that the existing child care provider population was ready to move ahead to more timely and possibly more advanced levels of professional development. Arkansas State University Childhood Services identified a better way to achieve enhanced professionalism and better prepared educators within the system and state using a newly revised selection of topics and content. This new system is referred to as the Continuum of Effective Teaching, which programs and descriptions are presented in Table 5.

Table 5 Continuum of Effective Teaching

Program	Description
Arkansas New Staff Orientation Training	This online training focuses on basic elements of minimum licensing requirements that new employees must know. Topics include supervision of children, behavior guidance, child development, and health/safety practices.
Early Care and Education DIRECT	This 20-hour orientation to child care is offered in five online modules: child development, the learning environment, language and guidance, planning early learning experiences, and professionalism. When requested, this course can be provided in face-to-face workshops.
Hands-On Routine	This series of 10 one-hour modules is offered online to help staff gain essential knowledge and skills required for responsive infant and toddler care. It includes on-site coaching visits after completing modules.
Intentional Teaching	The 9 three-hour workshops help experienced teaching staff think more about the how and why of best practices in early care and education. Topics include child development; planning; math; language development and early literacy; professionalism and reflective practice; science; intentional teaching with infants and toddlers; creative development; and positive interactions.
Powerful Interactions	Participants learn and practice a 3-step process that strengthens adult-child relationships and supports children’s learning. Includes the annual 6-hour Powerful Interactions Institute, the 3-hour Introduction to Powerful Interactions, and a 3-day Directors as Coaches seminar.
Basics of Assessment	This 12-hour workshop series introduces assessment strategies that can be used with any classroom-based assessment tool. Participants explore observation, documentation, evaluation, and using assessment results for curriculum planning.
Curriculum Implementation	Administrators and teaching staff participate in intensive training led by national experts. Curriculum coaches provide ongoing support for

implementation of the selected curriculum approach.

Conscious Discipline Participants learn a comprehensive classroom management program and a social-emotional curriculum based on current brain research, child development information, and developmentally appropriate practices. Participants attend three 2-day seminars over a period of several months.

Arkansas Children's Week (ACW) To support programs in celebrating ACW every April, workshops are offered throughout the state. In addition, a resource book is published and an ACW planning guide is available to help programs and communities plan special events.

<http://chs.astate.edu/onlinelearning/course/index.php?categoryid=3>

The Continuum of Effective Teaching fits into the TAPP Map, a visual used to interpret the Career Lattice, at the Foundation Level, where clock hours of requirements are identified (http://professionalregistry.astate.edu/chsdownloads/tapp_map.pdf). It is important to note that the Continuum of Effective Teaching appears at the lowest level, the Foundation Level, and is followed by the CDA and/or Associate degree at the Intermediate Level, and the Bachelor's, Master's, or Doctorate degrees at the Advanced Level.

The Continuum of Effective Teaching plays a valuable role in the process of increasing professionalism, knowledge, and performance of ECE providers in the state. It provides quality professional development opportunities documented as annual training hours and supports the knowledge base found in the CDA and in early childhood degree programs. Although the state has not adopted a model where annual training hours can feed into a degree program such as an Associate in ECE degree, the recognition that individual progress is important can be derived from the Spectrum and TAPP Map. Childhood Services reports from July 2014 to June 2015, the following activity and participation levels within the Continuum trainings: (1) 107 trainings with 1,316 participants; (2) 6,350.5 hours of training provided; and (3) 30 coaching visits.

CDA is an important training program within the state of Arkansas and at ASU Childhood Services. From 2003 to 2012, there were 2,318 CDA program completers documented within the Registry. During this same time period, 10,497 individuals completed the less demanding ECESC. The outcome, product, time, and monetary commitment of the CDA are very different from the 60-clock-hour ECESC which can be completed over a 5-year period or the professional development training programs listed in the Continuum; these programs serve different purposes and should not be compared. The TAPP Map provides a path for individuals to progress through the system at varying levels, speeds, and includes the CDA, ECESC, and now the Continuum, along with many other opportunities for achievement.

The hope of many in the field is that the effort to achieve the goal of increasing educational attainment in the form of the CDA, an Associate, Bachelor's, Master's or Doctorate degree continues. The former Governor of Arkansas, Mike Beebe, who recently left office due to term-limits, started "A College Degree Matters" initiative which targets approximately 6,000 people within the state who have already completed three-fourths of the coursework required for an Associate's Degree (www.degree matters.org); and

<http://www.arktimes2.com/guides/college/content.cfm?StoryID=25>). This initiative and website help individuals move in the direction of completing a degree in higher education, and reinforces the goals of the ECE profession. Now is an important time for institutions of higher education to work with agencies in the development of policies and procedures to facilitate this process and goal.

Discussion and Conclusion

A well-prepared and continuously supported early childhood teacher is key to providing high quality care and education to the children of today. Research has documented that specialized professional teacher training has a positive impact on student learning and classroom quality (Landtry et al., 2009; Zaslow & Martinez-Beck, 2005). This paper illustrated how Arkansas implemented a professional development system and organizational structure for identifying, training, and tracking ECE professionals. Additionally, the ECESC that had 10,497 completions shows how one state attempted to improve the care and education of young children while supporting teachers in their effort to improve student learning outcomes, and successfully complete certificate programs.

The information presented in this paper can be used to implement a more thorough and systematic approach for communicating with and advising individuals in an effort to increase the number of participant completions, enhance the professional status of the individuals in ECE settings, and improve the quality of care for children. This model shows a sequential program of scaffolding beginning with basic principles of child development, and building knowledge and refining understanding based on age-and developmental-specific needs of children. The paper concludes at the highest level with enhanced personal and professional growth through the twenty-clock hour portfolio focusing on community, parents, personal, and professional involvement. An individualized approach with self-selected goals and outcomes was described and implemented in Arkansas to increase the level of professionalism within the field. Likewise, at the completion of the nearly decade-long focus on child development and specialty age training, a revised focus evolved in the form of the Continuum of Effective Teaching, which is designed to take early childhood practitioners, at a variety of different educational levels, and move them along a continuum toward improved understanding of the profession and enhanced performance as teachers, caregivers, and administrators within the broad field of ECE.

In spite of many advantages, the Arkansas model has a limitation as well. In the NAEYC blueprint, one of the guidelines for having a comprehensive professional development plan is financial compensation (NAEYC, 2005). Although leading to enhanced professional preparation and possibly a reflection of intrinsic motivation on the part of the teacher or childcare provider, the Arkansas model is clearly lacking in regard to financial compensation as no monetary incentives for completing additional training hours beyond the minimum state requirements are provided. Thus, this paper points to the need for financial incentives in ECE designed to increase teacher's pedagogical knowledge and skills. Although many teachers and caregivers chose to enhance personal professionalism, a lack of extrinsic motivation exists for the completion of a credentials for which there are no mandates, requirements, or compensation in childcare sectors.

Based on the process that occurred in the state of Arkansas regarding the transition from the Specialist to the Continuum of Effective Teaching, some recommendations can be made for the future direction of the professional development training program. Within the state and field, changing priorities have resulted in the need to revisit, update, and refine professional

development training and the process by which it is approved such as the transition from ECESC to the Continuum of Effective Teaching. In addition, an issue of the registry system, initially, was voluntary membership and the subsequent difficulty in tracking and documentation. The need for required membership was recognized and has already been implemented with very little resistance due to the recognized value of the transcript and the state-wide online scheduling system. With the registry membership at 45,948, the need for an increase in trainers and refinement of the trainer approval process has become apparent. Finally, the continued need for interaction with multiple agencies within the state such as Head Start, Licensing, Department of Education, institutions of Higher Education, among other agencies, is essential to the continued growth and success of the program. Working together in advocacy endeavors, agencies can have a greater impact than working in isolation. No time is better than the present for enhancing the professional landscape of the field of early childhood education.

References

- Arkansas Early Childhood Professional Development System. Retrieved from http://humanservices.arkansas.gov/dccece/dccece_documents/spectrum.pdf
- Arkansas Minimum Licensing Requirements for Childcare Centers. Retrieved from http://humanservices.arkansas.gov/dccece/licensing_docs/mlr%20-%20center%202011.pdf
- Arkansas TAPP Map. Retrieved from http://professionalregistry.astate.edu/chsdownloads/tapp_map.pdf
- Barnett, S. (2003). *Low wages = Low quality: Solving the real preschool teacher crisis*. NIEER *Preschool Policy Matters*(3). New Brunswick, NJ: National Institute for Early Educational Research. Retrieved from <http://nieer.org/resources/policybriefs/3.pdf>.
- Bennett, J. (2006). New policy conclusions from starting strong II an update on the OECD early childhood policy reviews. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, 14(2), 141-156.
- Brennan, D. (2007). The ABC of child care politics. *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, 42(2), 213.
- Bueno, M., Darling-Hammond, L., & Gonzales, D. (2010, March). *A matter of degrees: Preparing teachers for the pre-K classroom*. The PEW Center on the States, Education Reform Series. Washington, DC: The Pew Charitable Trusts.
- Buyse, V., Winton, P. J., & Rous, B. (2009). Reaching consensus on a definition of professional development for the early childhood field. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*, 28(4), 235-243.
- Cho, E. K., & Couse, L. J. (2008). Early childhood teacher policy in the United States: Continuing issues, overcoming barriers, and envisioning the future. *International Journal of Child Care and Education Policy*, 2(2), 15-30.
- Degree Matters. Retrieved from www.degree matters.org
- Demma, R. (2010). *Building an early childhood professional development system*. Washington, DC: National Governors' Association, Center for Best Practices. Retrieved from <http://www.nga.org/cms/home/nga-center-for-best-practices/center-publications/page-edu-publications/col2-content/main-content-list/building-an-early-childhood-prof.html>
- Federal Student Aid (2015). Federal student aid: TEACH grant program. Retrieved from <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/sites/default/files/teach-grant.pdf>

- Goethals, M. S., Howard, R. A., & Sanders, M. M. (2004). *Student teaching: A process approach to reflective practice. A guide for preservice and inservice teachers*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Helburn, S., & Howes, C. (1996). Child care cost and quality. *Future of Children*, 6(2), 62-82.
- Johnson, J. O. (2005, Winter). Who's minding the kids? Child care arrangements: Current Population Reports, U.S. Bureau of the Census.
- LeMoine, S. (2005). *Workforce designs: A policy blueprint for state early childhood professional development systems*. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.
- Landtry, S. H., Jason, L. A., Paul, R. S., & Monseque-Bailey, P. (2009). Effectiveness of comprehensive professional development for teachers of At Risk preschoolers. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 101(2), 448-465.
- National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). (2005). Standard 10, topic area 10-E: Personnel policies. In *Early childhood program standards and accreditation criteria: The mark of quality in early childhood education*. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.
- National Child Care Information and Technical Assistance Center (NCCIC). (2008). *State requirements for minimum preservice qualifications and annual ongoing training hours for child care center teachers and master teachers in 2007*. Retrieved from <http://nccic.acf.hhs.gov/pubs/cclicensingreq/cclr-teachers.html>
- Neuman, S., & Cunningham, L. (2009). The impact of professional development and coaching on early language and literacy instructional practices. *American Educational Research Journal*, 46(2), 532-566.
- Ochshorn, S. (2011). *Forging a new framework for professional development: A report on "The Science of Professional Development in Early Childhood Education: A National Summit."* Washington, DC: Zero to three.
- OECD (2011). *Building a high-quality teaching profession: Lessons from around the world*. Paris: OECD Publishing.
- Olsen, H., Donaldson, A., & Hudson, S. (2010). Online professional development: Choices for early childhood educators. *Dimensions of Early Childhood*, 38(1), 12-18.
- Torquati, J. C., Raikes, H., & Huddleston-Casas, C. A. (2007). Teacher education, motivation, workplace support, and links to quality of center-based child care and teachers' intention to stay in the early childhood profession. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 22(2), 261-275.
- U.S. Department of Education (2014). *Funding early childhood educator professional development program*. Retrieved from <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/eceducator/index.html>
- Whitebook, M., & Sakai, L. (2003). Turnover begets turnover: An examination of job and occupational instability among child care staff. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 18(3), 273-293.
- Whitebook, M., Gomby, D., Bellm, D., Sakai, D., & Kipnis, F. (2009). *Preparing teachers of young children: The current state of knowledge, and a blueprint for the future*. Berkeley, CA: Center for the Study for Child Care Employment.
- Zaslow, M., & Martinez-Beck, I. (Eds). (2005). *Critical issues in early childhood professional development*. Baltimore, MD: Brookes.

A Clinically Intensive Teacher Preparation Program and Its Effectiveness for Teacher Preparation

Anne Lindsay, PhD, University of Arkansas at Little Rock
Katina M. Leland, EdD, University of Arkansas at Little Rock

Abstract

Clinical experiences in teacher preparation programs are vital to candidates' readiness for classroom teaching upon graduation. This article describes a clinically intensive teacher preparation program. A description of the program's clinical components includes relationships between the university and schools, integration of coursework in the field, the role of faculty supervisors, the structure of the experience, the procedures for making field and internship placements, and the structure of learning for teacher preparation. Exit and graduate data are provided to reflect the effectiveness of the clinical component on candidates' readiness to teach.

Relevant Literature

In 2013, the Council for the Accreditation of Education Preparation (CAEP) standards were approved replacing the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) standards. Prior to the shift to CAEP standards, NCATE's Blue Ribbon Panel on Clinical Preparation and Partnerships for Improved Student Learning (2010) published a report on the transformation of teacher education that addressed the need for a vigorous movement in clinical experiences in teacher education. Standard Two of the CAEP standards, which focuses on clinical partnerships and practice, features NCATE's Blue Ribbon Panel on the transformation of teacher education.

The authors of the NCATE Blue Ribbon Report pointed to the demands on American schools to educate all candidates "including those from increasingly diverse economic, racial, linguistic, and academic backgrounds" (p. 1) and called these demands an unprecedented responsibility. The authors stipulated that what was needed was not just revision and change but a complete transformation of the way in which teacher preparation is envisioned. The foundation of the Panel's vision was the placing of clinical experience at the center of the process as similarly advocated by other educators and researchers (e.g., American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 2010; Ball & Forzani, 2009; Grossman & McDonald, 2008; Hollins, 2011; Jesse, 2010; Solomon, 2009; U.S. Department of Education, 2011).

Among these calls for a clinically intensive approach to teacher preparation are several commonalities. Perhaps the most fundamental of these calls is what Darling-Hammond (2010) referred to as "a major overhaul of the relationships between universities and schools" (p. 42). The Blue Ribbon report claimed that "only when preparation programs become deeply engaged with schools will their clinical preparation become truly robust" (CAEP, 2013; NCATE, 2010, p. 3).

A second call is the relative place of course work and field work. The Blue Ribbon's model stated that at least some coursework should be taught in schools (CAEP, 2013) and that the program should be aligned with the school rather than the academic calendar. Another feature that distinguishes clinically intensive models from traditional ones is the role of faculty. Zeichner (2010) argued that the role of tenure-track faculty in supervision in the field needs to become much more substantial in contrast to the prevailing dependence on clinical faculty. Clinically intensive models typically advocate placing candidates in schools throughout a

program and for extended residencies. However it has been noted that, at present, these residencies are only found in 5% of programs (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 2013).

Proponents of clinically intensive models have also addressed the structure of learning in teacher preparation. Ball and Forzani (2009) explained how effective teacher preparation requires multiple opportunities necessary for observing, analyzing, practicing, coaching, and measuring performance against given exemplars (CAEP, 2013), an argument made similarly by other researchers (e.g., Lampert et al., 2013; Hollins, 2011; & Solomon, 2009). Finally, the process of making field placements has been challenged. Darling-Hammond (2010) argued that “the clinical side of teacher education has been fairly haphazard, depending on the idiosyncrasies of loosely selected placements with little guidance about what happens in them” (p. 40). In contrast, she described how highly effective programs make carefully selected placements for candidates’ teaching experiences (CAEP, 2013).

The remainder of this article describes a five-semester-program in early childhood education that has been in place for 14 years at a four-year, doctoral intensive, metropolitan institution in the southern United States. The program was designed to be a clear departure from its traditional predecessor in making field experience a cornerstone of the program. The structure of the program will be described in relation to features of the research and reports previously described in this article. Finally data are presented on the effectiveness of the program.

Description of the Program

The program described here was not developed out of research on teacher preparation but derived from many years of experience in training early childhood teachers. Although the model does not match all the features the research and reports cited above describe, it shares many of them. At its core is the heavy emphasis on field experience and the connections between schools and the university.

Relationships between Universities and Schools

CAEP standard 2.1 states, “partners co-construct mutually beneficial P-12 school and community arrangements for clinical preparation and share responsibility for continuous improvement of candidate preparation” (CAEP, 2013). This program has been able to build relationships with schools in part by matching each faculty or clinical faculty supervisor to her/his own school where they take responsibility for all candidates placed there and act as the liaison between the school and the university. This relationship remains intact over multiple semesters ensuring supervisors have a continuous presence in the school. Consequently supervisors become well known by many school personnel enabling the process of building trust and communication over time. Additionally, the program has been able to place current candidates with program graduates who have developed an understanding of the program as well as established relationships with the faculty.

The program has aligned the internship schedule with the school rather than the academic schedule. For example, when the candidates begin the new school year on the schedule of their cooperating teachers, they are starting earlier than their colleagues on campus. Candidates are instructed to follow the teachers’ schedules for the duration of the internship attending all school functions including those after hours. Immersing interns in the school schedule has resulted in school personnel viewing candidates as “belonging” to the school community.

Integrating Coursework within the Field

As in the Blue Ribbon's recommendations, the program decided that some of the coursework being taught by adjunct instructors who were classroom teachers would be better taught in their own schools rather than on the university campus, helping to balance the relationship between school and university. Addressing CAEP standard 2.1, requirements for many classes taught on campus include assignments that are integrated within the field placements (CAEP, 2013). For example, the three literacy courses in the program are taught over three consecutive semesters, and the content of each course aligns with the grade level for the field experience for that semester.

The Role of Faculty

CAEP Standard 2.2 states, "partners establish, maintain, and refine criteria for selection, professional development, performance evaluation, continuous improvement, and retention of clinical educators in all clinical placement settings" (CAEP, 2013). Each early childhood faculty member supervises in the field every semester. Together with additional adjunct supervisors, they work as a team communicating regularly regarding ongoing issues and activities in their schools. Over the years the program has developed a style of working with schools in which respect for teachers and the operation of the school is the first priority. For example, understanding the time constraints on teachers, the program deliberately set out to place all responsibility for paperwork on supervisors rather than on teachers.

Grounded in the relationships the supervisors build with their individual schools, they develop an understanding and commitment not just to the candidates placed there but also to the school, in general, and to the children, parents, and community, specifically. The supervisors make regular visits and allocate time for discussion not just with candidates but also with teachers and principals. As such, supervisors develop first-hand knowledge of all aspects of the school including ongoing shifts in curriculum and assessment.

The trust and communication that are built over time facilitates discussions between school personnel and university supervisors around issues of candidates' learning and performance. The close relationships with school personnel create a context in which sensitive issues such as situations involving candidates' dispositions can be raised and addressed readily along with other issues pertinent to school-university relationships. Additionally, positive relationships provide opportunities for university faculty to be seen by candidates as part of collaborative teams in the field working together to improve young children's learning.

The Structure of the Field Experiences

When the program was originally designed 14 years ago, it was based on the belief that the more time candidates spent in the field the better. As such, candidates begin their field experiences in the second week of their first semester in the program. Candidates spend one full day a week in the field throughout the first three semesters, each semester in a different grade level of the licensure area. Candidates are required to work with children throughout the day and to remain in the school and with their cooperating teachers at all times, including lunch. Each candidate is instructed to be an active participant in the learning environment, not just an observer, and to take charge of the class when a substitute teacher is present to enhance the candidates' initial teaching experiences.

Candidates submit weekly reflections to their university supervisors who uses the reflections as a basis for maintaining ongoing communications about the field experience. The supervisors conduct monthly visits on site with the candidates and cooperating teachers assessing each candidate's progress and ensuring that expectations of the candidate are being maintained. Candidates' summative evaluations are completed collaboratively by the cooperating teachers and university supervisors at the end of each semester.

A full time internship comprises the final two semesters of the program. Candidates are placed with one cooperating teacher for the entire time. The semester includes the time spent preparing for the first day of school in August prior to the arrival of children. Candidates are present on the first day of class and they participate in working with teachers, children, and families in the beginning days of school. Candidates are expected to work with their cooperating teachers in a team teaching role. The cooperating teachers are asked to provide regular and detailed direction and feedback as the candidate, now called an intern, assists in the classroom. Cooperating teachers are encouraged to think aloud so interns can begin to understand the thinking processes that underlie planning, teaching, and assessment. University supervisors make regular visits to assess each intern's teaching abilities, professional dispositions, and overall performance in the classroom. The university supervisor and cooperating teacher collaborate to discuss the intern's professional growth, to provide feedback to the intern, and to complete the summative evaluation at the end of the semester.

The Structure of Learning for Teacher Preparation

Fieldwork is the backbone of our teacher preparation program. All field experiences include a reflection component meaning that candidates are engaged in a continuous practice-reflection cycle throughout the full five semesters of their teacher preparation. Similar to the models described above, the program provides candidates with numerous opportunities to observe, plan, and practice followed by reflection and coaching. A single assessment tool is used throughout the internship. Each candidate receives a copy of the assessment tool and reviews it during the orientation process that precedes the beginning of the internship. Based on Danielson's (2007) four domains, this assessment tool is used throughout the internship for formative assessment and at the end of each semester for a summative evaluation. The repeated use of the same tool allows candidates as well as their supervisors and teachers to return to the same exemplars of learning repeatedly as Ball and Forzani (2009) advocated. In addition, this structure of learning addresses CAEP standard 2.3 which states, "clinical experiences are structured to have multiple performance-based assessments at key points to demonstrate candidates' development of the knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions associated with positive impact on the learning and development of all P-12 students" (CAEP, 2013).

The program has made a strong effort to coach candidates in the development of professional dispositions. Again the approach is cyclical in nature. Orientations are held at the beginning of each semester for all field experiences. Expectations of candidates' dispositions are reviewed each semester and candidates are asked to sign an agreement. If any of the instructors or supervisors working with a candidate observes indications that these expectations are not being upheld, a conference is held with the candidate. The last phase of the conference is an agreement with the candidate on the date when the issue will be revisited to ensure that progress in being made. If necessary a series of similar conferences will be held until the instructors and supervisors are satisfied that the candidate's progress is satisfactory. This process allows for re-visiting concerns with performance as necessary.

Procedures for Making Field and Internship Placements

The multi-dimensional task of university supervisors in their schools provides the basis for another important aspect of the role that they fulfill related to the making of field placements. Just as Darling-Hammond (2010) advocated, the program puts much effort into making carefully selected placements. Candidates are given opportunities to request their field placements for each upcoming semester. The supervisors, including both program faculty and adjunct instructors, meet to consider each candidate's placement individually.

Consideration is given regarding the candidate's specific request, past performance in schools and at the university, the kinds of schools where candidates have already completed field work, and their strengths and weaknesses. Then the team decides on a cooperating teacher and school for the candidate. University supervisors, working in close collaboration with classroom teachers and school principals in each site, decide whether the recommended placement is an appropriate choice. They are careful to ensure that potential cooperating teachers actually want a teacher candidate in her/his classroom for an entire school year. If the candidate and the cooperating teacher have not already met each other, opportunities are made for the candidate to visit and for both of them to make the final decision about the placement. This procedure for field placement addresses CAEP standard 2.2 which states, "partners co-select, prepare, evaluate, support, and retain high-quality clinical educators who demonstrate a positive impact on candidates' development and P-12 student learning and development (CAEP, 2013)."

In summary, this teacher preparation program could be described as a clinically intensive model. It differs markedly from traditional programs where faculty have little contact with clinical settings and where candidate spend little time in the field until their culminating semester, i.e., internship. Following survey data are presented on the effectiveness of the program as perceived by graduates at the point of completion and after one year in the field.

Candidate Satisfaction with Preparation for Teaching

CAEP Standard 4 states, "the provider demonstrates, using measures that result in valid and reliable data, that program completers perceive their preparation as relevant to the responsibilities they confront on the job, and that the preparation was effective" (CAEP, 2013). A common indicator of effectiveness of teacher preparation programs is a measure of graduates' satisfaction with their preparation for teaching. According to the AACTE's 2013 report, 60% of programs surveyed collect these kind of data. The program described here has been collecting candidate satisfaction data for the past five years both at the point of graduation and at the end of their first year of teaching.

Exit Survey

Graduating candidates are asked to complete exit surveys. The survey consists of questions that relate to preparation in pedagogy and content knowledge, collegiality, and dispositions. Using a 4-point Likert scale, candidates indicate their levels of satisfaction with their preparation. As seen in Table 1, the results indicate that approximately 95% of candidates believe that they have been "adequately" to "well-prepared" to teach.

Table 1

Exit Survey Results 2008-2013

N=126

Rating	Pedagogy & Content	Collegiality	Dispositions
Not Prepared	.20%	0%	0%
Somewhat Prepared	3.97%	5.56%	3.97%
Adequately Prepared	28.67%	30.95%	33.33%
Exceptionally Prepared	67.16%	63.49%	62.70%

Graduate Survey -1 Year Out

Once graduates have completed their first year of teaching, they are contacted again to assess their satisfaction with their preparation for teaching. Using the same questions and Likert scale, the teachers are asked to consider their experiences during their first year and again indicate their level of satisfaction with their preparation. Although the number of responses is fewer than the number of responses received at the end of internship, the results are about the same. As shown in Table 2, about 95% of them report that they believe they were “well-prepared” to teach during their first year in the classroom.

Table 2

Graduate-One Year Out-Survey Results 2008-2013

N=55

Rating	Pedagogy & Content	Collegiality	Dispositions
Poor	.68%	1.82%	7.41%
Fair	2.51%	1.82%	1.85%
Good	28.25%	18.18%	25.93%
Excellent	68.56%	78.18%	64.81%

Additional Indicators of Program Effectiveness

Faculty members' close connections with schools have allowed for many informal discussions with various stakeholders about the perceived quality of the program. In particular, school principals have commented on how they actively search for graduates of this educator preparation program and have praised their teaching after hiring them. Teachers are generally very willing to take interns or field experience candidates and to work closely with university supervisors. Perhaps the most satisfying quality of the program is that field placements almost always go well with very few problems and very few instances of having to take candidates out

of their placements. Additionally, retention rates in the program have been high, and candidates almost invariably pass the Praxis II and PLT exams the first time.

Discussion

The data indicating graduates' level of confidence in their preparation for teaching provide support for the effectiveness of this model of teacher preparation. Candidates preparing to graduate report that they feel they are well prepared for beginning their teaching careers and the data from the graduates after one year in the field help to confirm this perception. In contrast, other studies have reported a much higher proportion of candidates who do not feel they were adequately prepared for teaching (e.g. Levine, 2006).

Several other factors could also be contributing to the effectiveness of the program. For example, in comparison to many programs, this program is small with approximately 110-120 students per semester. All faculty get to know candidates well. This knowledge facilitates working with candidates in many ways. The fact that candidates have the opportunity to request or at least discuss the relative value of requesting a particular placement could have a significant effect on their perceptions of the effectiveness of the internship. Still another factor could be that candidate evaluation is based on the work of Danielson (2007), which has also been used in the schools for mentoring novice teachers. As such the frame is familiar to many of the teachers thus providing a common language, a feature Danielson (2015) cites as crucial to teacher learning.

A limitation of the data is the survey instrument. In comparison to research-based tools of this kind (e.g. Darling-Hammond, Chung, & Frelow, 2002; Silvernail, 1998), the survey that has been used is relatively simple. A more detailed and fine-grained instrument might provide more complex results. Future research that examines candidates' perceptions of their readiness to teach as well as their actual performance should be very valuable in assessing the value of investing in this kind of a teacher preparation model.

Establishing and maintaining such a field-intensive program requires significant commitment on the part of faculty. Faculty in this program have consistently focused on their work with candidates and schools. If an institution is committed to this model, at least one of the challenges is ensuring that faculty can and will make the investment necessary to establish and maintain the vital clinical partnerships.

References

- American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. (2010). *The clinical preparation of teachers: SA policy brief*. Washington, DC: American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education.
- American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. (2013). *The changing teacher preparation profession*. Washington, DC: American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education.
- Ball, D., & Forzani, F. (2009). The work of teaching and the challenge for teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 60(5), 497-511.
- Council for the Accreditation of Education Preparation. (2013) CAEP standards. Retrieved from caepnet.org
- Danielson, C. (2007). *Enhancing professional practice: A framework for teaching* (2nd ed.). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

- Danielson, C. (2015). Framing discussions about teaching. *Educational Leadership*, 72(7), 38-41.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2010). Teacher education and the American future. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 61(1-2), 35-47.
- Darling-Hammond, L., Chung, R., & Frelow, F. (2002). Variation in teacher preparation: How well do different pathways prepare teachers to teach? *Journal of Teacher Education*, 53(4), 286-302. DOI: 10.11774/0022487102053004002
- Grossman, P. & McDonald, M. (2008). Back to the future: Directions for research in teaching and teacher education. *American Education Research Journal*, 45(1), 184-205.
- Hollins, E. (2011). Teacher preparation for quality teaching. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 62(4), 395-407.
- Jesse, D. (2010) *University of Michigan revamping the way it trains future teachers*. Retrieved from <http://www.annarbor.com/news/university-of-michigan-looks-to-change-way-future-teachers/>
- Lampert, M., Franke, M., Kazemi, E., Ghouseini, H., Turrou, A., Beasley, H., & Crowe, K. (2013). Keeping it complex: Using rehearsals to support novice teacher learning of ambitious teaching. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 64(3), 226-243.
- Levine, A. (2006, September). *Educating school teachers*. Retrieved from The Education Schools Project website: http://www.edschools.org/teacher_report.htm
- National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education. (2010). *Transforming teacher education through clinical practice to prepare effective teachers: Report of the Blue Ribbon Panel on clinical preparation and partnerships for improved candidates learning*. Washington, DC: National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education.
- Silvernail, D.L. (1998). *Findings from an initial analysis of the New York City Teacher Survey*. New York, NY: New Visions for Public Schools.
- Solomon, J. (2009). The Boston Teacher Residency: District-based teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 60(5), 478-488.
- U.S. Department of Education. (2011). *Our future, our teachers: The Obama Administration's plan for teacher education reform and improvement*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.
- Zeichner, K. (2010). Rethinking the connections between campus courses and field experiences in college and university-based teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 61(1-2), 89-99.

**Value-Added Reflection: Promoting Higher Order Thinking,
Inquiry, Learning, and Change**

Kathleen Shahan, EdD; University of Arkansas at Monticello

Abstract

The Peter Pappas Model of reflection supports teacher educators in the instruction of reflective thinking and writing, and, thus, value is added to the product through this special processing. The model provides a useful scaffolding method to support all teacher candidates, especially candidates who struggle with the elements of reflection. Allowing for construction of reflective responses using higher order thinking and inquiry, this model's format is connected to important theories of learning and change supporting best practices of organizational and individual growth. The aim of most educator preparation programs is to produce candidates skilled in the

art of self-reflection ready to teach their students to identify and analyze problems, evaluate appropriate courses of action, and create plans regarding the future. *Value-added* reflection provides techniques that advance educator preparation and professionalism.

Value-Added Reflective Tasks

P-12 classroom teachers and teacher educators alike understand the value of reflection and have sought to guide their students into deeper reflective practices primarily through the use of journal writing. National Board certified teacher and author Sackstein (2015) described teaching reflection as an “opportunity for us to share a moment with each student and get inside his or her head, and in the process deepening our relationship with that student. The insights we gather provide valuable context that we can apply in our practice” (p.7). Although the goal may have been clearly understood, reflective journal writing in and of itself has not accomplished what teachers and teacher educators have envisioned. When teachers and teacher educators have asked for student writing thought to be a demonstration of what is “inside the student’s head” and in the context of reflective journal entries, they have not always found high levels of metacognitive thought. Perhaps students still require more instruction in order to adequately engage in this process.

The need to add more to the teaching of reflection is most obvious when instructors review student samples of reflective writing. In many cases, it is then that the writing has more clarity. Adding value to this process adds value to the product. According to Webster’s dictionary (2015), *value-added* means “of, relating to, or being a product whose value has been increased especially by special manufacturing, marketing, or processing or pertaining to something added to a product to increase its value.” What has been done in the area of teaching reflection has not been enough to increase the value of the learner’s product. Clearly, the need for *value-added* reflection strategies has increased as educators associated with both P-12 schools and traditional educator preparation programs are challenged to improve quickly in response to additional scrutiny from state and national education groups, reform movements, and local stakeholders. Perhaps most importantly, teaching students to understand how to reflect is an essential way to help them solve problems and better understand themselves and the world around them. In this global partnership of education, it is the responsibility of organizational and individual stakeholders to respond to issues affecting instruction, learning, and the educational process. The problem rests with and can be corrected by teacher educators to guide classroom teachers who, in turn, can guide their P-12 students.

P-12 Schools and Classrooms

Across the United States, P-12 curriculum specialists and grade level teams have sought to infuse opportunities for reflection into daily work and certainly during the time of Common Core, there has been a push to move students toward deeper thinking in multiple content areas. The most common tools used for reflection have been responses to literature and journal entries. Yet, in recent years researchers have gained more awareness that reflective journal writing in itself may not sufficiently raise the levels of student metacognition or academic success, and other instructional measures may be necessary.

In particular Lew and Schmidt (2011) focused their research using the multiple definitions of reflection popular over the last quarter century and found that they “shared emphasis on reflection used to achieve deeper meaning and understanding” (Introduction, para.1). These scholars discussed the “positive, yet inconclusive results of several previous, and

limited studies on the effectiveness and influence of reflective journal writing on students' cognitive skills" (Reflection journals, self-reflection and academic achievement section, para. 4).

Their research in an analysis of over 690 applied science students in their first year of studies at a polytechnic school in Singapore was focused on the effectiveness of journaling on test scores and increased cognitive skills. Among their findings noted "the type of reflection (i.e., self-reflection on how learning took place and/or what was learned) did not matter when it came to promoting learning and hence academic achievement in students" (Results section, para. 3). Finally, their findings most relative to this article included the possibility that "the weak relationship between self-reflection and performance is because students are generally poor at self-reflection, not able to reflect on their own performance and the subject matter taught effectively because they have insufficient access to their own learning process."

Educator Preparation Programs

Thus, the greater need is for models of reflective practice such as the one described in here created by Pappas (2010) to guide and scaffold teacher candidate learning. Modeling and teaching the reflective process adds value to both organizations and individuals. Wilson and Conyers (2015) realized the value of reflection by teaching students that they are the "conductors of their own brains" and in "conveying the need to master a wide range of thinking and learning tools for use across core academic subjects and later in their college years and careers" (Making connections section, para. 3.) These brain researchers stated, "Success in the 21st century demands self-directed learners and independent, creative thinkers" (Making connections section, para. 3). Teacher educators may benefit from accessing methods and tools more useful in preparing teacher candidates to become self-directed learners and thinkers. Sackstein (2015) proposed "teaching reflection can help students decipher their own learning needs and elicit evidence from their own work to support their growth" (p. 1). Ultimately, all P-12 students, teacher candidates, teacher educators, and classroom teachers have a need for developing more powerful self-reflective skills.

Danielson (2013) understood "the value of teachers reflecting with accuracy and specificity, as well as being able to use these skills within proficient teaching." She realized reflection is an acquired skill and is developed through supportive and deep questioning" (p. 87). Her framework rubrics specified the progressive nature of acquiring levels of reflective skills in domain four. Furthermore Danielson stated, "Over time this way of thinking both reflectively and self-critically becomes a habit of mind, leading to improvement in teaching and learning. Her thoughts were that teachers would become more accurate in their reflections and would grow in their abilities to identify specific examples from their lessons to support their judgments" (p. 87).

Educational Organizations and Change

Educational organizations are systems in which individuals interact for many purposes. Their primary functions could be thought to include teaching and learning as well as to create organizational visions, missions, and goals to guide their actions. They operate under a specified structure that meets the needs of most stakeholders both in and outside of the organization. Educational organizations impact the larger spectrum of the public including parents, citizens, businesses, and taxpayers at the local, state, and national level and in a variety of complex ways. As these societal systems interact issues and problems occur resulting in the need for corrective measures or responses; educational examples could include low test scores, lack of attendance,

poor graduation rates, and results leading to the need to examine the processes and the products being produced. Individuals and groups have their own perspectives on what is happening and may either ignore the problems or seek to contribute in their own unique ways to solving them. This work is an attempt to solve a problem identified in the process of teacher preparation. Bandura (2001) encouraged people to direct their individual energies toward collective change stating, “Social efforts to change lives for the better require merging diverse self-interests in support of common core values and goals” (p. 18). In education and for the sake of this article, common goals include developing learners who are prepared to meet high standards by using reflective and metacognitive skills to monitor, evaluate, and plan future learning.

Rather than depending on top level down solutions to solving educational problems, inroads have been made through 2015 federal education legislation, national, and international action research projects. The shift in focus seems to be moving toward allowing the people closest to the problems to identify and solve their problems. Fullan and Quinn’s (2016) cutting edge thinking and action research promoted the concept that change should focus on building a unit’s coherence and in developing district’s middle leadership to move change forward, stating

When the organization values the talent and expertise of its people, it creates leadership development strategies that grow internal capacity. It creates a stream of successive development opportunities to grow leaders at all levels; selects them based on proven performance of authentic tasks; and provides ongoing coaching, mentoring, and development. It intentionally builds collaboration and learning for formal and informal leaders at all levels (p. 50).

Whether at the district level or within higher education the idea of change among organizations can be led by teacher educators and produced as a result of a “scholarship of teaching and learning bringing a scholarly lens – the curiosity, the inquiry, the rigor, the disciplinary variety-to what happens in the classroom” (Chick, 2015, A Scholarly Approach to Teaching section para. 2). This concept of a scholarly lens should apply to the collection of reflective data both at the organizational and individual level with the purpose of change that brings about system improvement. Chick (2015) shares four steps in directing the scholarly lens,

- asking meaningful questions about student learning and about the teaching activities designed to facilitate student learning,
- answering those questions by first making relevant student learning visible as evidence of thinking and learning (or mis-learning), and then systematically analyzing this evidence, and
- sharing the results of that analysis publicly to invite review and to contribute to the body of knowledge on student learning in a variety of contexts, and
- aiming to improve student learning by strengthening the practice of teaching (one’s own teaching *and* other’s teaching).

Collaboration over reflective data of this nature could guide decisions about the types of professional development, instruction, or action warranted among groups and individuals. If faculty and candidates are not achieving at high levels, these types of data may lead to planning for improvement and, in today’s society when a school is satisfied with current performance levels it may already be falling behind. Educational agencies and other “organizations have to be fast learners and continuously innovative to survive and prosper under rapidly changing technologies and global marketplaces. Slow changers become big losers” (Bandura, 2001 p. 11). Over the past decade educational organizations have found themselves at the mercy of top down leadership. Districts have dealt with federal policies related to funding based on state testing

data and accountability along with corporate and nonprofit groups now operating as strengthening external influences for reform.

Reflection on Organizational Data

Data collection through the standards accreditation process may primarily be gathered in order to meet the criteria of external judges. Using a single source of data such as state testing to make critical decisions is insufficient. This inadequate collection of data provides a limited scope and vision in measuring the internal causes or reasons outcomes are what they seem to be. Data driven from the inside out, from the eyes, ears, and reflective thinking of those stakeholders closest to the situation are most beneficial. During situations of unrest or disturbances in learning there is much to be said for gathering data from participants to alter the course. Teacher candidates within an organization may benefit from their use of reflective data when failing or struggling within the system, but only if the reflective content is designed to be used to plan for change and growth. Teacher educators grow through the process of self-evaluation as unique members of the organization. Mid level leaders support the growth in a unit through the use of self-reflection and self-examination to direct change.

Bandura (2001) advocated there is great value in reflecting on select information to manage problems, “functional consciousness involves purposive accessing and deliberative processing of information for selecting, constructing, regulating, and evaluating courses of action. People are not only agents of action but self-examiners of their own functioning” (p. 10). Internal reflections, viewed through the lens of current best practices in education and combined with insight into each district’s culture and climate, will allow for a unique perspective into how an organization may design appropriate and significant change.

Reflection for Individual Change

As the organization is partially the sum of the individuals within it, how do individual educators move forward and determine the direction that will propel each one toward their correct purpose? “Improvement plans should be specific to individuals and groups and those plans should be based on observation and reflective data” (Church-Shahan, 2012). With the advent of common standards for organizations the work of the individual has changed. Burke (2009) maintained one of the “most valuable by-products of the standards movement is the need for determining what is high quality work and changing the focus to be student reflection and metacognition” (pp. 22-23). When teacher educators model metacognitive strategies with candidates, the outcomes may result in increasing the organization’s value and its ability to produce *cadres* (a member of an activist group) functioning as reflective practitioners. The task should be individualized and focused on assisting faculty members to delve more deeply into learning their respective content and pedagogy. Along those lines Fullan & Quinn (2016) specified,

We must shift our focus to a deeper understanding of the process of *learning* and how we can influence it. *Maintaining relentless focus* that is the next shift in learning will require knowledge building by everyone engaged and must affect all students. We can shape how children connect with the world and with each other and create deep learners who are curious and committed (p. 79).

The best professional development should be timely and tailored to suit the needs of individuals within an organization. Stakeholders may reflect best on internally produced data to focus on perceived individual strengths, create opportunities for dialogue, and generate analytical

responses toward change (Church-Shahan, 2012). There are ample reflective data that could be gathered to assist learners in developing their conceptual and skill knowledge.

Sources of Individual Data

Individual reflective data may be collected from multiple sources in order to validate the findings. Students have varied strengths and interests. “Just as there is no single type of student, there is no one right way to do reflection. Teachers who effectively use reflection give students the freedom to choose how they reflect, whether in writing, through video, or in face-to-face conferences” (Sackstein, 2015 p. 5). Reflective data could be found in many types of classes and in perhaps unexpected places. Individual data could be collected from communication occurring in student-to-student blogs, course discussion boards, side bar dialogues, small group conversations, and teacher-to-student collaborations occurring in postings, emails, text messages, and face-to-face interactions. The National Board Professional Teaching Standards renewal process encourages professionals to consider all avenues of dialogue as evidence of learning. Teacher-to-teacher reflections could exist when faculty members reflect on instruction that has worked well and what may need to be adjusted for instruction to be more engaging and effective. These conversations may also happen within Professional Learning Community (PLCs) in local schools and dialogue among community stakeholders. Internal data may be collected through reflective self-evaluation, student and peer evaluations, surveys, conferences and interviews to determine program needs.

Using the Pappas Model to Add Value to Reflection

In this case, reflective data were collected in an entry-level teacher education course. Students ranged from primarily freshmen to generally only a few sophomore or junior students. This survey style course contained historical information on the origins of public education as well as current issues relating to the current status of education and public school educators. When required to reflect either orally or in writing, whether on learning material in text or video, students lacked motivation and generally put little effort into the process. The results, even among the more dedicated or interested students, lacked depth or complexity and were generally bland and repetitive. The Pappas model (2010) connected reflection to Bloom’s Taxonomy (Blooms, 1956) a tool with which students had previously become familiar. The Pappas model had successfully been used with public school students and teachers for at least five years to assist in generating more analytical reflective responses. For each level of Bloom’s taxonomy (Bloom, 1956), Pappas offered an accompanying reflective question intended to foster a deeper *value-added* processing of the learning and outcomes taken from the learning experience. This approach, used in an entry-level teacher education class, assisted teacher candidates in determining what was important or the essential information and discovering value in their personal learning process.

Prior to using this model candidate attempts to engage in reflective thinking were less than successful. Fullan & Quinn (2016) suggested, based on the results of a Gallop Poll (2014), that something is needed to change the 53 percent of students who have a “lack of enthusiasm for school and learning.” Previous student reflections lacked both depth and focus. Engagement in deeper reflection did not occur without using a scaffolding device to structure the process. Pappas (2010) described the need for such a tool and asserted,

Reflection can be a challenging endeavor. It's not something that's fostered in school - typically someone else tells you how you're doing! At best, students can narrate what

they did, but have trouble thinking abstractly about their learning - patterns, connections and progress (The Reflective Student: A Taxonomy of Reflection (Part 2) section para. 1).

In an effort to help teachers become the needed reflective practitioners and to change their environments, the Taxonomy of Reflection was developed based on the concepts of Bloom's taxonomy (Bloom, 1956). Teacher candidates enrolled in an introductory course to teaching and learning had become familiar with the Bloom's approach to higher order thinking and were not taken aback with the Pappas reflective questions that mirrored similar type of thinking. Fullan & Quinn (2016) recognized the responsibility of learners to make sense of their thinking,

There is a need for learners to take responsibility for their learning and to understand the process of learning, if it is to be maximized. Learning to learn requires that students build metacognition about their learning. They begin to define their own learning goals and success criteria; monitor their own learning and critically examine their own work; and incorporate feedback from peers, teachers, and others to deepen their awareness of how they function in the learning process (p. 95).

Learners do not always internalize learning on their own or make sense of their thinking solely in isolation. Their self-regulated learning has an impact on other learners both now and in the future. "People do not live their lives in isolation. Many of the things they seek are achievable only through socially interdependent effort. They have to work in coordination with others to secure what they cannot accomplish on their own" (Bandura, 2001 p. 13). Reflective teacher educators impact teacher candidates to become reflective classroom teachers and hopefully teacher leaders who contribute to organizations and to society as a whole.

Opportunities for gathering reflective data may occur throughout the daily teaching and learning process. By looking inward and measuring both individual and collective efforts, teachers refine the mission and focus to meet the needs of the stakeholders. "Leadership makes outcomes such as this possible by supporting individual relationships in the work of building organizational capacity" (Fullan, 2001). Organizational leaders may include a wide variety of personnel in collecting data and interpreting the results with multiple voices engaged in the process.

Sample *Value-Added* Reflections

One teacher candidate affirmed his thoughts regarding learning using this modified Pappas reflection tool are shown in Table 1 with comments associated with remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating. The ultimate goal of reflection should not be that individuals can reflect but rather how reflection benefits thinking and may change or define an individual's direction. It appeared as if this teacher candidate was metacognitively engaged. The candidate was able to express his thoughts as he applied, analyzed, evaluated, and judged his outcomes. He then connected his ideas and communicating his plan for the future. Every candidate who made the effort to use the scaffolding of the model increased in her or his reflective thinking, but not all to this level. Perhaps with the addition of further practice the class-wide results could have been more uniformly successful. It is important to note there were generally and significantly better individual reflections written using the Pappas (2010) scaffolding model.

Table 1.
Sample Responses (Z. Mays, personal communication)

Remembering: Retrieving, recognizing, and recalling relevant knowledge from short or long-term memory.

Adapted Pappas Reflection: What did I do? What have I learned?

I learned how to handle a classroom and was treated like a future teacher. As I worked in groups, I heard responses from my peers and the reasoning behind their answers. This course played to my strengths as a visual learner.

Understanding: Constructing meaning from oral, written, or graphic messages.

Adapted Pappas Reflection: What was important about what I did? Did I meet my goals? What did I contribute to others in this class?

I wanted to run my classroom with an iron fist; but now I want a democratic classroom. I helped my peers see things in a different way. I learned that I needed to listen to others opinions and not consider mine alone.

Applying: Carrying out or using a procedure through executing, or implementing. Extending the procedure to a new setting.

Adapted Pappas Reflection: Where could I use this again? How will this learning transfer to other classes or in my future classroom?

All of this information can be used in a classroom on a day-to-day basis. The information will make me a better student while finishing at the university by teaching me to respect my peer's thoughts. I will be able to better manage my classroom because I will be able to use my students' thoughts and ideas to teach the content in ways they will find useful and fun.

Analyzing: Breaking material into constituent parts, determining how the parts relate to one another and to an overall structure or purpose.

Adapted Pappas Reflection: Do I see any patterns in what I did throughout the course? Did I change my performance throughout the semester? What did I do differently? In which areas did I improve and why did I decide to approach learning differently? How did other learners affect my decisions or learning purposes?

I came into the course without giving 100% but after starting it I saw how much fun it was and how it could really help me in the classroom. I began to take it more seriously and to study a lot more. I began to give valuable feedback in the classroom and started reading my book because it had a lot of helpful information that I would be able to use for the rest of my life and my teaching career. I realized it just wasn't about me anymore but also about my future students and learning all I can because I don't want to cut my students' education short by not being a well-rounded educator. It inspired me to want to learn more seeing my peers giving valuable insight into the conversation and I wanted to do that also. I would read and study at night so I could add important things to the class to make it more fun and educational. It was fun watching our class develop and how much information we retained. We would sometimes come into the classroom before class started and discuss the topic for that day's class.

Evaluating: Making judgments based on criteria and standards.

Adapted Pappas Reflection: How well did I do? What worked? What do I need to improve as a student in order to become a better teacher? How do I relate or compare to each of the conceptual frameworks and standards?

I still need to improve my work ethic. I should go into every course now seeing what I can gain to help benefit myself and my future students. There are many things that I want to do: group work, students doing the teaching, role-play, and projects. This will benefit visual learners because it did for me. I will use technology in the classroom to go the extra mile and I will use it as a tool and not a crutch. I will be professional because my students and parents deserve that from their child's educator.

Creating: Combining or reorganizing elements into a new pattern or structure.

Adapted Pappas Reflection: What should I do next? What's my plan/design? How will I change what was not working into a plan for success as a student and future teacher? Use the Conceptual Frameworks as your guide.

I will continue to build on the information obtained from the course and use it as a foundation for the rest of my education courses. I've learned from this course that you have to be flexible and diverse, as you never know what kind of student you will have or the type of learning disability. Some of my peers were not big on group activities so I have to keep in mind that my students may not all like them. It is up to you to have the tools to reach every student regardless of the barriers. Society is becoming more technology based so I will show my students how to use it as a future citizen. I know how important being professional is and how it can impact how my students and how their parents look at me.

Organizational Reflection Opportunities

At the faculty level, reflection often occurs in a structured self-evaluation, peer-evaluation, and administrator-observation process that provides evidence and feedback for personal effectiveness. Faculty in both P-12 and higher education organizations, particularly educator preparation programs, could use this model modified to collect metacognitive data and measure

- Instructional strategies thought to work well
- Innovative approaches to retention, motivation, and engagement
- Outstanding individual contributions
- Approaches used across the curriculum or in nontraditional ways
- Faculty productivity for working together toward common organizational goals
- Unit performance increases and decreases
- Abilities of organizations and/or individuals to learned from mistakes
- Changes that may benefit the organization
- Unit effectiveness in meeting its vision and mission in regard to the school's conceptual frameworks

The greatest value of reflections such as these could come from the reflective self-dialogue and initiation of cognitive processes revealing deeper revelations. A teacher candidate, a new teacher, a new instructor, a seasoned professor, or an administrator/leader may access or mine these data to make more informed decisions. The Pappas Model (2010) appears to allow teachers and learners to dig deeper and reveal what may not be readily available at the surface

level of their individual thinking in regard to making comparisons, evaluations, justifications, and moving toward creation of a plan for the future.

Closing Reflections on *Value-Added* Reflection

Introductory education courses by their nature begin by focusing learning at the lower levels of Bloom's taxonomy (Bloom, 1956) with survey type courses rich in information. Reflection improves individual and collective thinking, and as illustrated by the teacher candidate's responses, having steps to guide reflection led to deeper processing of tasks and experiences. Scaffolding reflective practice over time and with appropriate questioning strategies may enhance levels of activity within the thinking process.

High quality educators at all levels are interested in adding value to instructional programs and plans. In Merriam-Webster's (n.d.) Online Dictionary *value-added* may relate to a product, as demonstrated in these reflections, whose value has been increased especially by special processing. Modeling and teaching the reflective process with candidates not only adds initial value to the candidate and the university, it may then flow further into community schools as candidates teach the value of reflection. Reflective teacher candidates will become better classroom teachers able to think metacognitively and individuals who as part of organizations carefully validate, critically discuss, and analyze educational decisions.

In higher education *value-added* self and organizational reflection may serve as a tool for increasing recruiting success, raising student satisfaction levels, and increasing retention and graduation rates. Perhaps it may influence successful candidate standardized test results, now considered useful as an external measure to characterize the effectiveness of an organization's teaching and learning. Reflection is a tool for improving society in general; with the use of models such as the one described could improve how universities go about the business of preparing teacher candidates.

References

- Bandura, A. (2001). Social cognitive theory: An agentic perspective. *Annual Review of Psychology* 5, 1–26. Retrieved from <http://www.uky.edu/~eushe2/Bandura/Bandura2001ARPr.pdf>
- Bloom, B. S. (1956). *Taxonomy of educational objectives, handbook I: The cognitive domain*. New York: David McKay Co Inc.
- Burke, K. (2009). *How to assess authentic learning* (5th ed.) Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Chick, N. (2015). Center for Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. Retrieved from <https://my.vanderbilt.edu/sotl/understanding-sotl/a-scholarly-approach-to-teaching/>
- Church-Shahan, K. (2012). Development of an instructional coaching plan to improve an organizational system. Retrieved from <http://gradworks.umi.com/35/43/3543032.html>
- Danielson, C. (2013). *The framework for teaching evaluation instrument*. Retrieved from <https://www.danielsongroup.org/framework/>
- Fullan, M. (2001). *Leading in a culture of change*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Fullan, M., & Quinn, J. (2016). *Coherence: The right drivers in action for schools, districts, and systems*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- Lew, M., & Schmidt, H. (2011). Self-reflection and academic performance: Is there a relationship? Retrieved from <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3167369/>

- Pappas, P. (2010). A Taxonomy of reflection: Critical thinking for students, teachers, and principals (part 1). Retrieved from <http://www.peterpappas.com/2010/01/taxonomy-reflection-critical-thinking-students-teachers-principals.html>
- Sackstein, S. (2015). *Teaching students to self-assess. How do I help students reflect and grow as learners?* Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
- Value-Added. (n.d.). Retrieved from www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/value-added
- Wilson, D., & Conyers, M. (2015). Strategies for strengthening the brain's executive functions. Retrieved from <http://www.edutopia.org/blog/strategies-strengthening-brains-executive-functions-donna-wilson-marcus-conyers>

Preservice Teachers' Perceptions of Literacy, Learners, and Learning

LaToshia Woods, PhD; Arkansas State University

Abstract

How do teacher candidates view literacy learning? Teacher candidates from four sections of a reading foundations course elected to write narratives describing what it was like for them to help their learners complete literacy tasks. The narratives were analyzed to determine what each teacher candidate prioritized when helping a learner during a literacy event. The results point to university coursework that supports teacher candidates as reflective practitioners who perceive learners as necessary contributors to learning events and who need strategies to use in future learning events.

Introduction

Teacher quality is a primary topic of many education policy reports. As blame is cast, educator preparation often bears the brunt of concerns. Better preparation prior to entering the field is one of the solutions that has been offered for improving teacher quality and decreasing early career teacher attrition (Greenberg, Walsh, & McKee, 2014; Ingersoll, Merrill, & May, 2014). Furthermore, education preparation providers (EPP) must ensure that their program completers impact student learning and development (CAEP, 2015). Although it may seem that educator preparation programs are holistically under attack, some of the attacks focus on particular aspects of these programs, such as their abilities to equip elementary school teachers to teach literacy (Greenberg, Walsh, & McKee, 2014; Rickenbrode & Walsh, 2013; Rowland, 2015; Salinger et al., 2010).

Methodology

For the purposes of this study, a phenomenological approach was used to analyze written narratives of 37 female and 2 male teacher candidates enrolled in a university educator preparation program in the Southeast United States. The majority of the participants were Caucasian (95%); 5% were African American. The participants graduated from various high schools in eight different states. All of the participants were part of a junior level reading foundations course, and all had been admitted to the educator preparation program as elementary school or middle level education majors. None of the candidates had received any formal university training in literacy interventions prior to participating in this study.

The researcher chose to use the written narratives of teacher candidates to better understand the predispositions of individuals preparing to teach literacy to students. By having

the participants detail their own experiences, an avenue was created to understand their “characteristic ways of perceiving” (Wasicsko, 2002) literacy events. According to Wasicsko, studies of teacher effectiveness and measures that determine individuals’ ways of perceiving align more closely with their concepts of self than self-reports (such as surveys). Additionally, written narratives provide more in-depth descriptions from which to inform future educator preparation program practices of literacy teachers. Through explorations of lived experiences, these personal accounts can be used to inform concerned parties about the supports that literacy teacher candidates need so that they can enhance their practices.

The participants in this study were asked to respond to the following prompt derived from Wasicsko’s perceptual psychological approach for determining the dispositions of teacher educators:

I would like for you to think of a significant past event in which you were involved in helping someone participate in a literacy activity. This literacy activity could include a reading, writing, speaking, listening, or viewing activity. From a human relations standpoint, choose an event that was significant to you in some way and write about it. Be sure to describe any strategies you used to help with the activity. In writing your event, please answer the following items:

1. Describe the situation as it occurred at the time.
2. What did you do in the particular situation?
3. How did you feel about the situation at the time you were experiencing it?
4. How do you feel about the situation now?
5. Would you wish to change any part of it?

The written narratives were reviewed by two reviewers in search of the priorities of the literacy events. Significant statements, quotes, and phrases that detailed how the participants experienced helping one another during a literacy event were extracted. Clusters of meaning were derived from the significant statements and were translated into relevant themes. Based on textural and contextual evidences, a thematic essence of the phenomenon was constructed. Verification was achieved through searches of the literature on the topic, adhering to the phenomenological method, using an adequate sample of narratives, and including significant statements of both negative and positive cases. Validity was obtained through the use of an external reviewer to confirm the significant statement selections during the review of the transcripts.

Results

Examples of significant statements were extracted from the review of the 39 narrative writings as presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Selected Examples of Teacher Candidates' Perceptions of Literacy Events as Related Formulated Meanings

Significant Statement	Formulated Meaning
<p>Neither girl knew...how to write a paragraph....I made her rewrite the story the correct way. It was frustrating that [she] wouldn't do her work in the way she knew it was supposed to be done. I wasn't sure what I should do to correct the issue.</p>	<p>Literacy is about the teachers making sure that learners do their work correctly and correcting issues that arise.</p> <p>If a student passes his test, I have successfully helped him in literacy.</p>
<p>I felt really good about it [my help] because he always passed his tests.</p>	<p>I can learn things from literacy events that will help me in working with students in future literacy events to better assist them.</p>
<p>The situation influenced me to have a focus on the student and their reading ability and their level....I can use the situation then to now focus on how...I can make plans to prevent reading difficulties.</p>	<p>Helping students is about preventing reading difficulties by focusing on where students are and meeting them instructionally at their levels.</p>
<p>By doing the craft after the literacy event, I helped the children have a visual of what was just read to them.</p>	<p>Multisensory aids can support students' understanding of text during a literacy event.</p>
<p>It turned out that he wasn't a good reader and why he would never complete his work.</p>	<p>If students are not strong in reading they will sometimes avoid doing their school work that requires them to read.</p>
<p>Every Thursday we would practice his reading not only for fluency but for comprehension....Sometimes I would look over the questions first, so he would know what key points to pay attention to.</p>	<p>There are strategies that can be used before reading to better prepare students before they read on their own.</p>
<p>We decided on a topic together....The two of us would count the number of words in his sentences.</p>	<p>Students must actively participate in the learning event and own the assignment in some way.</p>

Arranging the meaning statements derived from the significant statements resulted in six themes as presented in Table 2. This inductive process allowed the researcher to substantiate concepts of what participants reported they needed to be prepared to teach literacy in comparison to the claims in the literature.

Table 2. Example of Three Theme Clusters with Their Associated Formulated Meanings

Helping Requires Correctness

Helping learners requires one to oversee the correctness of the learning event

Learners should get it after the teacher helps them

Success of Failure

Students passing tests is an indicator of the teacher's success with teaching

Students who are not strong readers avoid doing school work that requires reading

Hindsight

The need to help learners know how to "do" literacy

I am already capable of effectively relaying information to students

Literacy events are opportunities to see how students think and solve problems

Discussion

Theme 1: Helping Requires Correctness. Correctness was a priority during a literacy event for some of the participants. The sense was that learners could do better during literacy activities if they would just try harder or do what they knew was the right way to perform a task. One participant was frustrated because the learner "wouldn't do her work in the way she knew it was supposed to be done" denoting that the student was deliberately performing a task in a manner that opposed the helper's directions. A sense of exhaustion was evident in one participant's narrative who found it "frustrating to work with a child week after week, and they still don't even recognize the first letter" [of the alphabet].

Theme 2: Success or Failure. Some participants determined that learners' literacy abilities were based on achievement or academic gains, and one participant concluded that his helping efforts were successful because the learner "always passed his tests." In another account, a participant concluded that a learner would "never complete his work" because "he wasn't a good reader." Unsubstantiated conclusions for the success of or deficiencies of students were formed by the participants based on isolated experiences with learners.

Theme 3: We Read; We Write. Some participants opted to include how the learners experienced the literacy events in addition to their own experiences. Some participants recalled the events through collaborative accounts with statements such as "every Thursday we would practice his reading." In an account about a writing help session, one participant insisted that "we decided on a topic together" and "the two of us would count the number of words." In one narrative, the literacy event was described as time when "I was there to see her brain work." Among these statements literacy events were described as collaborative acts requiring participation and collaboration of both individuals.

Theme 4: Beyond the Book. The need for and the use of strategies with learners to help them understand better what they were reading were mentioned multiple times by the participants. Some participants provided specific descriptions of strategies they used with the learners such as one account of the comprehension strategy used before reading: "Sometimes I

would look over the questions first so he would know what key points to pay attention to.” In a comprehension strategy used after reading, a participant described an activity consisting of pictorial representation of an object shown in the text that “helped the learner have a visual of what was just read to them.” Strategies were viewed as tools to make reading of a text easier to understand or easier to remember.

Theme 5: A Take-Away. Some participants made concerted efforts to address the reflection portion of the prompt. In this theme, descriptions of lessons learned for future use were described where the participants gained understandings. In one account, the participant saw the literacy event as an opportunity to “reflect on the benefits of learning.” Another participant processed the event as “a time of learning not only for the learner, but myself as well.”

Theme 6: Hindsight. There were a few participants who were willing to go beyond their lived experiences to describe what they would need to create a hypothetical ending to an event that had already occurred. One participant believed she would “have done a better job if I had known how.” Another participant explained how nervous he was throughout the learning event “because I didn’t want to tell him wrong.” However, some participants insisted that “I did a pretty decent job” and that there was no need to change anything about the literacy event even if possible.

Conclusion

In this study, teacher candidates viewed literacy events in diverse ways. Although their definitions of literacy events were somewhat consensual, their perceptions of the purposes, functions, and outcomes of the events were not. Some participants chose to focus on the frustrations they experienced during the events; other participants highlighted the outcomes and new-found understandings as a result of the events. Similarly, while some participants focused their written narratives primarily on their experiences within the events, other participants made efforts to elaborate on their perceptions of the learners’ experiences.

It has been noted that teacher candidates bring their own concepts of literacy to their preparation programs (Broaddus, 2000; Helfrich & Bean, 2011; Wolf, Ballentine & Hill, 2000). However, many educational researchers insist that a lack of up-to-date literacy content knowledge is a serious deficit in many education preparation programs (Greenberg, Walsh, & McKee, 2014). Salinger, et al., 2010). It has been emphasized that there is a lack of priority and attention devoted to the five essential elements of reading--phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension--within a balanced approach to teaching literacy in many education preparation programs (Greenberg, Walsh, & McKee, 2014). Understanding the five reading elements still remains the primary focus of large scale studies for preparing quality elementary school reading teachers (Rickenbrode & Walsh, 2013; Salinger et al., 2010). As many suggestions for improving reading teacher preparation have been posited across the literature within the past two decades, enhancing reading content knowledge and field experiences have been consensual priorities (Hoffman et al., 2005). Limited research has been determined about the necessary links between program features and teacher candidates’ thinking. Thus, conclusive evidence of the essential rudiments for quality literacy teacher preparation is still lacking.

Wherein assurance that teacher candidates obtain essential content knowledge throughout their programs for teaching reading and writing is necessary, understandings relating to development of the literacies of learners also must be a priority. The differentiation can be made

in one's choice of whether to focus on skills or strategies when aiding learners during literacy events. Skills-based literacy practices emphasize the accuracy and automaticity of literacy concepts, while strategy-based practices are actions based on goals intended to be used flexibly across multiple contexts (Afflerbach, Pearson, & Paris, 2008). One way to make sure that students develop the necessary literacy skills they need to read is for education preparation programs to make the purposes and functions essential for literacy learning explicit by considering it an instructional priority alongside content development. More studies exploring the predispositions of teacher candidates of literacy are needed to further inform the refinement of practices within educator preparation programs.

References

- Afflerbach, P., Pearson, P. D., & Paris, S. G. (2008). Clarifying differences between reading skills and reading strategies. *The Reading Teacher*, 61(5), 364-373.
- Broadus, K., & Ivey, G. (2000). Tailoring the fit: Reading instruction and middle school readers. *The Reading Teacher*, 54(1), 68-78.
- Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). (2015). Retrieved from <http://www.caepnet.org/>
- Greenberg, J., Walsh, K., & McKee, A. (2014). 2014 teacher prep review. Retrieved from http://www.nctq.org/dmsView/Teacher_Prep_Review_2014_Report
- Helfrich, S., & Bean, R. (2011). What matters: Preparing teachers of reading, *Reading Horizons*, 50(4), 241-262.
- Hoffman, J. V., Roller, C., Maloch, B., Sailors, M., Duffy, G., & Beretvas, S. J. (2005). Teachers' preparation to teach reading and their experiences and practices in the first three years of teaching. *Elementary School Journal*, 105(3), 267-298.
- Ingersoll, R., Merrill, L., & May, H. (2014). What are the effects of teacher education and preparation on beginning teacher attrition? *Research Report (#RR-82)*. Philadelphia: Consortium for Policy Research in Education, University of Pennsylvania. Retrieved from <http://www.cpre.org/prep-effects>
- Rickenbrode, R., & Walsh, K. (2013). Lighting the way: The reading panel report ought to guide teacher preparation. *American Educator*, 37(2), 30-35.
- Rowland, J. (2015). Trends in teacher certification: Equipping teachers to prepare proficient readers. *Education Commission of the States*. Retrieved from <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED555548>
- Salinger, T., Mueller, L., Song, M., Jin, Y., Zmach, C., Toplitz, M., Partridge, M., & Bickford, A. (2010). Study of teacher preparation in early reading instruction. *NCEE 2010-4036*.
- Wasicsko, M. (2002). *Assessing educator dispositions: A perceptual psychological approach*. Retrieved from <https://coehs.nku.edu/content/dam/coehs/docs/dispositions/resources/Manual103.pdf>
- Wolf, S., Ballentine, D., & Hill, L. (2000). Only connect! Cross cultural connections in the reading lives of preservice teachers and children. *Journal of Literacy Research*, 32(4), 533-569.