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K-6 Classroom Teachers' Perceptions of Effective Teacher Education Programs

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A dissertation

presented to

the faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis

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in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

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by

Pauletta J. Johnson

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ABSTRACT

K-6 Classroom Teachers' Perceptions of Effective Teacher Education Programs

by

Pauletta J. Johnson

The demands placed upon stakeholders of the public education system have become more and more compelling with each passing year. With the success of schools and students at stake, it is imperative to examine multiple facets of the public education structure. One of the most important aspects of this process is the development of preservice teachers entering the classroom.

This study initially chronicled the history of teacher education and state licensure. Subsequently, standards enforced by the Tennessee Department of Education and National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education were also explored to gain information about the guidelines and criteria required for accrediting teacher education and licensure programs. Further information in regard to teacher education was examined through current trends and issues that affect classroom teachers. The teacher education program criteria from 6 Tennessee higher education institutions were also reviewed.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the perceptions of classroom teachers about effective higher education programs. Twelve K-6 classroom teachers with 5 or fewer years of teaching experience were interviewed to gain insight about the opinions of effective components of teacher education programs. This information was examined to explore specific program requirements.

The analysis of the data collected in this study introduced several themes and common patterns. Most commonly, participants expressed the importance of a substantial field experience within the teacher education program. The value of relating content and theoretical approach to the practical application of the classroom was also noted as a priority. Participants reported the most effective teacher education programs as those that formulated a realistic portrayal of the classroom setting. These responses illustrated the significance of a hands-on approach to teacher education training and development.

DEDICATION

I dedicate the success of this journey to my family.

I give special tribute to my daughter.
I hope that I am as much of as inspiration to her as she is to me.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Education can be defined as knowledge and development resulting from a learning process (Merriam, 2011). Throughout history education has been used in a variety of forms to provide opportunities to understand academic and technical processes. Education can be used to provide an answer to an unknown problem. The educational process supplies people with answers. Ancient education stems from individuals seeking comprehension of occurrences that did not provide an immediate answer. "The method or process of philosophers is questioning and reasoning; their product is thought" (Ryan, 2010, p.290). These thoughts included academic and technical development that lead to an advancing society. Further advancements of education guided distinct civilizations and cultures that have shaped present day societies.

The movement of people into civilizations has further advanced forms of education. By progressing from the focus of education as an understanding of religion and philosophy, the development of schools began to emphasis the instruction of children as a necessity in order to ensure that civilizations would continue to prosper and advance. This mindset eventually led to the development of formalized institutions of learning to include public school systems, colleges, universities, and technical training facilities. Public schools or free tax-supported schools controlled by a local governmental authority provided a means to ensure the continuation of an informed and educated society for all the children regardless of social status or economic background (Merriam, 2011). Although this process has been complex in its establishment, state law presently maintains that all children have the opportunity to an education within the public school system.

History of Public Elementary Education in the United States

The development of present day elementary schools stem from the cultivation of basic skills. This focus began in the 1600s, emphasizing reading, writing, arithmetic, and religion. As formalized education occurred mainly for the boys, girls learned household skills such as laundry, sewing, cooking, cleaning, and other household chores. Boys of a lower socioeconomic status gained knowledge of a trade development through an apprenticeship. Ryan (2010) noted that in 1642 Massachusetts passed a law that required parents to supply education for their children. This law strengthened the goal of teaching all children to read by the Old Deluder Satan Act. As a result, town schools were developed. Noted by their name, town schools were set up in locations for students whose parents were unable to educate them (Ryan, 2010).

As the expansion of the New England portion of the United States began to take place, town schools were noted as being ineffective in educating all children. Soon moving schools developed, requiring a school master to travel to villages and communities in order to teach the children (Ryan, 2010). Moving schools also proved to be unsuccessful, leading to the development of school districts in which the school was funded as a result of tax money from the town (Ryan, 2010).

The development of schools in other parts of Colonial America in the 17th century was different from that of the New England colonies. For example, there was a lack of formal education in the South as a result of the common belief that all citizens did not need to be educated. Private tutors were used for the wealthy families in order to educate children. The middle colonies valued privately funded education as a means to educate children in citizens' respective faiths (Ryan, 2010).

As the new nation began to expand, the term universal school was noted as a means to provide education for all at the expense of the public. "The national system of formal education in the States {commenced} in the 19th century" (Thattai, 2001, ¶2). This concept met a great amount of opposition. Some of the opposing principles were based on the following: financing of the schools, educational and political principles, religious responsibility, merging of various ethnic groups, and moral values. After the 1920s the development of the common school had expanded into a nationwide focus of educating the children of the United States. During this time, the enrollment of a universal system of public education progressed to an attendance of more than 75% of school aged children. This noted increase illustrated the importance of an educated society for all citizens (Ryan, 2010).

The Department of Education was originally established as the National Bureau of Education in 1867 as an entity of the federal government (Federal Role, 2010). The initial goal of the organization was to assist school systems at the state level in developing local successful school systems (Federal Role, 2010). In conjunction with the Second Morrill Act of 1890, the entity later known as the Department of Education was given the "responsibility for administering support for the original system of land grant colleges and universities" (Federal Role, 2010, ¶5). This endeavor quickly expanded to additional forms instruction within the education setting to include vocational education as a result of the 1917 Smith Hughes Act and the 1946 George Barden Act (Federal Role, 2010). These acts focused on the technical paths of instruction for high school students.

Several periods of history have also mandated an expansion of federal funding and involvement into the education sector. In 1944 the Servicemen's Readjustment Act, also known as the GI Bill, provided financial assistance to war veterans who wanted to attend in college (The

GI Bill's History, 2009). In addition, the Soviet's launch of Sputnik in 1958 provided a push in the content areas of math and science, thus releasing government funding to these areas. In order to provide more equal opportunities for the nation's students, the federal government has supported the following: the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Over time, these laws have demanded equal opportunities as directed by the federal government in order to provide a quality education for all children of this nation regardless of diversities that previously prohibited this progress (Federal Role, 2010).

The development and funding of a formalized education system soon demanded training for individuals seeking to become educators. In the past, teachers were allowed to lead classrooms by demonstrating sufficient knowledge of skills or acknowledging a desire to be an educator. As education became a more sanctioned entity of the government, leaders soon viewed a necessity for skilled individuals to provide appropriate learning environments and instruction for children and young adults (Ryan, 2010). Soon to follow would come the demand for specialized training and licensing within the areas in which teachers would be instructing in the nation's schools. As this phenomenon expanded, criteria and mandates for teacher training quickly began to follow suit, leading to the development of today's teacher education programs of higher education institutions (McCarty, 1973).

Background of the Study

The training of future educators at the college level is known a teacher education. As part of the higher education system, these programs are structured by institutional requirements and state mandates for licensure. Teacher education programs foster the training and preparation of

classroom teachers. The goal of these programs is to maintain the effective development of classroom teachers prepared to join the workforce (NCATE Strategic Goals, 2007).

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to examine the perceptions of K-6 classroom teachers in terms of effective teacher education programs. The study places emphasis on the following elements of teacher education programs: Admission requirements, field experience, length of the program, delivery of program, and methodology.

Significance of the Study

As more demands are placed on classroom teachers, it is imperative that teacher education programs evaluate the characteristics of their programs that are most effective within the parameters of state criteria. By gaining perspective of classroom teachers, crucial components may be examined and amended in order to train preservice teachers in ways that will allow them to be most successful.

Definition of Terms

Praxis I Testing: Tests {measuring} basic skills in reading, writing, and mathematics. In addition to licensure, these tests are often used to qualify candidates for entry into a teacher education program (Praxis Series Testing, 2011).

Praxis II Testing: Tests {measuring} subject-specific content knowledge as well as general and subject-specific teaching skills that you need for beginning teaching (Praxis Series Testing, 2011).

Field Experiences**:** A variety of early and ongoing field-based opportunities in which candidates may observe, assist, tutor, instruct, and/or conduct research (NCATE Glossary, 2011)

Student Teaching**:** Preservice clinical practice in P–12 schools for candidates preparing to teach (NCATE Glossary, 2011).

Initial Teacher Preparation Programs**:** Programs at the baccalaureate or post-baccalaureate levels that prepare candidates for the first license to teach. They include 5-year programs, master's programs, and other post-baccalaureate and alternate route programs that prepare individuals for their first license in teaching (NCATE Glossary, 2011).

Research Questions

1. What aspects of undergraduate teacher education are most effective? Why?

2. In what ways can teacher education program better prepare preservice teachers?

3. Does the format of teacher preparation programs influence participant teachers in terms of current career satisfaction?

Scope of the Study

The study targeted graduates from three higher education institutions of Tennessee. These institutions represented the public and private sectors. The elementary school teachers were selected from three school systems of East Tennessee. Twelve participants were used in the study.

Limitations

The participants used in the study were considered a limitation. Each participant of the population was a graduate from one of three higher education institution of Tennessee. Two thirds of the participants interviewed were graduates from East Tennessee State University. Each participant is working in a school system in East Tennessee. Using participants currently living in the state of Tennessee is also a limitation of the study.

A limitation of the study was my personal experience within the field of education. I have 7 years experience as a K-6 classroom teacher and 4 years experience working in higher education. Within the higher education sector, my experience has been focused on the training and development of preservice teachers expressing an interest in becoming educators as careers.

Overview of the Study

This study evaluated the perceptions of K-6 classroom teachers in terms of effective teacher education programs. By using qualitative research in this study, the perceptions of the participants provided insight to this aspect of the education field. Chapter 1 offers an introduction to the study explaining the background of the study, statement of the problem, significance, definition of terms, and research questions. Chapter 2 provides a review of literature featuring the history of teacher education and licensure, accrediting guidelines, outlines of higher education programs, entities of education reform, and teacher attrition. The research methodology is described in Chapter 3 to include the selection of participants, research design, recruiting and ethical protocol, and data collection. Chapter 4 consists of the data collected in the study. Findings, conclusions, and recommendations for practice and future research are contained in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Teacher education programs are responsible for the training of future teachers. Its most useful form prepares teachers to "facilitate learning in contexts very different from those typically provided in a public school" (McCarty, 1973, p.28). Also known as Initial Teacher Preparation Programs, preservice teachers receive a broad spectrum of theory, content, and pedagogy that allows them to develop a foundation of the education system and teaching methods. "Teachers need to be able to think creatively about complex situations, consider multiple options, make decisions about best courses of action, and understand why they do what they do" (Russell, 2007, p. 31). In addition, teacher education programs offer a variety of opportunities for field experience. Field experience offers preservice teachers the ability to gain practical experience from both practicum and student teaching endeavors. The goal of linking course methodology and field experience is to provide more effective teacher education programs, thus developing more effective teachers for the field of education.

History of Teacher Education

The history of teacher education can be dated back to the early 18th century of France. During this time a monk, John Baptist de la Salle, developed what is known as the Brothers of Christian Schools. The Brothers of Christian Schools was a community of teachers who taught poor and middle class students who would otherwise be unable to afford an education (History of Education, 2007). This group of teachers supported schools based on the importance of a quality of education regardless of financial capabilities. As a result John Baptist de la Salle and the Brothers of Christian Schools began a series of schools that featured "...well prepared teachers with a sense of vocation and mission…"(Fratelli Delle Scuole Cristiane – la Salle, 2010, ¶3).

Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi is another contributor to the development of formalized teacher training. Born in Zurich, Pestalozzi's philosophy of education emphasized a "loving, family- type environment in which a child can grow and flourish naturally…{combining} intellectual, physical, and technical abilities with emotional, moral, ethical, and religious growth" (Brooks, 2008, ¶1). As a volunteer teacher Pestalozzi's nontraditional methods of teaching were ridiculed, leading to the development of his own private school. Pestalozzi's private school generated a great deal of success, leading to renowned recognition and government funding. Pestalozzi's influence quickly spread internationally impacting many other educators to incorporate his ideas within their teaching philosophies (Brooks, 2008).

Following John Baptiste de la Salle and Johann Pestalozzi was the influential development of the Monitorial System in the 19th century. The Monitorial System was introduced by Joseph Lancaster and Andrew Bell. This system illustrated a way to "furnish schooling to the underprivileged even under conditions of severely limited facilities" (Monitorial System, 2011,¶1). This method of instruction allowed students to be placed in one room with several benches. Monitors, or the older children at the school, were instructed by the classroom teacher. Following the initial instruction, monitors would teach younger children who sat on the corresponding benches (Monitorial System, 2011). This system ultimately allowed for a large number of students to be educated by one qualified teacher, while leading to the assumption that monitors would become teachers themselves (The Lancasterian Monitorial, 2011). This method was quite popular until a more contemporary model was formulated into the education system.

Another influential individual who influenced the development of teacher education was Horace Mann. A former member of the United States House of Representatives, Mann demonstrated his commitment to education with the support of common schools or elementary

schools open to children of all economic and social classes. His continued interest and support lead to the founding of the first public normal school in 1839 (Ryan, 2010). Located in Lexington, Massachusetts this school focused on the formal training of elementary school teachers rather than merely allowing interested individuals to be placed within an educator's position (American Association of Teachers Colleges, 2011). As a result this establishment led to the present day model used to train and license teachers for the classroom.

The present model of teacher education includes "theory–practice links, cohort groupings, teaching for understanding, reflective practice, school–university partnerships, and self-study research" (Beck, 2006, p. 1) in the development of effective teachers. "Teachers and teacher educators must have the expertise to maximize these opportunities to diversify teaching and learning to better understand the complex technological, knowledge-based, multicultural dimensions" (Futrell, 2010, p. 436) of the classroom setting. Darling-Hammond, Chung, and Frelow (2002) note that teacher education programs provide the opportunity to establish candidates who display a resilient foundation and establish confidence in their levels of effectiveness as an educator.

History of Teacher Licensure

As the trend of teacher training programs became more common, states also mandated testing requirements of those individuals that wanted to become teachers. Pennsylvania was the "first state to require future teachers to pass a test of reading, writing, and arithmetic" (Ravitch, 2003, ¶ 6). This step directed a movement that led to other states requiring completion of testing requirements to a satisfactory level and obtaining licenses. In 1834 New York was the first state to issue a teaching certificate recognized throughout the state (Coggshall, 2009). As a result of

this program many states began to develop specific criteria for state licensure. This included "basic skills,…U.S. History, geography, spelling, and grammar" (Ravitch, 2003, ¶ 6).

As licensure requirements began to differentiate among varying states in the 19th century, methods of training teachers also began to distinguish. This led to the use of New York's focus on "private academies to prepare teachers for its schools" (Ravitch, 2003, ¶ 7). In addition, during this same frame of time Massachusetts maintained elementary teacher training in "normal schools" that allowed individuals to complete short courses in educational methodology. The western states supported a lengthier time frame in the training of their teachers (Ravitch, 2003). Ravtich (2003) explained that more rural areas developed training institutes for individuals interested in teaching. As noted, there was little commonality to the approaches of the teacher licensing system of the 19th century. During the 20th century initiation of a more common approach to the teachers of the nation was developed.

The 20th century welcomed a perspective of education that fostered a more professional, theoretical approach (Ravitch, 2003). The Teachers College, founded in 1888, became a component of Columbia University in New York. The Teachers College assisted in the modification of the image of teacher training (History of Education, 2007). This change in mindset was the result of "teacher evaluation eventually…{being} identified with the completion of teacher education programs rather than the receipt of local certificates or the passing of subject-matter examinations"(Ravitch, 2003, ¶ 13). As a result, the profession of education led to a more prestigious image in terms of a career. In addition, graduate schools and advanced degrees for educators became more common.

The development of a more formalized system of government continued to lead to more official criteria of teacher certification and training. Between the years of 1789 and 1860 the

development of state school systems began to form (LaBue, 1960). This change led to state funding for school systems and state parameters for the criteria by which teachers are certified. Additional systems of teacher training and education also expanded throughout much of the country. As a contrast to past practice, teachers were beginning to be recognized as professionals because a standard was required for those individuals seeking to become educators.

Normal schools and teacher preparation colleges set the trend of formalized teacher training. Individuals completing these programs became certified as teachers. In other cases teacher candidates took examinations or gained committee approval to be allowed to teach in schools. The examinations were required to be passed by individuals seeking to obtain teacher certification. This practice was limited as the examination was geared toward a specific grade level to teach. The examinations included passing subject area content as well a minimum of teaching theory and practice (LaBue, 1960). Consequently, it was noted that a more standard measurement must be mandated to ensure the quality of classroom teachers.

In 1907 Indiana became the first state to require certified teachers to be high school graduates. This initiative advanced until states began the practice of requiring teachers to be college graduates in order gain certification to teach. In addition, states began to differentiate the types of specialized certification presented to teachers. Historically there had been two types of certification for teachers to obtain: elementary and secondary. As teacher certification began to be more scrutinized, debate demonstrated the need for secondary teachers to have more specific, formalized training in the area in which they were licensed. Another concern stemmed from teachers' certification being valid from state to state. Teacher certification varied among the states, creating a need for a more uniform system of teacher preparation (LaBue, 1960).

As of July 1, 1959, 40 of 52 states and two U.S. territories required 4 years of college to obtain licensure for elementary school teachers. In the same year, 48 of 50 states and U.S. territories required 4 years of college to obtain a teaching license to teach at the secondary level. The transition of the increase in academic and pedagogical preparation has led to the universal concept of a holistic approach to teacher training programs (LaBue, 1960).

As the field of education continued through varying transitions, the national government set parameters in which state government systems and higher education institutions were required to follow in order to license teachers. This development was noted under the Title II of the Higher Education Act of 1965. Revised in 1988, Section 207 of the Title II state report required states to submit information in regard to standards, requirements, assessment, waivers, and quality (Title II, 2009) of licensing teachers. Even though state government bodies were able to set the guidelines for higher education institutions to recommend licensure of teachers, all licensed educators are required to pass nationally recognized criteria.

Normal Schools of Tennessee

A normal school is defined as "a school whose methods of instruction are to serve as a model for imitation; an institution for the training of teachers" (East Tennessee State Normal, 2011, ¶ 2). According to Fraser (2007), Horace Mann remarked that "the course of instruction, proper to qualify teachers, must be essentially different from a common academicals one" (p. 51). After the conclusion of the Civil War, this concept of teacher training began to expand into many areas of the United States including Tennessee. In 1909 the General Assembly mandated that the State Board of Education develop three normal schools across the state of Tennessee, one in each region of the state. After much competition and debate, the Normal Schools of Tennessee were placed in East Tennessee, Middle Tennessee, and West Tennessee. East

Tennessee State Normal School was placed in Johnson City, Washington County. Middle Tennessee's school was named Middle Tennessee State Normal School. This school was located in Murfreesboro, Rutherford County. The region of West Tennessee housed West Tennessee State Normal School in Memphis, Shelby County.

East Tennessee State Normal School was developed in 1911; this school was designed to assist in the training and development of classroom teachers for public school systems in East Tennessee. The school recruited men and women from the region seeking to obtain teacher certification. Twenty-nine students were enrolled in the initial registration day (East Tennessee State Normal, 2011). The Normal School offered a 4-year high school curriculum, while allowing preservice teachers to complete a 2-year training program at the same facility. Focusing on the grade levels K-12, Johnson City's Board of Education later began to partner with the Normal School in efforts of advancing education for the region (East Tennessee State Normal, 2011). This concept expanded to the University School which presently remains in operation. East Tennessee State's Normal School was later renamed East Tennessee State College. The institution was later expanded to become East Tennessee State University.

Middle Tennessee State Normal School was also created in 1911. The school's purpose was declared to support advancement "for the education and professional training of teachers for the public schools of the state" (Middle Tennessee Normal, 2011, ¶ 4). Enrollment to Middle Tennessee's Normal School fostered strict entrance requirements that extended beyond an individual's sole desire to become an educator. Additional requirements included pledging to teach in Tennessee for the following 6 years, certification of character and integrity from a church official or other individual of reputable standing, and documentation of good health from a physician (Middle Tennessee Normal, 2011). Initial enrollment began with 125 students,

growing to 247 students before the end of the 1st year. Middle Tennessee State Normal School later developed into Middle Tennessee State Teachers College, Middle Tennessee State College, and then Middle Tennessee State University, its present name.

West Tennessee State Normal School began in 1912. Fewer than 300 students enrolled at the school in preparation of their teacher training (The University of Memphis, 2011). Like the other normal school in the state, the training required 2 years of training on order to gain teacher certification (The University of Memphis, 2011). The school was later named West Tennessee Teacher's College, Memphis State College, Memphis State University, and then the University of Memphis.

This change in philosophy of teacher training and certification began to lead to a more uniform approach to education across the state of Tennessee. As a result, "relatively small teacher colleges and departments of pedagogy at some of the nation's universities were converted into undergraduate and graduate schools of education" (Meeting the Highly Qualified, 2002, p.11). In addition, areas of specialized curriculum components began to develop as a result of the needs of schools and school systems. The development of these areas assisted in allowing school personnel to develop a more holistic approach to teaching and learning.

Tennessee Licensure Requirements and Guidelines

The Tennessee Department of Education is the designating body for educators seeking to gain a teaching licensure within the state. "Within the state department, the Office of Teacher Education and Accreditation is responsible for the implementation process that evaluates the professional education units in Tennessee teacher preparatory universities and the state licensure programs offered by those units" (Tennessee Teacher Education, 2011, ¶1). This process includes licensing standards as outlined by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher

Education (NCATE). The requirement of these standards allows for uniformity within the state's higher education institutions. In addition, bodies such as NCATE "call for professionalization of the teaching profession through defining the kinds of knowledge and skills teachers should have in order to teach effectively; the use of program accreditation to ensure that programs are indeed transmitting these skills and knowledge; and testing and certification to ensure that teachers do posses these skills and knowledge" (Kirby, 2006, p.2).

Tennessee Licensure Standards and Induction Guidelines are initially centered around the focus of general education .The goal of this standard is to allow teachers to have a general education that will "permit teacher candidates to develop the knowledge and skills essential to experiencing success, satisfaction, and intellectual growth in teaching and in life" (Tennessee Licensure Standards, 2011, p.13). The general education component of state licensure includes the following:

- Knowledge and Skills Pertaining to All Areas

- Communication

- Humanities and the Arts

- Social Science and Culture

- Science and Technology,

- Mathematical Concepts and Applications

Based on Tennessee Licensure Standards, general education components must include 50% of the total teacher licensure program.

The second section of Tennessee's Licensure Standards emphasizes professional education. "Professional education is a lifelong undertaking that is initiated in college course work, refined in field experiences, and enhanced during professional practice" (Tennessee

Licensure Standards, 2011, p.3-1). The Professional Education standards of state licensure

include the following divisions:

- Discipline Taught

- Student Learning and Development

- Diverse Learners

- Teaching Strategies

- Learning Environment

- Communication

- Planning

- Assessment and Evaluation

- Reflective Practitioner

- Colleagues, Parents, and Community

- Technology

(Tennessee Licensure Standards, 2011).

The combination of these standards provides preservice educators a thorough depiction of the

professional aspects of becoming an educator. With the combination of course methodology and

field experiences, the standards assist the holistic development of future teachers.

The subsequent sections of the Tennessee Licensure Standards outline each licensure area

to emphasize the criteria components needed for each endorsement area. Differentiating

segments within the individual licensure areas facilitate the needs of that individual section.

Standards are outlined in each division to emphasize the significant focus and appropriate

function of each area of licensure. The State of Tennessee licenses individuals in 28 endorsement

areas (Appendix A).

Following the explanations and function of each licensure area, Tennessee Licensure Standards outline the purpose of clinical practice. Clinical requirements for licensure include that "the induction programs will provide teacher candidates with either (1) a full school year, paid internship following the attainment of a baccalaureate degree, or (2) an enhanced student teaching experience of a full semester as part of the undergraduate program" (Tennessee Licensure Standards, 2011, p.46-1). This step is essential for students to meet the requirements of obtaining an apprentice license within the state.

Full internship programs contract jointly with a school system allowing students to gain a full year of paid experience in the classroom setting. In addition, interns complete activities to include "observation, course work, seminars, planning, and evaluation" within the calendar year of the school system (Tennessee Licensure Standards, 2011, p.47-1). Regular meeting sessions with college officials, mentoring teachers, and school administration personnel form the professional development team. This team is designated with the responsibility of evaluating the growth and development of each intern, ultimately deciding the status of the intern in regard to licensure status and completion of college credit (Tennessee Licensure Standards, 2011).

Enhanced student teaching requires students to complete 15 weeks or 1 semester of student teaching. Licensure standards allow students to complete experiences in two classrooms, either at one or two schools. Student teaching seminars "will be held with higher education faculty to focus on application and analysis of teaching knowledge in the classroom…" (Tennessee Licensure Standards, 2011, p. 48-2). During the professional semester student teachers complete a "coherent program of observation and teaching experiences with students with diverse teaching needs and varied backgrounds" (Tennessee Licensure Standards, 2011, p.48-6). Student teachers are required to use content from previous courses, theory, pedagogy

and information obtained from practicum experiences to assist them in developing their teaching styles and philosophies. In addition supervising teachers, college supervisors, and school administrators assist in guiding student teachers though the process of this transition. Evaluation of the experiences and assignments of the student teaching semester lead to recommendation of the student teacher for state licensure in his or her content area.

Tennessee Licensure Standards and Induction Guidelines indicate the framework for Evaluation and Professional Growth to be used in the evaluation of preservice teachers. This section explains the evaluation process licensed teaches use within the evaluation process. The section supports teacher education programs using this evaluation instrument for preservice teachers as well (Tennessee Licensure Standards, 2011). It is suggested that the format be altered in a manner that will fulfill the licensure requirements while allowing the student teacher or intern to gain perspective about personal development as an educator. In addition, student teachers and interns gain experience with the format prior to becoming licensed teachers.

Tennessee's Department of Education also allows for alternative measures in obtaining a teaching license. As noted in the Tennessee Licensure Standards and Induction Guidelines, post-baccalaureate programs focus on attracting "talented individuals and those seeking to change careers who have the potential to become good teachers" (Tennessee Licensure Standards, 2011, p. 51-1). These students have completed bachelor's degrees in other areas and seek to obtain a teacher license. For post baccalaureate programs, students complete courses for general education and professional education requirements. In addition, 1-year internships or enhanced student teaching requirements and successful completion of Praxis II are required.

Tennessee's transitional license policy "{recruits and selects} highly qualified individuals, ranging from promising recent college graduates to seasoned professionals, who can

bring maturity and a variety of work experiences to the teaching profession and prepare them for successful teaching in Tennessee schools" (Tennessee Licensure Standards, 2011, p. 52-1). Transitional licensure preparation programs may be offered to individuals who possess a bachelor's degree and "have verified knowledge of the teaching content area, have been offered employment as a teacher of record" (Tennessee Licensure Standards, 2011, p. 52-1). This license is may be renewed twice, allowing teachers to teach with the license for up to 3 years (Tennessee Licensure Standards, 2011). Candidate and organizational eligibility must be maintained as outlined within the licensure standards.

The following section of Tennessee Licensure Standards and Induction Guidelines evaluates add-on endorsement areas for teachers. This standard allows teachers to be licensed in one endorsement area and later complete requirements to be endorsed in another. To add licensure for elementary education, early childhood education, and middle grades, additional course requirements may not exceed 21 semester hours. For areas such as art, music, theater, physical education, health and wellness, and special education additional course requirements may not exceed 30 semester credit hours. Requirements for gifted education added to an endorsement may not exceed 15 semester hours. Individuals seeking additional endorsement are also required to complete and pass Praxis II requirements for licensure. Individuals presently licensed in secondary education, grades 7-12 or 9-12, and seeking to add an endorsement in secondary education may demonstrate competency by completing and passing Praxis II tests for the specific content area, additional coursework is not required in this instance. Field experiences may also be required to add endorsement to present licenses.

Approval of Teacher Education Programs and Professional Education Units are subject to review by the standards of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education

(NCATE). These standards require the successful completion of state licensure requirements, successful completion of specialty area programs, satisfactory performance of teacher candidates, and satisfactory performance by teacher education program graduates in performance evaluation systems towards licensure requirements (Tennessee Licensure Standards, 2011). "The state (requires) all institutions to meet NCATE unit standards and guidelines for both initial and advanced programs" (Tennessee Teacher Education, 2011, p. 54-1). These standards are subject to review by the Office of Teacher Licensing and Accreditation team. The purpose of this office evaluates the program requirements and practices in relation to state licensing standards and accreditation. This review process is mandated in order to maintain compliance within state accreditation. Institutional review must meet approval status in order to continue to license educators.

National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education

NCATE is an organization that provides accreditation for teacher education programs. "NCATE's dual mission is accountability and improvement in education preparation" (NCATE: Quick Facts, 2011, ¶ 1). NCATE's accreditation process includes the development of standards for teacher education programs, ensures institutions uphold set standards, and encourages unaccredited schools to work towards meeting the standards to achieve accreditation (NCATE: Quick Facts, 2011). By providing evidence of the quality of teacher education program candidates, NCATE seeks to maintain that preservice teachers "know their subject and how to teach it effectively" (NCATE: Quick Facts, 2011, ¶ 14). The United States Department of Education "recognizes NCATE as a professional accrediting body for colleges and universities that prepare teachers and other professional personnel for work in elementary and secondary schools" (NCATE: Quick Facts, 2011, ¶ 4). As a result of this status, 656 institutions have

NCATE accreditation, while 70 additional institutions are the process of candidacy and

precandidacy status for accreditation. As of 2009, 25 states have either adopted or adapted

NCATE unit standards to create alignment of state unit standards for teacher licensure (NCATE:

Quick Facts, 2011).

The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education enforces strategic goals and

objectives are part of their mission for effective teacher education programs. The goals are:

- Goal 1: To develop and maintain high standards for the knowledge, skills and
  professional dispositions required of educators and for the units and programs that
  prepare them to practice.

- Goal 2: To operate an efficient and effective accreditation system to assess the quality of
  education-preparation units and their programs.

- Goal 3: To offer advice and limited technical assistance to educator – preparation units in
  improving their own quality and the quality of their completers.

- Goal 4: To communicate effectively with all interested parties, including the public,
  about its work and to co-ordinate with others also having responsibility for the
  improvement of educator preparation and other aspects of educator quality.
  (NCATE Strategic Goal, 2007, p. 1-6)

The establishment of these goals allows NCATE to structure its corresponding objectives in a

manner that higher education institutions can further strengthen its programs.

Goal 1 is the level of standards that institutions place on teacher education development.

This goal covers candidate standards and how the standards affect teaching and learning for the

college and clinical settings (NCATE Strategic Goals, 2007). In addition, NCATE mandates

monitoring of knowledge and its application to the clinical setting by current practitioners and

developed unit standards. Appropriate programs must include academic rigor and appropriately

supervised student teaching experiences as noted by this goal. In addition, NCATE promotes an

alignment of standard among "unit accreditation standards, Specialized Professional Association

Standards, licensing standards, advanced certification standards, and P-12 standards" (NCATE

Strategic Goal, 2007, p.6). NCATE mandates the support of Specialized Professional

Association Standards (SPAs) in development and improvement measures to maintain program

unit standards. Institutions should also provide support of consistent standards for program and

review as included in NCATE's first goal. The final objective for this goal focuses on the

adaptation of "unit and program standards to ensure high quality educator preparation by units of

providers other than a colleges and universities" (NCATE Strategic Goal, 2007, p.6). Additional

strategies of implementation are included to facilitate topics that require special attention.

NCATE's Goal 2 involves the use of appropriate and effective assessment tools of

teacher education programs. The objective emphasizes the use of performance data to illustrate

meeting standard expectations (NCATE Strategic Goals, 2007). Goal 2 includes the unit and

program review integrated with the accreditation process to ensure continuity of the accrediting

bodies (NCATE Strategic Goal, 2007). NCATE's Goal 2 outlines the use of technology to

collect, analyze, and communicate data for accreditation review. Goal 2 includes the recognition

of NCATE standards and unit standards as similar to reduce effort duplication. "Core values of

non-partisanship, ideological neutrality, objectivity, and fairness" emphasizes objective 5.

Current issues are also included in this section to provide specific areas of focus within goal

obtainment.

The quality of the educator-preparation units and the quality of the program completers is

outlined in Goal 3. This section notes efforts in offering technical assistance to Historically

Black Colleges and other higher education institutions that cater to underrepresented populations.

Special situations are also noted in the objective that allows NCATE to offer advice or offer

technical assistance. The final objective in this section is "coordinating all special technical

assistance efforts with AACTE" also known as the American Association of Colleges for

Teacher Education (NCATE Strategic Goals, 2007, p.4). The following section of this goal is the trends and current issues as they relate to the content of Goal 3.

NCATE's strategy to involve additional stakeholders to the educator preparation process is outlined in Goal 4. The initial objective is to highlight information in regard to accreditation and educator preparation to the public. As this strengthens the image of the institution, NCATE also encourages the promotion of a "strong voice…of the units and programs accredited by it" (NCATE Strategic Goals, 2007, p.5). The following objective is the improvement of "quality assurance mechanisms" (NCATE Strategic Goals, 2007, p.5). Examination of federal activity in relation to teacher preparation is noted as the 4th objective. Next, NCATE illustrates the importance of supporting the improvement of all personnel at the P-12 level. Gaining the support of commercial businesses and organization outlines the support of the community as the basis for the sixth objective. The next objective for Goal 4 shows the importance of communicating the benefits of accreditation for member s and other institution stakeholders. The final objective includes the importance of communication of NCATE to higher education administrators in order to gain accreditation. The final section of this goal is current trends and how they can be addressed within the goal and objectives of NCATE's Goal 4.

NCATE emphasizes its vision that "caring, competent, and qualified teachers should teach every child" (NCATE: Professional Standards, 2008, p.3). This mission is further illustrated in the standards that are necessary in seeking accreditation. "The standards measure an institution's effectiveness according to the profession's expectations for high quality teacher preparations" (NCATE: Professional Standards, 2008, p.9). The standards are initially meet with preconditions that are necessary for continuing the accreditation process (NCATE: Professional

Standards, 2008). When the preconditions have been met, a visit will be scheduled to access the following NCATE Unit Standards:

- Standard 1: Candidate Knowledge, Skills, and Professional Dispositions
- Standard 2: Assessment System and Unit Evaluation
- Standard 3: Field Experiences and Clinical Practice
- Standard 4: Diversity
- Standard 5: Faculty Qualifications, Performance, and Development
- Standard 6: Unit Governance

The candidates of the teacher education program are emphasized in NCATE Standard 1. The content and pedagogical knowledge that the candidates demonstrate as a result of the program is included. In addition, Standard 1 includes how this information is translated into the professional application of effective teaching. Candidates are evaluated on their knowledge of "student learning and study the effects of their work" (NCATE: Professional Standards, 2008, p.21). This includes the comprehension of effective assessment methods and accurate measures of analysis and evaluation. Reflection of student learning and teacher effectiveness is also included. NCATE Standard 1 includes information about the candidates' viewpoint in regard to appropriate stakeholders of the school community. This includes but is not limited to the school climate (both physical and emotional), teachers, students, families, and other appropriate stakeholders. Conclusively, the level in which "professional disposition" (NCATE: Professional Standards, 2008, p. 22) is applied to the school community and learning environment and the situations that may lead to an adjustment is evaluated.

NCATE Standard 2 is the Assessment System and Unit Evaluation of the program. "The unit has an assessment system that collects and analyzes data on applicant qualifications,

candidate and graduate performance, and unit operation to evaluate and improve the performance

of candidates, the unit, and its programs" (NCATE: Professional Standards, 2008, p. 25). The

data collection and system used to assess institutional effectiveness are included in this standard.

The use of "multiple assessments made at multiple points before program completion" is noted

as targeted behavior (NCATE: Professional Standards, 2008, p.25). "Assessment data from

candidates, graduates, faculty, and other members of the professional community" are collected

from multiple sources in order to provide a comprehensive depiction of the institution (NCATE:

Professional Standards, 2008, p.26). An institution's developmental process of evaluation system

is also involved. This includes the analysis of the data in order to investigate strengths,

weaknesses, and patterns that may indicate additional changes may need to be implemented in

order to create a more effective environment for candidates.

Standard 3 of NCATE's Professional Standards is the field experiences and clinical

practice of teacher preparation program. The unit seeking accreditation and the schools with

which the institution partners for field experiences are included in this standard. Together the

entities facilitate placements that are most effective in "maximizing the learning experience for

candidates and P-12 students" (NCATE: Professional Standards, 2008, p.29). The value of

teacher education candidates gaining experience in the application of knowledge and pedagogy is

included in this standard. Candidates have the opportunity to gain experience in the classroom

setting while communicating with students, "teachers, families of students, administrators,

college or university supervisors, and other interns…" is supported (NCATE: Professional

Standards, 2008, p.30). The experience leads to the continual development and reflection of the

candidate as a professional educator, while gaining practical application of instruction methods

and pedagogy.

Diversity is included within preparation of teacher education candidates for Standard 4. In regard to the design of teacher education programs, NCATE values the implementation of teaching strategies that engage learners from all cultures and ethnic groups (NCATE: Professional Standards, 2008). Candidates should be reviewed regularly to ensure they can work with students of diverse circumstances. This standard includes candidate insight for communication with other individuals of a different culture. This standard expands the component to include the unit's faculty members, peers, future colleagues, as well as students and other stakeholders of the school community (NCATE: Professional Standards, 2008). NCATE's focus on diversity illustrates a value of gaining experience in working with individuals from diverse backgrounds and ethnic groups to gain an appropriate perspective of respect and civility.

Standard 5 of NCATE's Professional Standards of Accreditation involves Faculty Qualifications, Performance, and Development. This section outlines faculty credentials in terms of terminal degrees, scholarship, recognition, and expertise. Pedagogical modeling is examined to determine the level of understanding and scholarly practice faculty members demonstrate in their classrooms. Faculty members' involvement with the design and implementation of programs at the professional level and within schools is also included. Regular review of each faculty member's "teaching, scholarship, service, collaboration, and leadership in the institution and profession" (NCATE: Professional Standards, 2008, p.38) is included in Standard 5. The evaluation of each faculty member as a lifelong learner also contributes to this section in terms of mentoring opportunities to offer support and assistance to new faculty members (NCATE: Professional Standards, 2008).

NCATE Standard 6 for Accreditation outlines the higher education institution's "leadership, authority, budget, personnel, facilities, and resources, including information technology resources, for the preparation of candidates to meet professional, state, and institutional standards" (NCATE: Professional Standards, 2008, p.43). Standard 6 details the institution's abilities to coordinate programs "designed to prepare education professionals to work in P-12 schools" ("NCATE: Professional Standards, 2008, p.43). Standard 6 includes recruitment, admissions, publications, catalogs, collaboration with appropriate P-12 school personnel, and leadership recognition of the program as a comprehensive model. "Budgetary allocation, permit faculty teaching scholarship, and service" are also evaluated within Standard 6 (NCATE: Professional Standards, 2008, p.43). Acknowledgement of faculty course load policies, part-time faculty members, teaching assistants, and clinical faculty are assessed to provide insight about the effectiveness of the personnel as a comprehensive group. Unit facilities are considered in terms of supporting the development of appropriately training candidates. Finally, the unit's resources and technology in the foundation of providing "exemplary library, curricular, and electronic information resources" to include "exceptional reliability, speed, and confidentiality of connection of the delivery system" are assessed (NCATE: Professional Standards, 2008, p.45). The institution's leadership role within the education community and how this image contributes to the preparation of teacher education candidates includes Standard 6

NCATE Program Standards are designed to facilitate quality teacher preparation by providing explanation about appropriate behavior and experiences in regard to program completion and licensure. Further explanations of these standards are divided by content area to provide specific criteria for each designated licensure endorsement.

Accreditation decisions are made by the Unit Accreditation Board. This decision is based on the higher education institution's alignment of practice to the NCATE Standards for unit accreditation. In the event that an institution does not fully meet Standard criteria, the accreditation board could award varying status for accreditation. Based on this decision, a unit could be awarded full accreditation, provisional accreditation, denial of accreditation, and revocation of accreditation. After gaining initial accreditation, units can be defined as having complete accreditation, accreditation with conditions, accreditation with probation, or revocation of accreditation during the renewal process.

The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education places great value in its mission to offer effective criteria in teacher education training programs. The delivery of the organization's goals and standards allow institutions to formulate specific plans in order to increase the level of efficacy that is demonstrated within the practice of the institution.

No Child Left Behind

No Child Left Behind of 2001 (NCLB) is a federal law pertaining to the reform of public education (Public Law 107-110- Jan. 8, 2002). This law is an extension of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act passed in 1965. *No Child Left Behind* includes several components of the school environment. Initially, teacher licensure is considered to establish "highly qualified status". This mandates that all teachers teaching in a specific content area have formalized training and knowledge of the subject matter being taught. This can be obtained by completing coursework, passing mandated tests, or using forms of testing data prior to the act's targeted time frame for veteran teachers. For new teachers, the state's standardized testing series must be passed in order for educators to obtain teaching licenses. Another major component of NCLB focuses on the students and the standard to which they are performing. According to NCLB,

students in public school systems must obtain proficient or advanced status by 2014 (Public Law 107-110- Jan. 8, 2002). Schools not making substantial or adequate yearly progress towards this goal are placed on a targeted list in which sanctions can be enforced if a school does not improve. In evaluation of this model, critics refer to this act as a "test driven, one-size-fits-all approach that has had a dramatic and troubling impact on virtually every aspect of the educational process" (Selwyn, 2007, p.124), including teacher education.

The goal of teacher education programs is to effectively train future educators to be productive, successful teachers. *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* has caused teacher education programs to alter the components required for teachers to become licensed. Riney, Thomas, Williams, and Kelley (2006) state that most states require teacher education candidates to pass a mandated exam in order to be licensed within that state and be considered highly qualified in a endorsement area. As a result, this mechanism is often considered as the "gatekeeper" of individuals seeking to become teachers (Selwyn, 2007). This assessment tool has the potential to "…{alienate} potential teachers whose strengths and interests do not show up in test, and who do not believe that this is the best way to serve the public school students with whom they would be working" (Selwyn, 2007, p.128).

Pedagogical training has also been affected as a result of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.* Preservice teachers are now trained in the mindset of the accountability included with standardized tests. While preservice teachers are not specifically taught with the mindset of focusing directly on a standardized test, they are taught in a manner to consider best practices and retention of specific skills for future recall (Diez, 2010). Selwyn (2007) noted that "Veteran teachers are replaced by teachers willing to buy in to the crusade to raise test scores" (p. 132). He further explains, "…test driven teachers will serve as mentors and will be modeling practices that

help shape our teacher candidates' attitudes about what education is and how best to carry it out" (Selwyn, 2007, p.132). This is in many ways considered a disservice to teachers as they "{struggle} to remember why they loved teaching as they try to prepare their 28 (or 150) students for the standardized tests…"(Selwyn, 2007, p. 131).

Individuals seeking education as a career must consider all aspects that are included. Preservice teachers must be prepared to fulfill the role of "lecturer, facilitator, foil, coach, and assessor" (Levin, 2001, p.2). The future holds that standardized tests will be used as tools to evaluate the level of achievement and growth of students and the effectiveness of teachers in the classroom. Thus, "standardized testing {can} be assumed to be the bottom-line measure of school and student success" (Gideonse, 1992, p. 281).With this level of accountability, it is essential that teacher education programs instruct preservice teachers to fully understand all that is at stake.

Race to the Top

The Race to the Top fund was established to facilitate school improvement. The fund institutes a competition among states to receive funding to enhance school quality. Totaling $4.35 billion, the competition "{rewarded} states for past accomplishments, {created} incentives for future improvements, and {challenged} states to create comprehensive strategies for addressing the four central areas of reform…" (Fact Sheet - Race, 2009, ¶1). The areas of reform include:

- Adopting internationally benchmarked standards a and assessments that prepare students for success in college and the workplace;

- Recruiting, developing, retaining, and rewarding effective teachers and principals, especially where they are needed most;

- Building data systems that measure student success and inform teachers and principals about how they can improve instruction; and

- Turning around our lowest-achieving schools
  (Fact Sheet - Race, 2009, ¶1)

The winners of the initial phase of Race to the Top were announced on March 29, 2010. The winning proposals went to the states of Delaware and Tennessee. Delaware was scheduled to receive approximately $100 million, while Tennessee was awarded $500 million (Delaware and Tennessee Win, 2010). These amounts will be distributed over the span of 4 years. "The U.S. Department of Education {had} about $3.4 billion available for the second phase of the Race to the Top Competition (Delaware and Tennessee Win, 2010, ¶4). The second phase of the competition was due June 1, 2010. Ten winners of the second competition were awarded funding as noted:

- District of Columbia - $75 million
- Florida - $700 million
- Georgia - $400 million
- Hawaii - $75 million
- Maryland - $250 million
- Massachusetts - $250 million
- New York - $700 million
- North Carolina- $400 million
- Ohio- $400 million
- Rhode Island - $75 million
  (Nagel, 2010)

As a winner in the initial phase of Race to the Top, Tennessee has instituted changes to accommodate the new law. Noted as Tennessee First to the Top, one of the major changes to be introduced is the state law concerning educator evaluations (Tennessee First to the Top, 2011). The new changes include:

- Annual evaluation of teachers and principals

- A new teacher and principal evaluation framework that requires 50 percent of the evaluation be based on student achievement measures – including 35 percent of TVAAS where available

- Creating a 15- member Teacher Evaluation Advisory Committee to recommend guidelines and criteria for the new evaluation (Tennessee First to the Top, 2011)

Tests have been conducted during the 2010- 2011 school year in order to provide insight to the most effective components to be included within the framework (Tennessee First to the Top, 2011). The new plan has been evaluated and revised during spring 2011 and presented to the State Board of Education in July 2011 for approval (Tennessee First to the Top, 2011).

The reform of education not only affects educators presently in the classroom but also individuals aspiring to become teachers. It is necessary that teacher education programs acknowledge these changes and revise curricular standards as needed. For example, Tennessee First to the Top requires that apprentice teachers be observed a minimum of six times each year before obtaining a professional license (Tennessee First to the Top, 2011). As a result, teacher education programs need to prepare preservice teachers for this evaluation method. This includes preparation in terms of pedagogy and instructional methods as well as the criteria by which the teachers will be evaluated.

To become more active in education reform, the following strategies have been noted for teacher education programs:

- Continue to examine the various criticisms of teacher education and determine their validity.

- When criticism is found to be valid, teacher educators must find ways to correct the problem.

- Determine what may interfere with implementing a promising reform and eliminate that impediment. (Cruikshank, Bainier, Cruz, Giebelhaus, McCullough, Metcalf, & Reynolds, 1996, p.133)

Outline of Area Higher Education Institutions

Teacher education programs encompass criteria that differentiate higher education institutions. "Program content and even perspectives have changed over the years as dialogue with students, colleagues, and teachers in the field, as well as the findings of current research have become integrated with earlier beliefs and practices" (Kosnick, Beck, Freese, & Samaras, 2005, p. 169). As a result, institutions of higher education have also transitioned their teacher education and licensure programs to accommodate these changes. The types of licensure areas offered at each institution are one of the components that originally illustrate a distinction. Entrance requirements are essential in obtaining an accurate depiction of the program and its focus. Field experience components, including practicum and student teaching, are also important in distinguishing each program. Tennessee contains both private and public colleges and universities. One of the ways that these higher education institutions are differentiated is by the criteria of their teacher education programs. The following higher education institutions have been reviewed based on these standards: Carson Newman College, East Tennessee State University, Lincoln Memorial University, Tennessee Technical State University, The University of Tennessee – Knoxville, and Tusculum College.

Carson Newman College

Carson Newman College (2010) is a private institution located in Jefferson City, Tennessee. A religiously affiliated institution, Carson Neman provides 58 major areas of academic concentration. Within these areas of focus, Carson Newman offers an elementary education major that is termed Liberal Studies with Elementary Education (K-6). This program of study consists of initial coursework leading to the major. In addition, students are required to pass all three components Praxis I testing (or exemption), complete a satisfactory background

check, and conclude an application process. This process includes an application, approved recommendations, and an interview before being officially admitted to the Teacher Education Program. After being admitted to the program, major coursework can be resumed until student teaching. The focus of the coursework includes pedagogy, instructional methods, and field experiences. The combinations of these practices are in place to prepare students to begin their student teaching semester.

Before being allowed to begin the student teaching experience, all Carson Newman students are required to pass all four components of the Praxis II testing for elementary education licensure, grades K-6. The components of the Praxis II tests are required for recommendation of a teaching license in the State of Tennessee. After completing the student teaching semester and have completed other institutional requirements towards graduation, students are then approved and recommended for state licensure. Carson Newman College is accredited by the State of Tennessee and NCATE.

East Tennessee State University

East Tennessee State University (2010) is a public institution located in Johnson City, Tennessee. ETSU offers 112 programs of undergraduate study. Interdisciplinary Studies in Education contains the major for those seeking to pursue a career in teaching elementary education. The mission of this curriculum includes a "teacher preparation program for Interdisciplinary Studies in Education is designed to educate "Teachers as Instructional Leaders" (East Tennessee State, 2010).

To gain admission to this program a student must complete several steps. Initially a student must set up a file within the department to declare his or her major. While completing fundamental courses the students interested in this program must maintain a 2.5 grade point

average, while completing a minimum of 32 semester credit hours. This includes a computer science course and two courses focused on the introduction of the field of education. Students must also undergo a speech and hearing test as part of program requirements and pass all components of the Praxis I test (or exemption).

After these steps have been completed, students apply and interview with the College of Education Admissions Board. This process includes submitting a professional portfolio completed in one of the education courses previously mentioned. After a student has been accepted by the College of Education, he or she may continue with courses and field experience requirements in pursue of completing a program of study. In addition, students must pass all four components of the Praxis II test for elementary education before being placed for student teaching.

In addition to having passed all Praxis II tests, students must also retain a 2.5 grade point average, have completed all coursework leading to student teaching, and possess a "C" or better in all education coursework before being placed for student teaching. After successfully completing the student teaching experience for one semester and any additional requirements associated with the completion of program of study, a student may be recommended and approved for state licensure to teach grades K-6. ETSU is accredited by the State of Tennessee and NCATE.

Lincoln Memorial University

Lincoln Memorial University (2010) is a private institution located in Harrogate, Tennessee.. Focusing on liberal arts, LMU offers 30 academic majors of study. These academic

majors include the program study of elementary education, focusing on achievement of state licensure.

The elementary education program at LMU is a module design that requires students to complete specific elements before advancing. For example, specific modules include designated coursework and field experiences to be completed before being allowed to complete the following module. This framework provides for a defined sequence of coursework and focus of study. In addition to following the module steps, students are also required to obtain formal admittance to the Teacher Education Program before advancing through the program. Admission to the Teacher Education Program includes completion of Praxis I tests (or exemption), having a 2.5 grade point average, obtaining an approved background check, provide proof of liability insurance, writing an essay, and completing an interview session.

After gaining formal admittance to the Teacher Education Program, students are allowed to complete each module component, gaining no less than a "C" in each major course. In addition, students are required to complete all four Praxis II tests before beginning student teaching. The student teaching component of the program includes two placements for a total of 15 weeks of student teaching. LMU also requires students to complete an interview consisting of an oral examination before being allowed to exit the program. After successfully completing these steps, LMU may approve and recommend a student for his or her state teaching license.

Tennessee Technical University

Tennessee Technical University (2010) is a public institution located in Cookeville, Tennessee. Also referred to as TTU, the institution offers 44 major programs of study including elementary education which is located under Multidisciplinary Studies within the School of Education.

Any student interested in being accepted to the Multidisciplinary Studies program is required to follow the scheduled framework for each year at the institution. This allows for students to complete courses in a designated sequence. This sequence of courses includes core curriculum courses as well as education courses designed to focus on philosophy, teaching methods, field experience, and pedagogy. In order to advance within sequence of courses, one must complete the required three levels of admission noted for TTU teacher education program.

Initially provisional admittance is noted as an individual meets admission requirements for the college. A student may receive full admission when he or she completes 30 hours of course credit, maintains a 2.5 grade point average, completes Praxis I tests (or exemption), displays evidence of four desirable teaching dispositions, submits an application, and is approved by the Teacher Education Committee. The third phase of admittance to the College of Education is the admittance to student teaching. This phase includes maintaining a 2.5 grade point average, a minimum 2.0 average in the major teaching field, completion of Praxis II tests, completion of all course requirements, a minimum of "B" in all courses that require a focus on field experience or technology, and completion of the college base exam. Following these requirements, the student may begin the student teaching semester. Pending successful completion of this semester, a student may be approved and recommended for state licensure. Tennessee Technical University is accredited by the State of Tennessee and the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education.

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

The University of Tennessee or UTK (2010) is located in Knoxville, Tennessee.. Offering more than 300 degree programs, UTK's teacher licensure sector delivers an alternative model to other higher education institutions in the region. Students seeking an elementary

teaching license are required to pursue a major in the Arts and Sciences programs while completing a minor focused on an area of education. For example, a student may pursue a degree in psychology while completing a minor in elementary education.

In order to complete both areas of study a student must initially focus on the major program from the College of Arts and Sciences, fulfilling the obligations of this component while adding in course and program requirements for the minor. This includes being formally admitted to the College of Education. While student students may take several courses without full admittance, advancement into the program requires the following: completion of application packet, speech and hearing tests, minimum 2.70 grade point average, completion of Praxis I tests (or exemption), completion of 60 semester credit hours, and Board of Admission's Interview.

After a student has been formally accepted to the Teacher Education program, he or she may continue with the coursework that is limited those individuals officially admitted. Some coursework is limited to the time of year offered due to the upcoming year of student teaching or internship.

After completing graduation requirements students will complete a year of student teaching or an internship in order to gain teacher licensure. As graduate students, interns also complete graduate level coursework towards completion of a Master's degree. In addition, interns are also required to complete the four Praxis II exams before the completion of t he internship year. This allows the institution to approve and recommend the student for state teacher licensure. The University of Tennessee, Knoxville is accredited by the State of Tennessee and the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education.

Tusculum College

Tusculum College (2010) is a private institution located in Greeneville, Tennessee. A religious affiliated institution, Tusculum offers 29 areas of study. A liberal arts institution, Tusculum's academic calendar is set to a block system or focused calendar, taking one course at a time. Within Tusculum's block system, the School of Education contains an elementary education program focusing on Human Growth and Learning. A student may begin completing education courses if he or she has been accepted to the college and maintains institutional requirements.

The next step of course advancement requires official acceptance into the teacher education program. This includes maintaining a 2.5 grade point average, cold writing sample, recommendation of two faculty members, passing of the Praxis I testing (or exemption), satisfied background check requirements, and approval from the Teacher Education Screening Committee. After completing these steps students complete the remaining coursework of their program. The content of these courses focus heavily on field experience requirements. A minimum of 198 clock hours of completed clinical experience before student teaching is required.

Before the student teaching semester students are required to complete an application, a placement request, and submit a recommendation from an education faculty member. In addition, the students must possess an overall 2.5 GPA and minimum 2.75 GPA in their major courses. In addition, student teaching application packets are evaluated for completion of all course requirements before the student teaching semester begins. After students have successfully completed student teaching, met all other institutional requirements, and have passed all required Praxis II tests, they may be approved and recommended for state licensure.

Summary of the Report Card on the Effectiveness of Teacher Training Programs

Tennessee Code Annotated 49-5-108 requires that each college or university possessing a teacher training program report data obtained from its teacher education programs (Report Card of, 2010). This is a multifaceted notation that includes "philosophical considerations about the appropriateness of specific criteria for objectives of the teacher education program… and {the interpretation of} data pertinent to criteria of program effectiveness" (Rosner, 1972, p.3). The report card for the State of Tennessee evaluates "placement and retention rates, PRAXIS results, and teacher effect data based on Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS) scores" (Report Card of, 2010, ¶1). The following colleges and universities were evaluated in terms of the criteria outlined in the Report Card of the Effectiveness of Teacher Training Program*:* Carson Newman College, East Tennessee State University, Lincoln Memorial University, Tennessee Technical State University, The University of Tennessee – Knoxville, and Tusculum College (Appendix B).

Teacher Attrition

Within the field of education, the rate of attrition of teaches is often of concern to many stakeholders. "At the end of the 2003–04 school year, 17% of the elementary and secondary teacher workforce (or 621,000 teachers) left the public and private schools where they had been teaching" (Nation Center For Education, 2008, ¶6). Many reasons have been examined that are possible reasons teachers become dissatisfied and leave the classroom. These include "lack of planning time, too heavy a workload, problematic student behavior, and lack of influence over school policy" (Alliance for Excellence, 2005, ¶7).

The social demands placed on teachers are also thought to lead to teacher attrition. For some time schools have been transitioning to be community agents, addressing children holistically. This new role modifies the purpose and focus of the local school systems and classroom teachers.

They may often be street workers; they may offer a variety of medical and community health services; they may assist in developing intellectual and emotional growth in both children and parents; they will, as school related agencies, relate to other human service agencies and civil agencies; and they will work to create healthy professional community within the school and assist the community around it in organizing and developing its resources (Teacher Education in, 1976, p.3).

The increase of regulations and standards can also contribute to teacher attrition. "Prescribed curriculum and assessments have greatly curtailed {teachers'} freedom to tailor curriculum and instruction to the needs and interests of individual children"(Norlander- Case, 1999, p.12).

Included within these ideas is the notion that some teachers enter the workforce unprepared for the task at hand. Arne Duncan, United States Secretary of Education stated, "More than three out of five {education} schools {alumni} surveyed ….said their training did not prepare them adequately for their work in the classroom" (2009, ¶30). This proposition leads to further examination of the role teacher education programs play in the rate of teacher attrition. Latham (2007) stated, "Teacher education programs that diminish the gap between theory and practice, providing extensive, experience in schools, and immerse preservice teachers in the school climate have the potential to prepare new teachers entering the field for the challenges they face" (p. 154). According to Latham this leads to the notion that teacher education programs can influence the level of preparedness of teacher candidates entering the workforce, thus affecting the level of teacher attrition.

Teacher education programs offer a large variety of practical experiences to preservice teachers. Duncan (2009) argued that programs not offering a sufficient amount of practical, hands –on experience may lead to teachers becoming dissatisfied within the first years of teaching. This can be remedied by developing "an approach aimed at lessening the gap between …teacher educators and the K-12 setting" (Intrator, 2009, p. 514). "This is where fieldwork is

asked to play a central role: at its best field experiences for preservice candidates provide dynamic contexts where they can explore the complicated relationship between theory and practice" (Intrator 2009, p. 516). Extended field experiences for practicum and student teaching opportunities can assist in providing more preparation for content area being taught, but also developing the skills necessary to "create a safe learning environment that promotes academic achievement" (Rosas, 2009, p.55).

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Teacher education programs facilitate training for individuals interested in becoming licensed teachers. This study focused on the perceptions of K-6 classroom teachers in terms of the most effective teacher education programs. The topic of this study is the construction and development of teacher education programs in terms of design and preparation. In addition, specific emphasis was placed on program differentiation and its impact on the preservice teacher. The analysis of this information was used to assist colleges and universities to identify the components of their programs that influence preservice teachers to be more effective as classroom teachers. This is crucial in detecting which characteristics of teacher education programs promote success for future educators.

This study emphasized a qualitative design used to determine the perceptions of kindergarten through sixth grade classroom teachers in terms of effective teacher education programs. The components that kindergarten through sixth grade classroom teachers feel are most important in the training of future teachers were explored I this study. A naturalistic approach was applied … {in order to} study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings that people bring to them (Denzin, 1994, p.2). The use of this methodology offered information about the classroom teachers' opinions in regard to the most effective aspects of their teacher training. The experiences of K-6 classroom teachers were evaluated in terms of commonality and patterns of the participant responses.

Research Questions

The following questions guided this study:

1. What aspects of undergraduate teacher education are most effective? Why?

2. In what ways can teacher education program better prepare preservice teachers?

3. Does the format of teacher preparation programs influence participant teachers in terms of current career satisfaction?

Selection of Participants

The population for the study was kindergarten through sixth grade classroom teachers from the following school systems: Hamblen County Department of Education, Jefferson County Schools, and Knox County Schools. The population for this study was 12 K-6 teachers having 5 or fewer years teaching experience. Approval to contact teachers within these school systems was obtained from the appropriate personnel (Appendix D). After emailing the elementary school teachers, volunteers interested in the study responded to the invitation. Volunteers for the study provided contact information for future communication with the researcher. Additional participants were provided as a result of communication with initial volunteers. The participating school systems offered a diverse collection of teachers, thus offering a variety of preservice preparation and perspective from the classroom teachers.

Instrument and Measurement

The instrument used in this study was an in depth interview. The goal of this methodology was to "capture the subject's perspective" in order to gain more insight to the participants' point of views (Denzin, 1994, p.7). Macmillan and Schumacher (2010) noted that in depth interviews "use open-ended response questions to obtain data on participants' meaning" (p. 355). Interview questions were evaluated by peers and colleagues as an instrument development activity. The questions were developed into specific topics addressed during the interview, known as an interview guide (Macmillan and Schumacher, 2010). An interview guide

(see Appendix C) was used to develop a semistructured format that consisted of the participants being asked specific questions while also allowing the participants to voluntarily expand during their response (Macmillan & Schumacher, 2010). This mode of interview is used to "frame appropriate questions to find out information in regard to a specific topic" (Lincoln, 1985, p. 269). Interview questions elicited the following types of responses to the questions: experience and behavior, opinions and values, feelings, knowledge, and background and demographics (Macmillan & Schumacher, 2010). The interviews were categorized as a rapport interviews, noting the "interviewer is 'a human-being-in-a role'" (Lincoln, 1985, p. 269).

Each participant's responses were evaluated using a coding system. Categories were initiated by "noting patterns evident in the setting and expressed by the participants" (Marshall, 1999, p. 154). As implied with qualitative research, emphasis was placed on processes and meanings,..., in terms of quantity, amount, intensity, or frequency" (Denzin, 1994, p.4). Key components of teacher education programs were identified and categorized based on initiation and repetition. Patterns were identified to indicate commonality of themes within participants' responses.

Validity and Reliability of the Research Design

Denzin (1994) notes the importance of seeking understanding from normal social experiences of everyday life. This phenomenon lends to the validity of the research, referring to the "degree of congruence between the explanations of the phenomena and the realities of the world" (Macmillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 330). To increase the level of validity within this study, interviews were taped in order to maintain accuracy of records. In addition, member checking was used as a validity measure. Member checking provided an opportunity for participants to verify and confirm the meaning of their responses (Macmillan & Schumacher,

2010). Participants were also provided with the option of reviewing the transcribed interview.

This method of validity enhancement is known as participant review (Macmillan & Schumacher, 2010).

Recruiting Protocol

The procedures of this study were initiated by gaining approval from the Hamblen, Jefferson, and Knox County school systems to contact teachers in their systems about participating in the study. A representative from Jefferson County Schools approved the study by email after an explanation of the study. The Director of Hamblen County Schools required a form to be submitted detailing the framework of the study. In addition, the Director of School's signature was required prior to communication with the classroom teachers. The Central Office personnel of Knox County Schools also required information about the study and a copy of the finished study. After gaining approval from the appropriate personnel from the participating school systems, email communication was sent to K-6 school administrators to initiate communication with K-6 classroom teachers who met the criteria of the study.

Ethical Protocol

Following initial contact with the participants, a schedule was established to interview the participants using the questions in Appendix C. Consent forms were used to provide approval for participation in the study. The consent forms outlined the purpose of the study, the manner in which the information would be collected, and the summary of the findings. During the interviewing sessions, an audio recording device was used to record the interview session. After the transcription process had been completed, a copy of the transcribed interview was emailed to each participant to facilitate participant review of the session. The participants were requested to

return an email after reviewing the transcribed interview. Following this step, the interviews were coded to establish patterns and commonality of the interview responses.

<center>*Bias*</center>

To limit personal and professional bias in this study, participants from a variety of teacher education programs were included. Cultural bias was acknowledged within this study by the geographical limitations of the participants and each participant's teaching experience. Because of the limitation of the designated area, the researcher is known by some participants as an educator within the community. Personal bias is acknowledged by the researcher as a graduate of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville's teacher education program, former employee of the Jefferson County School System, and a present employee of Tusculum College's School of Education. Participant review was used to ensure accuracy of responses to the interview questions.

<center>*Data Collection*</center>

Data were collected during the individual interview sessions with each participant. Each participant authorized informed consent (Appendix E) and willingness to participate in the study. Participants selected locations convenient for the interview sessions.

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CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The participants volunteering to contribute in this study were interviewed face to face using the interview guide (Appendix C). Each participant was asked the same series of questions; however, each was allowed to expand on his or her ideas as they related to the topic. Alias were used in order for participants to remain anonymous. Participants were allowed to designate the time and location in which they would be interviewed for the study. Responses obtained from the interview questions have been arranged in a manner that provides evaluation of each participant's response. Interviews sessions ranged in time from 1 to 2 hours.

Interview Question 1

Participant Information

Each participant was selected based on the following criteria: 5 or fewer years teaching experience, graduate of a teaching preparation program outlined in the review of the literature, and presently working as a classroom teacher in Hamblen, Jefferson, or Knox County school systems. Each participant's information is organized in the following section:

Participant 1 selected an alias of Mr. Magic. Presently, Mr. Magic is employed as a second grade teacher. He has 2 years of teaching experience at the same school. He is a graduate of Tusculum College with an endorsement for kindergarten to sixth grade. Mr. Magic completed a cohort program at Tusculum designed for working adults. Mr. Magic's interview was conducted in his classroom. Because the researcher already had established relationship before the interview, Mr. Magic answered each question without hesitancy or noticeable feelings of discomfort. Mr. Magic offered an engaging rapport during the interview.

Participant 2 selected an alias of Ms. Renee. She is presently teaching sixth grade reading. Ms. Renee has 4 years teaching experience and has an endorsement to teach grades kindergarten to eighth grade. She is a graduate of Carson Newman College where she completed a traditional program. Ms. Renee's interview was conducted at a local restaurant. Ms. Renee answered the questions with some hesitancy as she had to recall a variety of the answers from several years past. The previously established collegial relationship with Ms. Renee led to a comfortable and relaxed environment for the interview session.

Participant 3 selected the alias of Ms. Blonde. Ms. Blonde is employed as a fifth grade teacher. Ms. Blonde has 5 years teaching experience, all of which are in the same school system and school. Ms. Blonde is a graduate of Tusculum College and is endorsed to teach grades kindergarten to sixth grades. She completed a traditional program at Tusculum. The interview session was conducted in Ms. Blonde's classroom. Ms. Blonde demonstrated a comfortable rapport during the interview as she had a previously established relationship with the researcher. Ms. Blonde answered each question with confidence and certainty of her feelings.

Participant 4 chose to be referred to as Ms. McGhee. Ms. McGhee is teaching fourth grade and has 3 years of teaching experience in the same school system. She is a graduate of Carson Newman College where she completed a traditional program. She is endorsed to teach kindergarten to sixth grades. The interview was conducted in Ms. McGhee's school, offering a comfortable environment for the sessions. Ms. McGhee exhibited a relaxed demeanor during the meeting.

Participant 5 elected to be called Ms. Sue. She is teaching fourth grade but has taught first grade previously. Ms. Sue has always taught in the same school system and school. She has 3 years teaching experience. Ms. Sue is a graduate of East Tennessee State University and is

endorsed to teach grades kindergarten to sixth grades. She completed a cohort program at a satellite campus. Ms. Sue's classroom was the agreed upon location for the interview session. Ms. Sue seemed somewhat shy and reluctant initially as no relationship had been established prior to the interview. Ms. Sue became noticeably more comfortable as the interview progressed.

Participant 6 selected the alias Ms. Suzanne. Ms. Suzanne has 5 years of teaching experience, all of which have been in the same system, school, and grade level. A first grade teacher, Ms. Suzanne is a graduate of East Tennessee State University and is endorsed to teach kindergarten to sixth grade. Ms. Suzanne completed a cohort program at a satellite campus of East Tennessee State University. Having a previously established relationship before the interview, Ms. Suzanne was comfortable being interviewed in her classroom. She seemed at ease with the questioning and willing to providing honest answers.

Participant 7 selected the alias Ms. Coates. She is teaching first grade. Ms. Coates has 4 years teaching experience in the same system, school, and grade level. Ms. Coates is a graduate of East Tennessee State University and is endorsed to teach kindergarten to sixth grades. She completed a traditional program at East Tennessee State University. Her interview was conducted in her classroom. No previous relationship with the participant was instituted; Ms. Coates seemed very comfortable to expand on her perceptions of her teacher education program. Her enthusiasm was noted as a correlation to her feelings of ease.

Participant 8 preferred to be known as Ms. Hope. Ms. Hope teaches first grade in which she has 3 years teaching experience. Ms. Hope is a graduate of East Tennessee State University and is endorsed kindergarten to sixth grades. She completed a tradition program of undergraduate study. Ms. Hope's interview was conducted in her classroom. Having no previous

association with the researcher, Ms. Hope demonstrated some initial apprehension to expand her answers. She quickly became comfortable with the setting and began to extend her explanations.

Participant 9 chose the alias Ms. Ann. Ms. Ann teaches fifth grade and is in her 2nd year of experience at the same school. Ms. Ann is a graduate of East Tennessee State University and is endorsed to teach grades kindergarten to sixth grades. She completed a cohort program at a satellite campus. Ms. Ann's interview was conducted in her classroom, providing a familiar environment for the participant. No affiliation had been established prior to the interview session. Ms. Ann demonstrated a relaxed state during the interview.

Participant 10 preferred the alias Ms. Ashley. Ms. Ashley teaches kindergarten in which she has 2 years experience in the grade level and school. She is a graduate of East Tennessee State University. Ms. Ashley is endorsed to teach kindergarten to sixth grades and completed a cohort program at a satellite location. No previous relationship was noted with the participant. While administering the interviews in Ms. Ashley's classroom, a comfortable rapport was developed. Ms. Ashley demonstrated a willingness to express her perceptions with confidence and conviction.

Participant 11 selected Ms. Brooke as her alias. She has 2 years experience in the same grade level, school, and system. Ms. Brooke is teaching at the fourth grade level. Ms. Brooke is a graduate of East Tennessee State University and is endorsed to teach kindergarten to sixth grades. She completed a cohort program at a satellite campus. Ms. Brooke had no previous connection to the researcher. The interview was completed in her classroom. Ms. Brooke demonstrated a persona of an individual at ease with the situation and environment. She answered each question without hesitation or any indication noted self conscientiousness.

Participant 12 chose the alias Ms. Claire. Ms. Claire teaches first grade. Her 2 years of experience are in the same grade level, school, and system. Ms. Claire is a graduate of the East Tennessee State University and is endorsed to teach kindergarten to sixth grades. She completed a traditional program for her undergraduate study. No previous association was established with the participant. Ms. Claire seemed comfortable during her interview sessions, but she did acknowledge the fear of sounding negative. After being encouraging to answer each question based on her honest feelings, Ms. Claire progressed throughout the interview decisively. The interview session took place in her classroom.

Interview Question 2

What are your overall impressions of the teaching profession? How do these impact the profession?

The second question was designed to gain information about the participants' perceptions of the teaching profession. In addition, inquiry about how these feeling lead to other factors of the profession were included. Mr. Magic, with a thoughtful expression, noted:

> As far as teaching in general, I love it, especially the interaction with the children. There is a great deal of what teachers "should be doing" from lawmakers and other decision makers. I don't want to take this out on my students. Of course, I would enjoy more money and perks.

Ms. Renee clarified that teaching is not merely limited to the classroom setting. She noted with certainty, "It is not just me and my classroom, teaching. There are so many other things that are beyond teaching and the curriculum that impacts the profession." Ms. Blonde, Ms. McGhee, and Ms. Sue supported this notion with their feelings on the topic. Their responses reflected a dispirited connotation. Ms. Blonde explained, "It can be overwhelming. A lot of pressure is placed on teachers; this impacts teachers to go into other fields." Ms. McGhee added that the

teaching profession is "Stressful, seems unappreciated. We are doing our best, but it seems to the public that we are not." Ms. Sue supplemented that the profession "can be rewarding in the sense of working with the students. It can also very stressful and overwhelming with all the given components; stress can outweigh the rewards."

Ms. Suzanne qualified her feelings in that she loves teaching. She continued, "It is a privilege to teach in such an impressionable occupation. I would be OK if I was left alone to teach my students. Unfortunately, it is very hard to do things with everyone telling me how to do it – administrators, politicians, etc." This response seemed to indicate a discouraged sentiment to the reply. Ms. Hope added to this opinion with a similar viewpoint by stating,

> It is much harder than lead to believe. There is much more paperwork and testing then we were led to believe. There is not enough time for one on one time with kids and this causes feelings of anger. We were led to believe that there was a high demand for teachers also. This is not realistic. Our program should have prepared us of how to stand out more and be noticed. I was hired two weeks before school began.

Ms. Coates explained her opinion of the profession by the following:

> I felt that the amount of work required for teaching was grossly underrepresented. I felt that Special Education would be the major that required so much paperwork. In a way were played for fools in some perspectives. We were shown this bright image in which teachers were valued outside of schools and that is not the case. I would have liked to have participated in more practicum and figured out ways to stand out and be part to stand out more. This would have been more valuable than writing skewed reports for 15 minute blocks of observation.

Ms. Claire supplied a response that also noted feelings of discontentment. She stated, "I love teaching. I do not like being placed on a pedestal where I am watched every minute inside the classroom and out." Ms. Brooke added her opinion to the pressure of teaching profession by commenting, "I would like to just teach. There seems to a million hoops to jump through with the walk throughs and observations." Ms. Ashley regretfully expanded with her answer to say, "At times I feel as if I am improving, but then I feel like I am not doing enough. I feel like others

are always looking for a show." Ms. Ann's response followed a common pattern of a

disheartened theme as well. She stated,

I love teaching. It is lots of fun. The expectation that has been set forth is not humanly possible. How the students perform on tests should not be reflective on the principal. People without a foundation in education are making decisions and that is not right.

Interview Question 3

What are your perceptions of the preparation within the college or institution in which you

received your teacher licensure? Describe the degree to which you feel that you were prepared

for your career in education (Fully prepared, somewhat prepared, not prepared)? Provide

examples of why you feel this way.

The third question examined the opinions of the participants in regard to the training they

received from the college. Each participant expressed opinions based on individual experiences

within the classroom setting.

Mr. Magic initiated his response by the following: "I feel that I was somewhat prepared.

It is hard to know what is required for all grade levels. The major itself is so broad that we were

trained for grades K-6". He eagerly elaborated, "We were taught to understand broad types of

testing and instruction, but the real world is different. I also felt I had an idea of what to do."

Ms. Renee supported his notion within her response to the same question:

> No amount of classes can prepare you; the terminology and vocabulary are useful, but - on teaching and learning is most useful. I felt somewhat prepared. Field experience is most valuable and allows you to take ideas to your own classroom.

Further support of the value of real world experience was noted in Ms. Blonde's response: "Most

practicum experiences are useful, student teaching is very useful. It is very overwhelming to

start." She resolutely expanded her opinion by stating that "mentoring teachers should allow

students to teach more in classes. It is more useful to gain practical experience than observe."

Ms. McGhee felt very strongly in her level of preparation. She positively stated, "I felt very prepared – above and beyond. So much classroom experience was very useful. My only negative experience was how to condense the lesson plans into a little box in a lesson pan book."

Ms. Sue had a conflicting level of preparation: "Not prepared; core curriculum did not cover the grade levels. It was like a fish thrown in the water. The information and terminology was not applicable". Ms. Sue sheepishly offered this response in manner that noted her feeling of discomfort. Ms. Suzanne shared her opinion in that she felt as if she were "not prepared at all from college courses". Ms. Suzanne confidently continued in stating that

> Most of what I came with were things that were innate, I think some people are natural teachers. I feel that a great deal of things was not shown honestly. I felt that I did not gain enough time in the classroom. I was not shown how to reteach skills when a student does not understand something. I also did not learn how to work with colleagues and was not made aware of the competition between teachers. I feel that working with men has been most beneficial to me.

More specific areas of preparedness are noted within Ms. Coates's response:

> I wished I had known what would be important during classroom management and C & I classes. For classroom management, this is something that you can't learn from a book. It was hard to attempt to develop a plan without having any experience. There should be more emphasis placed on the job, especially for special education, taken only as a sophomore, and ELL. I wish I had paid more attention during the reading classes. As we complete RTI 1 hour each day, this was not emphasized enough.

Ms. Hope added her opinion by elaborating that she felt "somewhat prepared for some things. Specific classes helped us with things like running records and language projects". Ms. Claire and Ms. Ashley stated that they were not prepared until they reached the level of student teaching. Ms. Claire decisively observed, "I felt that I was not prepared at all. I felt like student teaching helped me realize what to do. In class we were expected to memorize and regurgitate

information." She further explained, "I learned more from student teaching than my entire time in college." Ms. Ashley expressed,

> During student teaching, I was able to see the team aspect of teachers working together. It is important to not forget what you see and experience. I was not prepared before student teaching. I think it would be beneficial to have more practicing teachers as college instructors.

Ms. Ann stated that "classes in {college} were not productive. Student teaching, practicum, and specific instructors were more helpful. Substitute teaching helped most." Ms. Brooke seemed to waver in her response. She expressed her feeling of being somewhat prepared and stated, "We had a small cohort and were close knit. Before student teaching we did not have a lot of practical experience. There seemed to be too much information that we did not need to know. We needed more classroom experience."

Interview Question 4

In your opinion what component of your preservice training was most effective in preparing you to become a teacher (methods courses, field experiences, course delivery, mentors, cohort)? Why? What aspect was least effective? Why?

Question 4 identified the components of teacher education programs in which the participants felt were most and least effective during their training. Mr. Magic explained that "field experience is most effective and shows you about current issues. Classroom management needed more focus; it can make you or break you." He further stated, "For example, different personalities will lend to different approaches to classroom management. What works for me does not work for everyone". Ms. Renee concurred with Mr. Magic in her response: "Field experience and mentors are most useful to ask questions and gain ideas." Ms. Blonde, Ms.

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McGhee, and Ms. Sue shared this perspective in their respective responses "Field experience is

most effective"; "Field Experience – practicum and student teaching"; and "Field Experience; I

learned the most from the classroom". Ms. Suzanne enthusiastically illustrated the commonality

by stating the following:

> Most beneficial was student teaching – I got all the materials that I could get my hands
> on. I was lucky enough to have a mentor that allowed me to do that. I felt that I did not
> have enough practicum leading to student teaching.

Ms. Claire, Ms. Brooke, Ms. Ashley, and Ms. Ann also noted that student teaching was

the most effective aspect of their teacher training. Establishing a commonality with other

participants, effective mentors also played a major role in the level of usefulness for effective

teacher preparation. Ms. Claire shared, "Student teaching was most effective because I am a

hands-on learner. I had two great mentoring that I learned a lot from." Ms. Brookes decisively

stated, "Student teaching and mentor teachers were most effective. I was able to student teaching

in 4th grade and got a job in that grade level." Ms. Ashley contributed, "During student teaching I

was able to have very different mentoring teachers, I was able to compare them and use ideas

from both" contentedly noting the benefits from having two effective mentors. Ms. Ann

volunteered: "Student teaching; my mentors were amazing".

Ms. Coates and Ms. Hope also shared a commonality within the component that was

most effective. Ms. Coates was specific in her response:

> The most engaging courses were the READ classes. They offered the most hands-on
> knowledge that explained "how to do" instead of "about". This should have been done in
> the classroom management course. Instead we were given a grade level and told to
> develop centers in preparation to teach in classrooms that do not have these things.

Ms. Hope confirmed this notion in her response by stating, "The READ-prefix courses were

most effective. Reading and literacy were most helpful on the Reading across the Curriculum

Praxis II test. We were able to gain experience, practice running records, and similar things."

The examination of the least effective aspect of preparing teachers initially focused on theories that did not have an application to the classroom. Ms. Blonde asserted that "theory and theorists are not practical knowledge for day to day teaching." Ms. McGhee supported this perspective with her agreement. She stated, "Memorization of information that is not useful; this is only what professors know or believe". This commonality was further supported by the opinion that "some of the courses and theories did not have a practical application to the classroom". Ms. Suzanne provided this statement with an expression of distaste for useless coursework.

Other factors that lead to ineffectiveness of teacher education programs were more specific in nature. Ms. Renee expressed that "Ineffective professors that lecture only are not always effective." Ms. Ashley added to this feeling of inferior instruction by stating, "Instructors often taught us in ways that we were told not to teach." While Ms. Sue focused on the program design of her teacher education program, stating that the "cohort group was very unorganized with setup". Ms. Sue expressed her feelings of the ineffective organization with a grimace. Ms. Hope commented that "the class for the portfolio was least effective. Also the classroom management class – it was online. This class focused on developing the dream classroom; it was not practical." Ms. Ann, Ms, Brooke, and Ms. Ashley also shared the feeling of the portfolio class being less than useful. They stated respectively, "The portfolio and fluff classes were least effective"; "Portfolios; hours were spent on this for no point. It was just busy work"; "Portfolios were a weakness." Ms. Claire reflected that the scheduling of a block of classes was an ineffective strategy because of the extensive amount of time in class each day. She communicated, "Being in class from 8:00AM to 5:00 PM was way too long".

Interview Question 5

What was your biggest concern or fear entering the classroom for the first time as a full time teacher (curriculum, students, parents, colleagues, administrators)? Why did you feel this way?

Question 5 included the factors that caused anxiety or apprehension within classroom teachers. The participants explained their feelings in a variety of terms that focused on the classroom and beyond. Ms. Renee sincerely expressed her concern of "dealing with parents as I do not like confrontation. Also, middle school curriculum is not in my comfort zone." This unfamiliar feeling of the curriculum was also noted by other participants. Mr. Magic explains similar concerns by stating the following:

> The terminology – in Knox County there is CORE, CARE, and other things they expect you to know. You don't want to ask too many questions about things like that. It is important to do a good job, but not outshine others. There is pressure to please administrators but you have to stay away from the gossips with colleagues too. Also, there is pressure for students to show what they know and what works for you.

This notion extended to Ms. Blonde. She stated, "Being prepared to be a good teacher; knowing what I need to know to teach my students properly" caused her the most feelings of distress. Ms. Suzanne supported this opinion by her heartfelt expression: "Letting my students down; not giving them what they need. There are 18 sets of eyes on you all day, every day- that is so impressionable for the students". Ms. Brooke also noted a fear of being able to teach the students effectively. She said, "I am afraid that I will not be able to relay the material effectively for TCAP testing. I am asking myself 'Am I teaching this the correct way for my kids to get it'?" Anxiety was also articulated by Ms. McGhee's response, "Establishing your position in the classroom to sustain an effective environment for the rest of the year." Ms. Sue also candidly shared this feeling by stating, "Parents; I feel nervous about questions and acceptance. Classroom management and curriculum are areas of fear with all of the changes".

Ms. Ashley and Ms. Ann also articulated a concern for dealing with parents, especially as a first year teacher. An intimidation factor was expressed in regard to field trips and parent teacher conferences. Ms. Ashley straightforwardly expressed,

> I had four days to prepare for my teaching position, I was very overwhelmed with the curriculum set up. I was also intimidated by parents especially with field trips and conferences. When you are a new teacher, parents know it and try to intimidate you.

Ms. Ann stated, "TCAP scores and dealing with parents were my biggest concern and still are."

Areas of concern that extend beyond classroom instruction were communicated by Ms. Coates. Her response was very open and honest as she clarified,

> Fear of safety with the language barrier and cultural differences. My background consisted of rich and poor, there was not much diversity where I grew up. My fear is that I will offend a student and they will feel ill at ease due to my inexperience. We have collaborative experiences within my school in which we have grade level meetings and curriculum coaches that provide support so that you never feel alone.

This opinion was further supported by Ms. Hope. She elaborated,

> With the population I teach, the biggest fear is dealing with parents and the language barrier. I am still learning a great deal. Another fear is Jehovah's Witness students and holidays. Hispanic students also do not celebrate all of the holidays. I did not know that before taking this job. Also, dealing with the school's money is a concern.

Ms. Claire noted that the first day of school was an area of concern for her. She stated that she was unsure of "knowing what to do the first day or how it would go. I was still scared this year."

Interview Question 6

When was your first field experience to visit a classroom? How did you participate? Describe

why you feel this experience and other preservice field experiences prepared you to teach in the

classroom?

The initial visits of preservice teachers to the classroom settings and how this experience impacted the participants as teachers were included in Question 6. Mr. Magic provided his background of field experience by explaining, "Practicum – It was a good experience because you are involved but not responsible. It is an opportunity to see good and bad and pick out things you want to use." He amiably continued, "Some practicum experiences release you to work with students while others do not. I kept all of my notes and still use them." Ms. Renee shared her experience by accounting, "Practicum – only observation, lots of worksheets, very eccentric environment." In a more positive approach, Ms. Renee elaborated on a more effective experience: "With student teaching I learned more about using pairs, groups, and whole group instruction. I also learned to fly by the seat of my pants and use teachable moments."

Ms. Blonde noted her practicum experience in an optimistic manner: "Tusculum View – fourth grade – my first day I worked with the students and gave a spelling test. I enjoyed working in the classroom and jumping in. I learned more by being involved." Ms. Ghee illustrated her experience with encouraging certainty by stating, "Lake City Elementary School, I was with a fourth grade teacher. She was very welcoming, I was able to work with students and she was very open to allowing me to do so." Ms. Sue affirmed her experience by describing: "Dandridge Elementary School; I was able to assist with students; this made me want to teach. Experiences of observation only were not beneficial."

Ms. Suzanne provided a contrasting experience with her field experience by stating, "Observation only; did not impact my decision. I did not need the college experience to sway me one way or another. I have always known this is what I wanted to do." Ms. Hope further signified less than a positive experience with field experiences by noting,

> During my practicum experiences, there was a matching problem. I continually got
> placed in second grade. I did not get a complete view of teaching so that I could learn

from other grade levels. I student taught in second grade also, this well not well rounded enough.

Ms. Coates also elaborated frustration by providing an accounting of her first practicum.

> First semester during my sophomore year when I thought I was majoring in English. I was placed in a Cosmetology classroom in which I was required to complete a project. My supervising teacher was absent when it was time to present the project and I had a substitute to help me. This experience was influential in letting me know that I was not cut out for that. After that I had more well rounded experiences that matched my interests.

Ms. Ashley and Ms. Brooke shared that their initial experiences in the classroom were during their sophomore years of college. Both experiences were positive as they were allowed to work with students doing varying activities and were later allowed to experience different grade levels. Ms. Ashley reminisced, "It was during my sophomore year. I was allowed to give spelling tests and play games with the students. These experiences were beneficial so that I could see various grade levels to see which one best fit me". Ms. Brooke recalled in agreement, "It was sophomore year; I was able to help with pull out reading. This was a good experience". Ms. Claire expressed that she was only allowed to observe during her initial practicum, providing feelings of dissatisfaction both in her tone and by facial expression. She stated, "It was during my junior year. I mainly observed during that experience, but was allowed to complete more tasks later".

Interview Question 7

How did your program prepare you to teach students with multiple learning styles and varying achievement levels? In your opinion, how could this process have been extended to be more effective (extension of curriculum, professional development, inservice, workshops)?

Question 7 included teaching and learning styles and how these affect instruction in the classroom. Mr. Magic confidently answered this question with the following response:

> With the K-6 major, is so hard to know what level you will end up teaching. My experience could have been better with center-based, differentiated focused at Tusculum. I think that teaching to the higher achievement level of students is harder; we did not have enough experience learning how to extend the learning. It is so important not to hold the advanced students back; even with centers it is difficult. For example, at Tusculum we learned strategies in black and white even those there could be lots of reason why a student is having difficulty reading. There could be tracking, comprehension, and it is so important to be able to understand and fix where a student is struggling –this is huge.

Ms. Suzanne decisively explained that in her program these ideas were explained in great detail. She stated,

> The idea of differentiated instruction was stressed a lot. It comes down to experience no assignment to show me that I could do it. The use of unfamiliar materials to develop lesson plan and materials is very effective. I did not see a teacher's manual or plan book until student teaching.

Ms. Renee regrettably clarified that she did not receive any information in regard to these topics: "None – more methods, ELL, inclusion, etc. were needed." Ms Blonde concurred, "I did not hear the term differentiated instruction until I became a teacher. Theories do not teach you to address learners on all level and that is very important." This response was acknowledged as being unpleasing in the tone of Ms. Blonde's reply. Further commonality was provided by Ms. McGhee. She was sorry to say, "No application of multiple intelligences, differentiated instruction and techniques until I received a teaching position." Ms. Sue further explained, "Not very prepared with these concepts. In the time allotted I didn't see how to teach different styles and abilities."

Ms. Coates continued with a similar experience. In her experience she has limited application of these theories and models. She stated:

More theory and lesson plans that focused on students that have special needs. I am not talking about students with MR or that went to Resource. I am talking abbot students that need some type of accommodation that need to successfully function in the regular education setting. ELL strategies should be addresses. There should be more explanation of making picture schedules, students that need constant encouragement, and how to deal with the tried and true. Also more preparation in dealing with gifted students. When I completed practicum at my old elementary school there was a stigma of " not in my school" when approached about using new and innovative ideas and strategies. During my 4th grade student teaching placement, teaching manuals were handed off to me to take over, however, the supervising teacher would come in and reteach things that I had already taught.

Ms. Hope provided her explanation of experience relating to this topic by recalling,

Not enough Special Education experience in dealing with behavior problem. How can you make a positive impact? It seems that we are always teaching to the middle. I student taught at University school that had SMART boards, few Special Education students, and no textbooks. It was a dream classroom and it is hard to go other places after being there.

Ms. Claire explained, "I had one class of Special Education – this didn't tell me how to teach students that have varying achievement levels." She further noted, "During student teaching I had a hearing impaired student. That experience allowed me to gain a great deal of experience."

Ms. Brooke and Ms. Ashley shared the opinion that they learned about different learning styles but were not shown how to apply those strategies to the classroom. Ms. Brooke expressed, "We learned about some learning styles, but needed to learn more about different levels of students and how to teach to them". Ms. Ashley agreed by adding, "I had the most experience with learning styles. More information should have been provided about how to teach different levels in the classroom and students that have special needs, but are not diagnosed to receive services". Ms. Ann noted a more satisfying experience in that in that she "gained more experiences with student teaching, but took three special education classes. These helped tremendously".

Interview Question 8

In your opinion how effective are teacher education programs (Fully effective, somewhat effective, not effective)? Why?

Question 8 included the participants' responses of the level of effectiveness of teacher education programs in general. Mr. Magic provided his opinion of teacher education programs by stating,

> These programs are fully effective in terms of the teaching in general. Programs cannot be more specific because of the different styles of jobs that someone can get. I felt that Tusculum was full-on and intense, like my teaching experiences. I received a job directly after graduation.

Ms. Renee, feeling a bit less positive, concluded, "They are somewhat effective – not to be blind, but hands on instruction is more effective than what can learned in a book." Ms. Blonde and Ms. McGhee concurred with this notion. Ms. Blonde explained, "They are somewhat effective; time spent in the classes was important", while Ms. McGhee clarified, "They are somewhat effective; limited experiences impact the program effectiveness." Ms. Coates detailed her perspective:

> They are somewhat effective. It is important to learn material to be ready to graduate and complete Praxis II. It is sad that some people come all through the process and have a job lined up, but can't take the job. No support is offered if the test is not passed. It would be helpful to have two semesters of student teaching. This should replace some courses that could be taught by independent study. There is also value to having a variety of instructors that are outside of the academic setting. In addition, lots of practical experience in which instructors can model research strategies and engage students.

Ms. Sue offered an opinion that the programs can be "Effective if implemented the correct way." Ms. Suzanne enhanced this argument by stating,

> They can be fully effective; however pertinent information could be changed to be more effective. Positive encouragement is necessary to inspire others. So many people do the job and dislike it, it is important to share with others the real deal of teaching. I love this job, but it is not easy.

This imminent view continued throughout the participants' perceptions. Ms. Hope earnestly

stated that she felt the programs were somewhat effective. She said, "There are good points and

bad, but it is always necessary to be honest. I felt we were mislead about things". She elaborated,

"Many students, like me, play the waiting game to be admitted to students teaching. I feel that

we could be more prepared with more student teaching." Ms. Ann supported this opinion by

stating, "I think that education programs should be redone to have 2 years of general education

courses and 2 years of experience in a school." Ms. Ashley also elaborated on the importance of

experience in the schools by saying that teacher education programs are somewhat effective. She

reflectively expanded her opinion that "it is a good stepping stone and starting off point.

However, you must experience{teaching}."

Ms. Brooke and Ms. Claire shared the viewpoint that programs are somewhat effective to

not effective. Ms. Brooke wavered, "No class can prepare you, student teaching cannot even

fully prepare you. Programs would be more effective with more meaningful classes and

instructors." Ms. Claire expressed thoughtfully, "I learned more in student teaching than any

class. The most effective instructors were those that had been teachers before. They were able to

add more to {college} classes."

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Teacher education programs at colleges and universities facilitate training for individuals interested in becoming licensed K-12 teachers. This study used a qualitative design to explore the perceptions of kindergarten through sixth grade classroom teachers in terms of effective teacher education programs. The findings of this study were based on the responses of the 12 participants to an interview session. Interview sessions were used to examine the components K-6 classroom teachers felt were most crucial in their teacher preparation programs. Participants' responses were used to identify patterns and themes. In addition, categories within the themes denoted further illustration of each participant's explanations.

Summary of Findings

Interview Question 1

-Participant In formation (Appendix F)

The participants in this study offered varying experiences that were communicated during the interview. Participants' years of classroom experience varied from 2 to 5 years. Participants completed their teacher education training from Carson Newman College, East Tennessee State University, or Tusculum College. Participants completed traditional and cohort programs. Traditional undergraduate programs offered courses taken during the customary semester; varying groups of students complete coursework together. Cohort programs offered alternative delivery models in which the same group of students transitioned through courses as a unit at a satellite campus. All 12 participants were currently teaching in Hamblen, Jefferson, or Knox County School Systems of East Tennessee.

Interview Question 2

-What are your overall impressions of the teaching profession? How do these impact the profession?

In summary of Question 2 several participants noted motivators within the profession as a pattern. Several participants noted that the reasons they chose teaching as a career focused on their enjoyment of working with children and their love for teaching. Positive influences were acknowledged to include the intrinsic rewards of a teaching career and having an influence on children's lives. In addition, drawbacks were also communicated and viewed as negative influences of the profession. These drawbacks consisted of unrealistic expectations and pressure from entities outside of the classroom. This included new curriculum, education policy and standards, standardized testing, and public image.

The initial category noted within this theme focuses on the intrinsic rewards of the profession. Participants expressed their enthusiasm for working with students in the classroom. Participants also acknowledged the sense of fulfillment from their jobs as educators. The positive influence that teachers had on young people was declared as a factor that motivates teachers to remain in the classroom.

The second category of this theme was outside influence. Public image and political influence were mentioned as the factors that often provided a negative impression of teachers in the public school setting. These feelings caused emotions of frustration and inadequacy for several participants. Stress was also articulated in terms of the pressure of meeting standardized test score requirements and new modes of evaluation. These factors were expressed as reasons that could influence individuals to go into other professions.

Research Question 3

-What are your perceptions of the preparation within the college or institution in which you received your teacher licensure? Describe the degree to which you feel that you were prepared for your career in education (Fully prepared, somewhat prepared, not prepared)? Provide examples of why you feel this way.

In summary of Question 3 several participants noted practical application as a pattern. Being allowed to experience the classroom firsthand was considered by participants to be an education within itself. Each participant noted the benefit of being able to experience participation in the classroom setting. Several participants noted benefits from being able to experience the classroom firsthand, establishing relationships with mentoring teachers, and being able to gain ideas that were applicable to each individual's classroom. The participants expressed their feelings of adequate preparation as a correlation to the amount of practical application they experienced. This connection was the result of the participants' experiences in establishing a realistic expectation.

Initially, this theme categorizes the development of each individual's teaching style. By becoming familiar with the classroom setting as an observer, each individual was allowed to make decisions about factors that supported individual teaching styles and philosophy. Notes, materials, and experiences were used in this process to facilitate student development. Additional information from coursework was cited as being needed to correspond more closely with components of the actual classrooms.

The second category of this theme noted the value of a hands-on approach to teacher education programs. This experience was viewed by participants as an opportunity to expand information into experiences. Others characterized the experience as putting theory into practice.

This experience was valuable in allowing students to have a smooth transition from college to the K-6 classroom. This category also supports the idea that there is nothing more valuable to teaching than the actual experience of it firsthand. Participants recommended that teacher education programs increase the time spent in field experiences to allow for an increase of time in the K-6 school setting.

Interview Question 4

-In your opinion what component of your preservice training was most effective in preparing you to become a teacher (methods courses, field experiences, course delivery, mentors, cohort)? Why? What aspect was least effective? Why?

In summary of Question 4 several participants noted the relationship to field experience as a pattern. Students are most commonly allowed to complete these experiences of practicum and student teaching as directed by an instructor or supervisor. Participants viewed these experiences as highly effective as they were directly related to the actual classroom setting. Conversely, experiences that did not directly relate to the classroom setting were characterized as least effective.

Each participant noted that the most effective aspect of teacher education trainings was field experience. This category included both student teaching and practicum experiences. A productive setting in field experience allowed the participants to gain the most knowledge and experience that lead to their future development as K-6 classroom teachers. By actually gaining teaching experience or working with the students, the participants were able to receive tangible experience. Participants indicated the level of involvement in the classroom was positively related to the quality of the experience. Examples of involvement encompassed working with the

students in small-group and whole-group settings, assisting with assessments, tutoring exercises, and material development.

The participants also noted specific resources as being ineffective. This category included information that was not related or applied to the K-6 classroom setting. According to participants instruction delivered by lecture was considered irrelevant when the content could not be used in daily teaching. This was also viewed as an ineffective use of time. In addition, lack of modeling was noted as being ineffective within the college classroom. Participants indicated it would be more useful to show preservice teachers how to do something instead of merely being told about it. Lack of organization also played a role in the level of effectiveness noted within college programs as well.

Interview Question 5

-What was your biggest concern or fear entering the classroom for the first time as a full time teacher (curriculum, students, parents, colleagues, administrators)? Why did you feel this way?

In summary of Question 5 several participants noted effectiveness within the classroom setting as a pattern. The participants acknowledged this theme in regard to the effect their teaching and classroom environment had on individual student's productivity and learning. This theme illustrated factors that focused both on college instruction and those that extended beyond formalized teaching. This issue also contained feelings of inadequacy, unfamiliar curriculum, and uncertainty about student success from the participants.

Initially, participants expressed a fear of not being effective in providing instruction to the students. The participants were concerned that students would not learn as a result of their instruction methods. This fear was noted in terms of preparation; not being trained adequately to

address specific concerns or situations. In addition, language and communication barriers played a role in causing uncertainty. Participants had not been trained to address teaching strategies for non-English speaking students. Cultural awareness was also acknowledged as an area of fear. This fear stemmed from the desire to not offend individuals from other cultures or religions. In addition, participants aspired to be valued by their students. They indicated the importance of playing a role in their students' overall success.

Secondly, participants categorized concerns of effectiveness that extended beyond classroom instruction. Participants noted a fear of inadequacy and unpreparedness in terms of the curriculum of specific school systems and state mandates. The changes of the curriculum and standards lead to participants' feelings of incompetence in regard to content knowledge. In addition, participants noted a fear of policies for recording and handling money. Confrontation with parents and other stakeholders was also noted as a concern for several participants.

Interview Question 6

-When was your first field experience to visit a classroom? How did you participate? Describe why you feel this experience and other preservice field experiences prepared you to teach in the classroom?

In summary of Question 6 the participants noted a pattern of appropriate levels of involvement. The level of participant involvement was a recognized category that contributed to a positive or negative experience. Positive experiences were noted as experiences in which the participants were allowed to actively participate in the components of the classroom. Negative experiences were defined as those in which the participants were not engaged in the classroom setting during field experiences. Participants indicated they learned from both positive and

negative experiences, gaining the most from classrooms in which they were allowed to actively contribute.

The initial category focused on positive experiences of classroom involvement. Participants acknowledged these experiences of the supervising teacher providing a welcoming environment for a preservice teacher. This setting allowed for the participants to be engaged with the students and the activities of the classroom. Participants also noted experiences in which they were able to use ideas from other classrooms in their own.

Negative experiences stemmed from the lack of involvement in the classroom. College students were often only allowed to observe in the classroom setting. In addition, participants also noted sensing that they sometimes were not wanted in the classroom by the mentoring teachers. Negative experiences also included a disparity of content areas and selected majors. This inconsistency did not provide an effective environment for participants to become involved. In addition, lack of variety of field experience placements did not allow participants to be involved with different grade levels.

Interview Question 7

-How did your program prepare you to teach students with multiple learning styles and varying achievement levels? In your opinion, how could this process have been extended to be more effective (extension of curriculum, professional development, inservice, workshops)?

In summary of Question 7 several participants noted the level of connection as a pattern. Participants noted the necessity of teacher education programs remaining current with the trends and practices of the K-6 classroom settings. These components can include lesson planning, curriculum, teaching strategies, assessments, and teacher evaluation methods. This concept is

key to train preservice teacher most effectively in terms of expectation for their positions as K-6 classroom teachers. When their teacher education programs did not make a connection between the college training and becoming a classroom teacher, participants acknowledged a great loss in their training.

The initial category of this theme is lack of communication of current and crucial terms used in the classroom. Several participants acknowledged that they were not familiar with essential terms before their initial teaching position. Of these participants, information about many essential terms or terminology was explained when they received their teaching positions as part of professional development. In addition, the participants expressed realistic classroom situations should be addressed more. These include: ELL students, modifications, accommodations, and reteaching strategies.

Conversely, some participants stated that they had knowledge of current terminology before gaining a position as a classroom teacher. Of these participants, it was noted that they needed additional support of how to effectively implement these strategies in their classroom. This category demonstrated a lack of practical application in connecting theory and practice. These participants noted the definitions were not enough; modeling would have played a more prominent role in providing a more thorough preparation.

Interview Question 8

-In your opinion how effective are teacher education programs (Fully effective, somewhat effective, not effective)? Why?

In summary of Question 8 several participants noted the level of program effectiveness as a pattern. The participants communicated that teacher education programs were somewhat

effective. Levels of effectiveness were defined as fully effective, somewhat effective, or not effective. Participants' responses focused on the perception of their teacher training program. The participants provided reasons for their opinions that stemmed from each person's perception when entering the K-6 classroom. The participants also provided feedback on how programs could improve their effectiveness.

The effective category initially noted the program characteristics of each institution. This could be directly correlated with the level of effectiveness in training future teachers. These characteristics include field experience, amount of hands-on instruction, modeling, and support. In addition, the level of effectiveness of each program was also evaluated in terms of the level of preparation for practical teaching application. Participants expressed that the most beneficial information was that information could be adapted and used in a variety of classroom settings.

The ineffective category illustrated the degree that participants did not feel prepared for a career in the field of education. This included teacher education programs providing an unrealistic approach to the field of education and classroom setting. Inappropriate field experiences also played a role in providing ineffective classroom experiences. In addition, some participants pointed out that their programs misled them in terms of career expectations and obligations.

Conclusions

Teacher education programs offer a variety of methods in which preservice teachers are trained. By interviewing 12 classroom teachers with 5 or fewer years of teaching experience, perspective has been provided about the elements that have been the most crucial to the success in a K-6 classroom setting. The following conclusions can be drawn as a result of responses of the participants in this study.

1. What aspects of the undergraduate teacher education are most effective? Why?

Based on participant responses, field experiences were noted as being one of the most effective components of teacher education programs. The literature reviewed and participant's responses noted this aspect as a vital part of teacher training. Including both practicum and student teaching, participants were decisive in noting the importance of gaining hands-on experience in classroom settings within a range of K-6 placements,

2. In what ways can teacher education program better prepare preservice teachers?

As derived from participants' responses, teacher education programs can be more effective by allowing preservice teachers to be immersed in a practical approach to teacher training. Also cited in Chapter 2, this concept includes field experiences but expands to more modeling of research based teaching strategies of the most effective instructional practices. This concept extends to embrace strategies that address differentiated instruction, reteaching strategies, special education, and English language learners.

3. Does the format of teacher preparation programs influence participant teachers in terms of current career satisfaction?

Based on the participants' responses, a positive relationship was observed. The participants expressed the importance of realistic images portrayed of the K-6 classroom setting. More diverse field experiences could aid in this aspect. Participants indicated that a sincere and straightforward approach to instructional strategies and practice assists with the process of becoming an effective classroom teacher. As a result, the expectations for classroom teachers should be realistic for preservice teachers as they transition from the college setting to classroom teacher.

Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the research obtained in this study, it is recommended that a study of teachers in their initial year of teaching be completed. Research based on teachers employed for their initial year of employment can facilitate dialogue to discuss positive aspects, concerns, and frustrations. This mechanism could also be used to offer support to new teachers. In addition, surveys could be transmitted to teachers as they complete the initial year of teaching in order to gain feedback about perceptions of strengths and limitations of the preparation program. Teacher education programs could used this information to further strengthen their programs.

The second recommendation noted in this study explores further research to design a longitudinal study for selected teachers. This recommendation could examine new teachers as they begin their teacher education program to continue through the initial 3 years of the teaching career. The purpose of this type of study could explore the development of individuals as they advance through specified benchmarks of their training. In addition, changes and modifications could be made to the format of the teacher education program in order to deliver a more effective model.

According to the research of this study, further examination could be conducted to include an expansion of the designated geographical region of this study. Instead of evaluating teacher education programs in a limited area of East Tennessee, further research could expand to include other regions. A statewide or national evaluation of teacher education programs could also detail program requirements and teacher effectiveness data.

To correspond with the expansion of the geographical region, a study could also be completed to include additional participants. By interviewing additional participants, more information can be obtained to further support initial findings and expand common themes. In

addition, this information can be segregated to identify and evaluate components of individual teacher education programs.

As a result of the information obtained in this study, it is recommended that a study of teacher attrition and retention be conducted to examine individuals that have removed themselves from the teaching profession. Teacher education programs could assess whether program components can be adjusted to provide for more realistic information about the K-6 teaching profession. Although several reasons for teacher dissatisfaction are noted in Chapter 2, teacher education programs could target their graduates directly in order to gain understanding of their frustration levels. This could lead to individuals having a more holistic and accurate understanding of the demands of the profession before becoming employed.

Recommendations for Practice

Based on 12 participants included in this study, the initial recommendation for practice focused on the need for an increase in practical classroom experience before and during student teaching. All of the participants interviewed noted the benefit from gaining hands-on K-6 classroom experience. The more involved students were in the K-6 classroom during field experience opportunities, the more useful the experience became to the student. Research supports this finding as many institutions are beginning to require additional practicum hours and extended student teaching opportunities in their programs. This element was also noted as NCATE Standard 3(NCATE: Professional Standards, 2008). This standard exemplifies the benefit of preservice teachers gaining classroom experience (NCATE: Professional Standards, 2008).

The participants in this study noted that teacher education programs could benefit from examining the level of effective and practical application within the programs. This leads to the

recommendation that teacher education courses provide a direct link from classroom instruction and theory to application and practice. For example, students completing a methods course for reading should have the opportunity to practice teaching reading methods in the classroom setting. Intrator (2009) also noted this connection as a means of developing more effective teacher education programs. Without this link, participants may be disconnected from the college to the K-6 school settings.

The participants of this study expressed the level of willingness of supervising and mentoring teachers to allow a practicum student or student teacher to participate in their classrooms could be crucial. This suggests the importance of ensuring that preservice teachers have effective experiences while in the classroom setting as an observer or student teacher. As a noted recommendation of practice, the placement of field experience students with willing K-6 educators, the likelihood that the experience will be positive is much greater. Duncan (2009) suggested that effective experiences in the classroom can lead to students being more satisfied within their initial years of teaching.

According to the research obtained in this study, it is also recommended that college institutions provide an extensive level of support for students completing field experiences in K-12 classroom settings. This recommendation could allow instructors from teacher education programs to support the level of experience that college students are gaining in the classroom. Communication with the classroom teacher can facilitate mutual understanding of expectations for the students' experience. Participants noted that this could lend to an established support system for the college student to gain a positive learning experience towards teacher development.

Another recommendation is the collection of feedback from program completers in their initial years of teaching. By conducting interviews and surveys, teacher education program administrators could obtain information about the strengths and limitations included in present program components. The participants stated this action could lead to redevelopment of course goals and objectives. In addition, teacher education programs can use this information to provide practical information and hands-on experience to individuals seeking to enter the field of education.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A
Tennessee Endorsement Areas for Licensure

- Early Development and Learning PreK-K

- Early Childhood Education PreK-3

- Elementary Education K-6

- Middle Grades Education 4-8

- English 7-12

- World Languages: Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Greek, Japanese, Latin, Russian, Spanish, and other world languages PreK-12

- Mathematics 7-12

- Science Education: Biology 7-12, Chemistry 7-12, Physics 7-12, and

- Earth Science 7-12

- Social Studies Education: History 7-12, Government 7-12, Geography 7-12, Economics 7-12, Psychology 9-12, and Sociology 9-12

- Speech Communication 7-12

- Agricultural Education 7-12 and Agriscience 9-12

- Business 7-12 and Business Technology7-12

- Family and Consumer Sciences Education Family and Consumer Sciences, 5-12, Food Production and Management Services, 9-12, Early Childhood Care and Services, 9-12 and Textile and Apparel Production and Service Management 9-12

- Technology-Engineering Education 5-12

- Marketing 7-12

- Visual Arts K-12

- Music Education K-12 Vocal/General Music K-12 and Instrumental/General Music K-12

- Theatre K-12

- Dance K-12

- Special Education: Preschool/ Early Childhood Education PreK-3, Modified K-12, Comprehensive K-12, Vision PreK-12, Hearing PreK-12, School Speech-Language Teacher PreK-12

- Health and Physical Education: Health and Wellness K-12 and Physical Education K-12

- Occupational Health: Health Science Education 9-12 and Trade & Industrial Education 9-12

- English As A Second Language PreK-12

- Reading Specialist PreK-12

- Library Information Specialist PreK-12

- Gifted PreK-12

- Professional School Service Personnel: School Psychologist PreK-12, Professional School Counselor PreK-12, School Social Worker PreK-12, School Audiologist PreK-12, School Speech-Language Pathologist PreK-12

- Administrator

(Tennessee Teacher Education, 2011).

Appendix B

Summary of the Report Card on the Effectiveness of Teacher Training Programs

Teacher Training Program	Number of Completers 2007 - 2008	Statistically Significant Positive Rating (Y/N)	Statistically Significant Negative Rating (Y/N)	Percent of 2005-06 Completers Teaching 4 Consecutive Years	Praxis II Summary Pass Rates 2007-08
Carson Newman College	75	N	Y	54.2%	100%
East Tennessee State University	292	Y	Y	47.4%	100%
Lincoln Memorial University	148	N	Y	68%	100%
Tennessee Technical University	374	N	Y	56.3%	99%
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville	177	N	N	54.5%	98%
Tusculum College	155	N	Y	65.3%	100%

(Report Card of, 2010, p. 10-11)

Appendix C

Teacher Interview Instrument

Interview Questions

1) Name
School System
Years of Experience
College / Program Type

2) What are your overall impressions of the teaching profession? How do these impact the profession?

3) What are your perceptions of the preparation within the college or institution in which you received your teacher licensure? Describe the degree to which you feel that you were prepared for your career in education (Fully prepared, somewhat prepared, not prepared)? Provide examples of why you feel this way.

4) In your opinion what component of your preservice training was most effective in preparing you to become a teacher (methods courses, field experiences, course delivery, mentors, cohort)? Why? What aspect was least effective? Why?

5) What was your biggest concern or fear entering the classroom for the first time as a full time teacher (curriculum, students, parents, colleagues, administrators)? Why did you feel this way?

6) When was your first field experience to visit a classroom? How did you participate? Describe why you feel this experience and other preservice field experiences prepared you to teach in the classroom?

7) How did your program prepare you to teach students with multiple learning styles and varying achievement levels? In your opinion, how could this process have been extended to be more effective (extension of curriculum, professional development, inservice, workshops)?

8) In your opinion how effective are teacher education programs (Fully effective, somewhat effective, not effective)? Why?

Appendix D

Letter to School Systems

Hello School Administrator,

My name is Polly Johnson. I am currently a doctoral student at East Tennessee State University.

My dissertation topic focuses on K-6 classroom teachers' perceptions of effective teacher

education programs. In order to gain information about this perspective, I would like to interview

classroom teachers from your school with five years or less teaching experience. In order to

proceed with this portion of my research, I am seeking volunteers for the interview portion of my

study.

These interviews would be conducted strictly on a voluntary basis and would not interfere with

the teachers' contract time or the learning environment. At this time, I have gained permission

from the appropriate personnel at Central Office and would appreciate your willingness to pass

along my contact information to any K-6 classroom teachers that would like to take part of my

research. In addition, I am happy to provide any supplemental information as needed.

Thank you for your consideration.

Polly Johnson

ETSU Doctoral Student

johnsonpj@goldmail.etsu.edu

Appendix E

Informed Consent Form

EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

INTRODUCTION

Teacher education programs facilitate training for individuals interested in becoming licensed teachers. This study focuses on the perceptions of K-6 classroom teachers in terms of the most effective teacher education programs. The topic of this study focuses on the construction and development of teacher education programs in terms of design and preparation. In addition, specific emphasis is placed on program differentiation and its impact on the preservice teacher. The analysis of this information will be utilized to assist colleges and universities to identify the components of their programs that influence preservice teachers to be more effective as classroom teachers. This is crucial in detecting which characteristics of teacher education programs promote success for future educators.

PURPOSE

This purpose of this study fosters a qualitative design used to examine the perceptions of kindergarten through sixth grade classroom teachers in terms of effective teacher education programs. The study will explore the components that kindergarten through sixth grade classroom teachers feel are most important in the training of future teachers. This study applies a phenomenological approach to evaluate the perceptions of the classroom teachers. The utilization of this methodology offers information about the classroom teachers' opinions in regard to the most effective aspects of their teacher training. The experiences of the classroom teachers will be evaluated in terms of commonality and patterns of the participant responses.

DURATION

Each participant will be asked to share information through an interview session. This session will last approximately one hour per participant.

PROCEDURES

The instrument to be used in this study is a face to face interview. Interviews will be conducted individually utilizing the same panel of questions for each participant. The interviews offer a semi structured format that consist of the participants being asked specific questions, while also allowing each participant to voluntarily expand on his or her thoughts. Interviews will taped, allowing participants the opportunity to review and approve the responses.

ALTERNATIVE PROCEDURES / TREATMENTS

No alternative procedures or treatment will be used in this study.

POSSIBLE RISKS / DISCOMFORT

There are no anticipated risks for individuals participating in this study. Identity confidentiality will be utilized with the responses. Participants may choose to quit or refuse to participate at any time.

POSSIBLE BENEFITS

The possible benefit(s) of this study includes allowing each individual to express his or her opinion in a confidential forum.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Participation in this research experiment is voluntary.

You may refuse to participate. You can quit at any time. If you quit or refuse to participate, the benefits or treatment to which you are otherwise entitled will not be affected. You may quit by calling Pauletta Johnson, whose phone number is 423/ 231-6971. You will be told immediately if any of the results of the study should reasonably be expected to make you change your mind about staying in the study.

In addition, if significant new findings during the course of the research which may relate to the participant's willingness to continue participation are likely, the consent process must disclose that significant new findings developed during the course of the research which may relate to the participant's willingness to continue participation will be provided to the participant.

In addition, if there might be adverse consequences (physical, social, economic, legal, or psychological) of a participant's decision to withdraw from the research, the consent process must disclose those consequences **and** procedures for orderly termination of participation by the participant.

CONTACT FOR QUESTIONS

If you have any questions, problems or research-related medical problems at any time, you may call Pauletta Johnson at 423/ 231-6971, or Dr. James Lampley at 423/ 439-1000. You may call the Chairman of the Institutional Review Board at 423/439-6054 for any questions you may have about your rights as a research subject. If you have any questions or concerns about the research and want to talk to someone independent of the research team or you can't reach the study staff, you may call an IRB Coordinator at 423/439-6055 or 423/439/6002.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Every attempt will be made to see that your study results are kept confidential. A copy of the records from this study will be stored in Jefferson City Storage, Jefferson City, TN, for at least 5 years after the end of this research. The results of this study may be published and/or presented at meetings without naming you as a subject. Although your rights and privacy will be

maintained, the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, or ETSU IRB and personnel from East Tennessee State University's Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis Program have access to the study records. Your records will be kept completely confidential according to current legal requirements. They will not be revealed unless required by law, or as noted above.

By signing below, you confirm that you have read or had this document read to you. You will be given a signed copy of this informed consent document. You have been given the chance to ask questions and to discuss your participation with the investigator. You freely and voluntarily choose to be in this research project.

_____

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT   DATE

_____

PRINTED NAME OF PARTICIPANT   DATE

_____

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR   DATE

_____

SIGNATURE OF WITNESS (if applicable)   DATE

Appendix F

Table of Participant Information

Participant Number	Years Experience	Licensure	Institution	Program Type
Participant 1	2	K-6	Tusculum	Cohort / Satellite
Participant 2	4	K-8	Carson Newman	Traditional
Participant 3	5	K-6	Tusculum	Traditional
Participant 4	3	K-6	Carson Newman	Traditional
Participant 5	3	K-6	ETSU	Cohort / Satellite
Participant 6	5	K-6	ETSU	Cohort / Satellite
Participant 7	4	K-6	ETSU	Traditional
Participant 8	3	K-6	ETSU	Traditional
Participant 9	2	K-6	ETSU	Cohort / Satellite
Participant 10	2	K-6	ETSU	Cohort / Satellite
Participant 11	2	K-6	ETSU	Cohort / Satellite
Participant 12	2	K-6	ETSU	Traditional

VITA

PAULETTA J. JOHNSON

Education: Walters State Community College, Morristown, Tennessee
                        Associate of Arts, Secondary Education
                        1997

                University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee
                        Bachelor of Arts, Psychology / Elementary Education
                        1999

                University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee
                        Master of Science, Curriculum and Instruction
                        2000

                Lincoln Memorial University, Harrogate, Tennessee
                        Education Specialist, Administration and Supervision
                        2004

                East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee
                        Doctor of Education, Educational Leadership
                        2011

Professional
Experience   Jefferson County Schools, Dandridge, Tennessee
                        4th grade Teacher
                        2000 – 2007

                Tusculum College, Greeneville, Tennessee
                        Director of Student Teaching, Assistant Professor of Education
                        2007 – 2009

                Tusculum College, Greeneville, Tennessee
                        Director of Field Experience, Assistant Professor of Education
                        2009 – present