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A Study of the Perceptions of First-year Teachers as Prepared Classroom Teachers

Vida Jane Ward
Lindenwood University

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A Study of the Perceptions of First-year Teachers

as Prepared Classroom Teachers

by

Vida Jane Ward

November 2015

A Dissertation submitted to the Education Faculty of Lindenwood University in

partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education
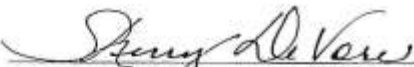
School of Education

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Lindenwood University, School of Education

_____   11 - 4 - 15
Dr. Sherry DeVore, Dissertation Chair   Date

_____   11 - 4 - 15
Dr. Terry Reid, Committee Member   Date

_____   11 - 4 - 15
Dr. Lisa Christiansen, Committee Member   Date

Declaration of Originality

I do hereby declare and attest to the fact that this is an original study based solely upon my own scholarly work at Lindenwood University and that I have not submitted it for any other college or university course or degree.

Full Legal Name: Vida Jane Ward

Signature: _Vida Jane Ward_ Date: _11-4-15_

Acknowledgements

Abstract

The quality of teacher education allows first-year teachers to meet mandates at federal

and state levels (Darling-Hammond, 2010a). The teaching profession is complex and

requires new and innovative quality preparation programs (Wei, Andree, & Darling-

Hammond, 2009). This study involved examination of the perceptions of 17 building

principals and 16 first-year teachers to determine the effectiveness of teacher preparation.

First-year teachers identified essential elements of teacher preparation and weaknesses of

programs. The study addressed building principals' perceptions of differences, if any, in

the effectiveness of first-year teachers graduating from traditional teacher preparation

programs and first-year teachers who choose alternative routes to the profession.

Perceptions of first-year teachers and building principals were identified in regard to the

skills of first-year teachers in the classroom. Building principal perceptions indicated

first-year teachers are prepared as effective classroom teachers in the areas of content

knowledge, creating positive environments, classroom management, cooperative

learning, cooperative partnership, implementing curriculum, use of technology and

communication; understanding student learning, growth, and development; and

performing roles, responsibilities, and collegial activities. Identified weakness in the

effectiveness of first-year teachers were in the areas of instruction and assessment.

Building principals indicated first-year teachers from traditional programs were more

effective than those who chose alternative programs. First-year teachers indicated

essential elements of teacher preparation programs to be organization, classroom

structure, positive reinforcement, classroom management, and implementing a variety of

instructional strategies. Areas of weakness identified were time-management, parent

teacher conference experiences, preparing the classroom environment, and time for realistic opportunities to experience classroom teaching. First-year teachers perceived their preparation to be more positive than building-principal perceptions in the areas of analyzing instructional goals and differentiated instructional strategies, teaching for critical thinking, effects of instruction on individual/class learning, use of student assessment data to analyze and modify instruction, assessment data to improve learning, and self-assessment.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

Chapter One: Introduction

Student achievement and the United States economy are strongly linked to teacher quality, making effective pre-service teacher preparation programs important (Cochran-Smith & Power, 2010). Tucker (2012) stated teacher quality is crucial to high achievement of students. One-half of practicing teachers have fewer than five years of teaching experience, magnifying the significance of high-quality pre-service training programs (Tucker, 2012). Debates concerning tenure, test scores, salary, and pedagogical skills are of concern to policymakers (Moore & Berry, 2010). Traditional teacher education programs are considered insufficient in preparing future teachers (Hobson, Harris, Buckner-Manley, & Smith, 2012). Innovative change of teacher education programs will be required to prepare effective future educators (Thomas, Herring, Redmond, & Smaldino, 2013).

Pre-service teacher education programs are the catalyst to guide student achievement (Perry, 2011). Teacher preparation program faculty have academic freedom of instruction, creating a challenge to consistent pre-service education (Cochran-Smith & Power, 2010). New teachers come from a variety of programs (Snyder, 2012). Powell (2015) indicated pre-service teacher academic performance and extracurricular involvement are indicators of classroom effectiveness. Traditional teacher education programs are relatively different from non-traditional and alternative avenues to obtain teaching positions and certification (Hobson et al., 2012). The traditional means of entering the teaching profession is graduation from a state-approved university program of teacher education (Ryan & Cooper, 2013). Traditional teacher education programs

require specific coursework and several weeks of student teaching supervised by a veteran educator (Ornstein, Levine, Gutek, & Vocke, 2014).

A shortage of available qualified teachers has led to alternative licensure and certification opportunities (Ryan & Cooper, 2013). Alternative teacher preparation programs are implemented in a variety of ways to fill high-need positions (Scribner & Heinen, 2009). Programs such as Teach for America recruit diverse educators to fill high-need positions (Harding, 2012). An estimated two million new teachers will be needed within the next decade in the United States (Sadker & Zittleman, 2010). Approximately 36% of educators are entering the profession with little or no traditional education program training (Kaplan & Owings, 2015). Society will expect effective, competent teachers who are accountable and responsible for learner success (Sadker & Zittleman, 2010). Teacher quality and accountability will continue to be concerns for policymakers and the public (Bornfreund, 2012).

Background of the Study

Realistic education training programs that provide a shift in practical experience bridge the training of teachers from the university to K-12 classrooms (Grossman, Hammerness, & McDonald, 2009). The No Child Left Behind legislation encouraged states to follow federal guidelines for highly qualified teacher training and certification (Spring, 2012). Public school experience and university preparation mirror the differences between theory of teaching and the practice of teaching (Grossman et al., 2009). Darling-Hammond (2010a) indicated it is as important for teachers to know how children learn as it is to be knowledgeable in content areas.

Other countries recognize the importance of high-quality pre-service teacher preparation programs (Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009). The national focus on failing education overlooks critical components necessary for highly trained teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2010a). Cochran-Smith and Power (2010) identified 10 current trends of teacher preparation impacting teacher quality:

- linking teacher preparation, teacher quality, and the economy;

- recognition of the teacher-quality gap;

- accountability for student learning outcomes;

- statewide data systems linking teachers, students, and preparation;

- more widespread performance assessments of teacher candidates;

- proliferation of multiple routes into teaching;

- school district-based teacher residency programs;

- practice as the center of teacher preparation;

- teachers as researchers; and

- preparation to teach diverse learners. (pp. 7-11)

Teacher preparation programs have the responsibility of providing classroom teachers the skills and knowledge base necessary to be successful educators in the 21st century (Powell, 2015).

Education reform is a high priority when the focus should be on the redesign of teaching (Adamson & Darling-Hammond, 2011). Reutzel and Cooter (2012) recognized classroom teachers as the most important factor in student learning. Effective teachers demonstrate content knowledge and pedagogical skills (Fulton & Britton, 2011). The goal of traditional teacher training is to develop lifelong educators with up to four years

of formal preparation from a state-approved program (Heineke, Carter, Desimone, & Cameron, 2010). Darling-Hammond(2010a) stated, "The traditional elements of the profession are formal preparation, licensure, certification, and accreditation" (p. 36). Novice teachers recognize a need for extended teacher preparation (Cuddapah & Burtin, 2012).

Goals of alternative certification programs and provisions include increasing the number of talented and diverse teachers in education (DAngelis, White, & Presley, 2010; Scribner & Heinen, 2009). There are no standard guidelines for alternative teacher certification programs, and individual states have varying requirements (Scribner & Heinen, 2009). The impact of alternatively certified teachers on schools and students is rarely addressed (Darling-Hammond, 2010a). Teachers are expected to improve educational practices but may not receive adequate training and support for meaningful decision making (Means, Chen, DeBarger, & Padilla, 2011). The purpose of many alternative programs is to fill areas of teacher shortage through flexible entry into the profession with little training (Darling-Hammond, 2010a).

Some alternative teacher certification paths give credit for life experiences as adequate beginning teacher training (Scribner & Heinen, 2009). Teach for America (TFA) teachers have an undergraduate degree, a five-week training course, and a two-year agreement to teach in a K-12 position (Heineke et al., 2010). Powell (2015) indicated teacher effectiveness is based more on the following characteristics than preparation program:

- set high, long-term goals for their students;
- perpetually look for ways to improve their effectiveness;

- constantly reevaluate what they are doing;

- recruit students and their families into the teaching and learning process;

- maintain focus, making sure everything they do contributes to student learning;

- plan exhaustively and purposefully;

- refuse to surrender to poverty, bureaucracy, and budgetary shortfalls;

- establish efficient classroom routines;

- possess a relentless mind-set of perseverance;

- reflect on their performance and adapt accordingly;

- show signs of contentment with their lives;

- have a history of personal goal achievement;

- know the content they teach. (p. 27)

Many alternative routes to the teaching profession do not have documented criteria of highly qualified teacher content and processes (Scribner & Heinen, 2009). Concerns about alternative programs include limited preparation and classroom experience (Heineke et al., 2010).

The profession of teaching is challenging and rewarding (Sadker & Zittleman, 2010). National focus is on classroom teachers and their ability to implement expected standards and to produce results effectively (Hall, Quinn, & Gollnick, 2014). Amerein-Beardsley (2009) confirmed a quality education is necessary for students to meet the high standards set for them. Quality teachers are knowledgeable and skilled at designing and implementing instruction and assessing learning (Darling-Hammond, 2010a). Ryan and Cooper (2013) stressed the importance of rigorous state and national standards required

for teacher licensure. Effective teachers must be prepared to transform the lives of students and not just meet a certification requirement (Harding, 2012). Darling-Hammond (2012b) described elements of teacher preparation that are key to a systematic training approach:

- common statewide standards;

- performance-based assessments, based on standards;

- local evaluation systems based on standards;

- support structures; and

- aligned professional learning opportunities. (p. 9)

Hall et al. (2014) recognized the importance of high-quality and increased hours of field experience for pre-service teachers. Increased classroom experiences in teacher preparation better prepare teachers for the profession (Powell, 2015).

The process of teacher training and licensure in relationship to effective teaching is an ongoing debate (Darling-Hammond, 2010a). Moore and Whitfield (2011) indicated the need for quality teachers who are reflective in professional growth. Teacher preparation should provide the framework to direct pre-service candidates toward research-based practices (Snyder, 2012). Harding (2012) stressed the importance of talented teachers to decrease the education inequality gap. Maintaining an awareness of current educational research to improve professional practice is pivotal in effective teaching (Sadker & Zittleman, 2010). Becoming a quality teacher involves much more than passing the required coursework (Moore & Whitfield, 2011). Effective teaching goes beyond being a certified or qualified teacher (Wong & Wong, 2012). Professional growth is an ongoing goal of effective teachers (Powell, 2015). Teachers must be

capable of providing students the "foundation for school success and beyond" (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009, p. 52).

Conceptual Framework

Teacher education programs weave theory concepts into coursework but provide little opportunity for pre-service teachers to apply information in relevant settings (Darling-Hammond, 2010a). This study is based on the findings of Linda Darling-Hammond (2009a, 2009b, 2010a, 2010b, 2010c, 2012a, 2012b, 2013; Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Darling-Hammond et al., 2009) and on Robert Marzano's (2010, 2012; Marzano, Frontier, & Livingston, 2011; Marzano & Pickering, 2007) extensive educational research. Both researchers considered effective teachers to be skilled in both the art and science of teaching (Ryan & Cooper, 2013).

Marzano's research has been well-documented in studies and publications (Kaplan & Owings, 2015). Marzano's framework of effective classroom pedagogy includes instructional strategies, classroom management strategies, and classroom curriculum design (Marzano & Pickering, 2007). The framework characteristics are interdependent strategies to increase student achievement (Kaplan & Owings, 2015). The Marzano model of quality teaching includes research-based instructional data and an understanding of individual student strengths and weaknesses (Marzano & Pickering, 2007). Marzano et al. (2011) detailed 60 elements in the following four domains of effective teaching that are research-and theory-based:

a) classroom strategies and behaviors,

b) preparing and planning,

c) reflecting on teaching, and

d) collegiality and professionalism.

Marzano's model for teacher evaluation provides a guide for understanding the direct relationship of effective teaching and learning (Powell, 2015).

In an interview with Scherer (2012), Darling-Hammond stated teacher preparation is important to teacher retention in the profession. Teachers who are not adequately prepared leave the profession at much higher rates than those who are prepared (Scherer, 2012). Darling-Hammond (2010a) determined teacher preparation will largely impact the future of the nation, and preparation programs have the responsibility of training highly qualified teachers who are effective in the classroom. Beginning teachers should be equipped with and supported in effective practice (Darling-Hammond, 2010a). Effective teachers must be well-prepared and should participate in ongoing learning for a successful teaching career (Darling-Hammond, 2012a). Powell (2015) quoted Darling-Hammond, "Substantial research evidence suggests that well-prepared teachers have the largest impact on student learning" (p. 27).

Statement of the Problem

Recent changes in education put an even greater focus on the importance of well-trained teachers (MET Project, 2012). Common core standards, increased accountability measures, new teacher evaluation performance measures, and lack of resources and supports are challenges faced by public school teachers (Anderson, 2007; Levy, 2008). Pre-service teacher education programs are mandated to prepare new teachers for the changing world of the education profession while addressing new structures in pre-service assessments and certification requirements for highly qualified teacher status (Darling-Hammond, 2010a). The high attrition rate of new teachers indicates many

teachers enter the classroom without adequate preparation (Teague & Swan, 2013). All teachers need highly effective preparation with adequate resource models (Darling-Hammond, 2012a). Darling-Hammond (2010b) suggested practice standards for teachers "guide professional training, development, teaching, and management" (p. 9). Identifying gaps in pre-service training will guide teacher education programs to develop needed changes for highly qualified classroom teachers. Darling-Hammond (2010a) suggested the "need to build a more knowledgeable and skillful professional teaching force" to guide the future of the nation (p. 36).

The typical first-year teacher is not prepared for the expectation of immediately assuming the responsibilities of a veteran teacher (Teague & Swan, 2013; Wong & Wong, 2009). Policy initiatives recognize the need for professional standards and pre-service requirements to transform the teaching profession (Darling-Hammond, 2010a). The number of new teachers entering the profession increases the importance of effective training (Sadker & Zittleman, 2010). Teacher education programs have the responsibility of training pre-service teachers to be highly qualified (Evers, 2011). Landsman, Moore, and Simmons (2008) stated new teachers believe training programs did not prepare them for how difficult teaching is, and career-change teachers find teaching the most difficult job to have. Teacher preparation increases a new teacher's effectiveness and retention in the profession (Darling-Hammond, 2010b). First-year teachers need training and supports to transition from student to teacher (Teague & Swan, 2013). New teachers with little education-based coursework and exposure to pre-service classroom teaching leave the profession at much higher rates than teachers with significant training (Darling-Hammond, 2010b).

Kelly (2009) recognized efforts to entice and retain quality educators must provide opportunities for new knowledge and relationships. An estimated 1.7 million current teachers in the United States will not be teaching in the next decade (O'Connor, Malow, & Bisland, 2011). The expense of recruiting and replacing teachers is approximately 7.3 billion dollars annually (Wong & Wong, 2009). A large number of expected retirements will challenge teacher recruitment in the future (Huling, Resta, & Yeargain, 2012). Many new teachers do not stay in the profession long enough to gain the experience to become effective (Kumi-Yeboah & James, 2012). The attrition rate of novice teachers is an issue in education (Huling et al., 2012).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of first-year teachers regarding their preparatory programs. The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MODESE) (2013) reported 59.9% of new hires in public schools are first-year teachers. A high number of new teachers leave the profession within the first five years, while the number of entering teachers remains constant (Teague & Swan, 2013). Approximately 50% of new teachers teach fewer than five years (Bieler, 2012; Teague & Swan, 2013; Wong & Wong, 2009). Attrition rates have led to high teacher shortage in many areas (Ingersoll, Merrill, & May, 2012). The low retention rate of teachers gives significance to the frequent criticism of the quality of professional education programs (Hobson et al., 2012). Teaching requires unique pedagogical skills and knowledge that are fundamental to pre-service teacher training (Ball & Forzani, 2010). Powell (2015) indicated a successful career in teaching requires a personal

commitment to the profession. A major aspect of educational reform is teachers gaining the status of highly qualified (Powell, 2015).

Being an effective educator is important to first-year teachers (Behrstock-Sherratt & Coggshall, 2010). Teachers surveyed by the Council for Basic Education identified concerns about teacher preparation (Blank, 2011). The survey results suggested the following:

a) four-year program was not enough;

b) coursework separated from practice was not as effective as it could be;

c) the focus was on only traditional views of schooling;

d) there was a superficial curriculum; and

e) university faculty were inexperienced in the schools. (Blank, 2011)

Teachers want effective, researched strategies in the classroom to make all students academically successful (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2012).

A Carnegie Corporation (MET Project, 2012) report confirmed quality teachers have a greater influence on pupil achievement than any other school-based factor. Bornfreund's (2012) research indicated teacher quality is the most significant factor for student achievement. Student learning is impacted more by the method of teaching than the content knowledge and beliefs of the teacher (Ball & Forzani, 2010). The MET Project (2012) found teacher quality is fundamental to student success. Effective teaching skills include not only the instructional process of teaching but supporting and motivating students (Scherer, 2012). Student learning directly corresponds to a teacher's instruction (D'Souza, 2012). Differences in teacher quality impact the achievement gap

of students (Cochran-Smith & Power, 2010). The No Child Left Behind and Race to the Top reforms focused on teacher quality (Ornstein et al., 2014).

Research questions. The following questions guided this study:

1. What are building principals' perceptions of the effectiveness of first-year teachers?

2. What are building principals' perceived differences, if any, in the effectiveness of first-year teachers graduating from traditional teacher preparation programs and first-year teachers who choose alternative routes to the profession?

3. What do first-year teachers perceive as essential elements of teacher preparation programs that adequately prepared them to carry out classroom and district expectations?

4. What do first-year teachers perceive as weaknesses of teacher preparation programs?

Definitions of Key Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following terms are defined:

Alternative programs. Alternative programs are a process to certify or license teachers who have not completed a formal teacher preparation program (Kaplan & Owings, 2015).

Certification. Certification is the official recognition by a state governmental agency that an individual has met state requirements and is, therefore, approved to practice as a duly certified/licensed education professional (Ryan & Cooper, 2013).

Pedagogical skills. Pedagogical skills are developed during experiences in which candidates study and apply concepts, theories, and research about effective teaching (Ryan & Cooper, 2013).

Pre-service teacher. The pre-service teacher is an individual enrolled in a program at the baccalaureate or post-baccalaureate level leading to initial licensure/certification as a classroom teacher (Ornstein et al., 2014).

Professional education program. A professional education program is a planned sequence of courses and experiences for preparing teachers or other professional personnel to work in PK-12 schools (Kaplan & Owings, 2015).

Teacher effectiveness. Teacher effectiveness is the ability to produce the expected or intended results and accomplish the purpose of teaching (Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation, 2014).

Traditional pre-service programs. Traditional pre-service programs are state-approved teacher education programs of two to four years of formal preparation (Heineke et al., 2010).

Limitations and Assumptions

Study results can be negatively impacted by limitations that cannot be controlled by the researcher (Gay et al., 2012). The population of a study is the group of people from whom research information could be collected (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2015). The study of the target population is limited to a sample population in the appropriate setting (Spaulding & Falco, 2013). The sample population is limited to a small subset of the target population (Mertler, 2014). The researcher does not have direct contact with

all participants (Spaulding & Falco, 2013). The following limitations were identified in this study:

Sample demographics. This study involved 16 first-year Missouri public school teachers and their building principals from 32 public school districts in south central Missouri. The ideal study would include every member of the population; however, the large geographical area and unknown number of the population make the ideal study unrealistic (Fraenkel et al., 2015).

Length of study. The study was limited to a two-week data collection period. Gall, Gall, and Borg (2015) identified a short time frame as a limitation of the study; however, a realistic schedule for research is important to complete the study (Gay et al., 2012).

Instrument. The instruments for this study were limited to a Likert-style survey and interview questions, which were developed by the primary investigator. These tools were used to identify commonalities of participants (Mertler, 2014; Spaulding & Falco, 2013).

The study results included unconfirmed facts that are assumed to be true (Gay et al., 2012). Assumptions are unconfirmed statements that are taken for granted and assumed factual (Spaulding & Falco, 2013). Specifically defining the population reduces generalizations and assumptions of the study (Fraenkel et al., 2015). The following assumptions were accepted:

1. It was assumed the respondents completed the survey honestly and were not under duress to participate.

2. It was assumed the survey was a valid instrument for identifying participants'
beliefs and opinions.

3. It was assumed the participants were representative of typical first-year
teachers and their building principals.

Summary

Powell (2015) stated, "Teaching is the largest profession in the United States" (p.
29). The impact of education on the United States economy and future exemplify the
importance of effective teacher preparation (Cochran-Smith & Power, 2010). The quality
of teacher education is currently experiencing positive development in response to
mandates at federal and state levels (Darling-Hammond, 2010a). The teaching profession
is complex and requires implementation of various mandates, policies, curriculum,
pedagogy, and management practices (Moore & Whitfield, 2011). Effective teachers
challenge students, provide guidance and understanding, demonstrate classroom
management, implement diverse activities, and relate to students (Powell, 2015).

High attrition rates for new teachers emphasize the need for new and innovative
quality training for the complex education profession (Thomas et al., 2013). The attrition
of novice teachers poses a challenge to education staffing (Huling et al., 2012). The
estimate of 50% of teachers leaving the profession within three to five years strongly
indicates the need for effective educator preparation (Bieler, 2012; Brown, 2012).
Teague and Swan (2013) estimated new teacher hiring and training costs at
approximately $50,000 per teacher. Investing in teacher education provides financial and
student achievement gains (Wei et al., 2009). Supports for new teachers are needed to

change attrition rates (Bieler, 2012). Brown (2012) indicated teacher effectiveness is a continuous process and not immediately developed.

The study of new teacher perceptions helps to identify challenges and commonalities that impact the training of quality educators (Spaulding & Falco, 2013). Effective teaching requires integrating content knowledge and pedagogy (Grossman et al., 2009). Teacher preparation programs are challenged with preparing novice teachers with experiences and skills to sustain the profession (Huling et al., 2012). Darling-Hammond (2010b) stated, "Creating schools that enable all children to learn requires the development of systems that enable all educators and schools to learn" (p. 8).

In Chapter Two, a review of relevant literature is presented. The main topics include classroom management and instruction, curriculum and assessment, reflective practice, and parent and community communication. In addition, teacher-student relationships and technology are discussed.

Chapter Two: Review of Literature

The future of education will be improved with quality teacher preparation as the springboard for the academic success of students (Wei et al., 2009). The quality of the classroom teacher is a fundamental factor in academic growth of students (Adamson & Darling-Hammond, 2011). Highly effective classroom teachers are the major indicator of student learning (Reutzel & Cooter, 2012). The teaching profession is complex and requires implementation of various mandates, policies, curriculum, pedagogy, and management practices (Moore & Whitfield, 2011). Teaching and learning will be transformed by teacher preparation programs (Darling-Hammond, 2010a). High attrition rates of new teachers emphasize the need for new and innovative quality training for the complex education profession (Thomas et al., 2013). Missouri teacher standards convey that professional teachers demonstrate the following skills:

a) content knowledge and instruction;

b) student learning, growth, and development;

c) curriculum;

d) critical thinking instruction;

e) classroom management;

f) communication;

g) assessment and data analysis;

h) professionalism; and

i) professional collaboration. (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education [MODESE], 2013)

This chapter presents a review of teacher preparation in classroom management, instruction, and curriculum implementation. The quality of teacher education training is powerful and an influential factor of professional expertise of teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2010a). Effective teaching involves ways to help students increase knowledge, develop skills, and build values (Joyce, Weil, & Calhoun, 2015). Grant and Ray (2013) stated, "Educator focus is on effective teaching and assessment strategies, classroom management skills, content expertise, and a myriad of other pedagogical skills and knowledge" (p. 3). Researchers have recognized the art and science of effective teaching (Brown, 2012; Marzano, 2012). Marzano's framework of effective classroom pedagogy includes instructional strategies, classroom management strategies, and classroom curriculum design (Marzano & Pickering, 2007).

Classroom Management

The effective management of the classroom is a primary responsibility of a teacher (Marzano, 2012). Chesley and Jordan (2012) recognized the need for new teachers to be skilled classroom managers and motivators of students. New teachers find the logistics of classroom management difficult to master without adequate real classroom experience during preparation programs (Cuddapah & Burtin, 2012). Brown (2012) emphasized the need for new teachers to be organized. Marzano (2012) estimated approximately 50% of a teacher's classroom time is spent correcting student behavior. New teachers must be proficient classroom managers to be effective (Chesley & Jordan, 2012; Wong & Wong, 2009).

Ryan and Cooper (2013) defined classroom management as "the actions teachers take to create an environment that is respectful, caring, orderly, and productive" (p. 183).

Appropriately implemented classroom management establishes an environment conducive to learning (Tompkins, 2016). A well-organized classroom is a characteristic students notice (Brown, 2012). Effective classroom management planning and implementation is as important as instructional planning (Carjuzaa & Kellough, 2013). Implementing developmentally appropriate management techniques improves classroom effectiveness (Powell, 2015). Teachers should provide classroom structure to encourage student engagement and to promote sharing, inquiry, and growth (Ogle & Beers, 2012).

Successful classroom management involves various techniques to construct productive environments (Ornstein et al., 2014). Teachers should establish a respectful environment with positive expectations (Carjuzaa & Kellough, 2013). Effective classroom management includes everything a teacher does in the classroom (Wong & Wong, 2009). Planning for each transition and developing consistent routines are necessary in effective classrooms (Carjuzaa & Kellough, 2013). Establishing procedures, rules, lessons, and activities to manage behavior are a few management challenges (Ryan & Cooper, 2013). Establishing specific guidelines, procedures, and teacher expectations is necessary for a well-managed classroom (Carjuzaa & Kellough, 2013). Ornstein et al. (2014) suggested effective classroom management involves the following practices:

a) communicating expectations;

b) having students informed on the process of getting help;

c) providing reminders during transitions and rewarding the observance of rules;

d) structuring transition time;

e) providing a variety of assignments to encourage student interest;

f) monitoring of comprehension;

g) protecting student from classroom embarrassment;

h) being flexible and responsive;

i) encouraging the students to use prior experiences and knowledge on tasks;

j) developing students' personal organization and management abilities;

k) being attentive to cultural backgrounds of students; and

l) providing each student a significant role in the learning community of the classroom. (p. 479)

New teachers need fundamental strategies of classroom management to create positive student behavior (Chesley & Jordan, 2012). Many alternatively certified teachers lack skills and experience to manage a classroom (Darling-Hammond, 2010a). Eighty-five percent of veteran teachers believe new teachers are not prepared to cope adequately with classroom behavior issues (Goodwin, 2012).

Reutzel and Cooter (2012) stated, "One of the most fundamental characteristics of effective instruction is the teacher's ability to manage the classroom" (p. 15). Classroom space is often crowded and a challenge to organize (Ryan & Cooper, 2013). Flexible classroom arrangements that allow for whole class, small group, and individual work areas are important in effective classroom management and instruction (Ogle & Beers, 2012). Effective instructional areas are planned and arranged to support learning (Carjuzaa & Kellough, 2013). Class designs should focus on instruction and allow for the following: floor space that is not congested; the teacher maintaining visual contact with all students; and students able to see all instructional areas at all times (Ogle & Beers, 2012). Classroom arrangement, materials organization, and encouraging environment enhance the effectiveness of instruction (Carjuzaa & Kellough, 2013). The

fundamental practice of teaching requires a student-centered environment that is active and engaging (Chesley & Jordan, 2012).

Classroom Instruction

Student learning is directly determined by teacher instruction, and having content knowledge does not guarantee the skills to teach information to students (Cuddapah & Burtin, 2012; D'Souza, 2012; Ryan & Cooper, 2013). Effective teachers implement instructional techniques that ensure students grasp content and do not rely only on the direct transmission of information by lecturing (Kaplan & Owings, 2015; Wilke & Losh, 2008). Instructional planning is a significant teacher responsibility (Powell, 2015). Instruction to develop skills of the 21st century will involve effective problem solving (Marzano, 2014b). Transmitting knowledge is a guiding goal of education, and each day in a classroom is an opportunity for teachers to provide all children with high-quality instruction (Ryan & Cooper, 2013; Spring, 2012).

Many content-savvy teachers lack pedagogy skills and focus only on knowledge of content in the attempt to be effective (Chesley & Jordan, 2012; Ryan & Cooper, 2013). Ogle and Beers (2012) stated, "The foundation of good teaching is providing students with interesting and meaningful context" (p. 20). The required knowledge of teaching is subject to change in the school context, and the appropriate balance of content instruction varies (Anderson & Freebody, 2012; Reynolds, 2007). New teachers are provided little information and resources for instructional planning during their attempts to identify appropriate content for student instruction (Goodwin, 2012; Kaplan & Owings, 2015). Bieler (2012) explained the benefit of veteran teachers sharing ideas, plans, and resources

with new teachers. Darling-Hammond (2012b) stated teachers "must know how to teach in ways that enable students to master challenging content" (p. 10).

Effective teachers want to grow professionally (Colasacco, 2011). Goodwin (2012) stated student achievement is significantly lower under the instruction of a first-year teacher. New teachers should effectively design instructional plans, construct assessments, and implement teaching strategies (Chesley & Jordan, 2012). Cuddapah and Burtin (2012) stressed the need to link pedagogy knowledge, experience, and application of skills. Pedagogical strategies influence achievement goals for students (Wilke & Losh, 2008). Curriculum implementation relies on the pedagogy and materials of instruction (Ornstein et al., 2014). Cuddapah and Burtin (2012) concluded new teachers lack effective strategies to teach content in meaningful ways. Effective instruction is guided by recognition of levels of student development and need (Tompkins, 2016). Educators who provide instruction based on currently researched methods reach a wider range of student interests and abilities (Smith & Tyler, 2011). Cuthrell, Stapleton, and Ledford (2010) noted the importance of new teachers understanding how to provide effective instruction to all students.

New teachers must be prepared to differentiate instruction to address varying learning styles and abilities (Anderson, 2007). Differentiated instruction ensures all students receive meaningful learning experiences (Brown, 2012; Hattie, 2012). Effective teachers improve the education of diverse learners by being well-prepared and willing to provide instruction that translates information to applied skills (Smith & Tyler, 2011). Reutzel and Cooter (2012) recognized diverse students demonstrate individual needs requiring differentiated instruction. To achieve higher standards, educators must

implement instructional strategies to assist students with the general education curriculum
(Clark, 2010). Hattie and Yates (2014) determined students require different types of
instruction and feedback. Pedagogy, how to teach, and curriculum, what to teach, are
two isolated but interdependent aspects of teaching (Kaplan & Owings, 2015). Diverse
learners require adapted curriculum and multilevel instruction from teachers (Danaher,
Price, & Kluth, 2009). Effective instruction involves knowledge and appropriate use of
curriculum and assessment (Powell, 2015)

Curriculum

The core of education is curriculum (Kaplan & Owings, 2015). Common core
standards, now adopted by most states, have been instrumental in the process of
curriculum changes and subject-level curriculum (Reese, 2010; Ryan & Cooper, 2013).
Ornstein et al. (2014) defined "curriculum as a body of content, or subject matter that
leads to certain achievement outcomes or products" (p. 421). Curriculum broadly
encompasses the experiences of students in school (Powell, 2015). The subject content
and objectives taught in school comprise the formal classroom curriculum (Ryan &
Cooper, 2013; Powell, 2015). Individual school districts translate state standards to
create the written curriculum to guide instruction (Stiggins & Chappuis, 2015). New
teachers are challenged to implement curriculum to activate student curiosity (Brown,
2012).

The development of effective classroom curriculum is both subject-driven and
student-driven (Ornstein et al., 2014). Advances in technology and available knowledge
challenge the traditional content-based curriculum structure (Sadker & Zittleman, 2010).
Teacher preparation should provide training to encourage integration of technology and

content curriculum (Roblyer, 2016). The focus on test scores leading to the use of scripted curriculum resources is a challenge to students and teachers (Brown, 2012). Pre-service teachers often lack opportunities to be involved in developing goals and utilizing curriculum standards (Chesley & Jordan, 2012). New teachers often lack adequate and appropriate curriculum to guide instruction (Goodwin, 2012). According to Powell (2015), "The formal curriculum is based on three foundations: the needs of the subject; the needs of students; and the needs of society" (p. 104). Responsible teaching involves studying, analyzing, and engaging in professional interactions to effectively implement district curriculum expectations (Stiggins & Chappuis, 2015). The effective use of curriculum enables teachers to establish and communicate clear goals and expectations to students (Ogle & Beers, 2012). Students respond positively to knowledgeable teachers who demonstrate passion for subjects (Hattie & Yates, 2014).

The core of high-quality instruction involves the effective use of data (Gabrieli, 2010). Curricular and instructional decisions are often driven by assessment (Ogle & Beers, 2012). District curriculum guides provide insight to academic expectations of students (Stiggins & Chappuis, 2015). Quality education involves both how the curriculum is taught and what is taught (Carjuzaa & Kellough, 2013). Many schools lack high-quality curriculum, making student engagement and interest a challenge to the educator (Brown, 2012). Curriculum must allow differentiation of instruction to meet the needs of all students (Anderson, 2007). Teachers who implement cross-curricular activities encourage students to apply information across disciplines (Gullen, 2014). Effective curriculum and assessment are highly interdependent and cannot be separate

elements of teaching (Powell, 2015). New teachers benefit from opportunities to work

with effective teachers to build curriculum (Darling-Hammond, 2009a).

Assessment

A teacher's fundamental role is to evaluate and activate student progress (Hattie,

2012). According to Reutzel and Cooter (2016), "Assessment is broadly defined in

education as all activities that teachers and students undertake to obtain information that

can be used to maximize teaching and learning" (p. 1). Evaluating student learning and

clearly identifying problem areas in subject matter are challenges for new teachers

(Guskey, 2001). Chesley and Jordan (2012) determined new teachers have little

experience with formative assessments. Effective assessment is ongoing and crucial to

the teaching and learning processes (Tompkins, 2016). The use and understanding of

formative assessment is necessary for effective instruction and curriculum

implementation (Crossouard & Pryor, 2012). Differentiated criteria for grades, clear

purposes for grading, and a consistent form of reporting achievement accurately are skills

many new teachers lack (Guskey, 2001). Effective use of assessment enables a teacher to

establish instructional priorities (Ogle & Beers, 2012).

The idea students should meet a minimum standard rather than be pushed to excel

is considered a misuse of resources (Reynolds, 2007). Effective assessment provides

information concerning what students can do, as well as student weaknesses (Reutzel &

Cooter, 2012). Untested content time has been altered to provide additional time for test

practice and preparation (Reynolds, 2007). Identifying targets provides data-driven

instruction and the development of techniques to improve instruction and focus

instruction more meaningfully (Chesley & Jordan, 2012). Implementation of curriculum

alignment with expected state standards is an effective strategy to guide and enhance academic performance (Brown, 2012; Ogle & Beers, 2012).

Educators are continuously searching for new ways to use teacher-led analysis of data and to improve programs based on that information (Foster, Kelley, Pritz, & Hodes, 2011). Teacher preparation should involve analyzing standards to understand assessment (Darling-Hammond, 2009b). Teachers develop the skill of applying formative assessments in instruction to support student learning (Crossouard & Pryor, 2012). Scherer (2012) indicated accurate analysis of data by teachers is necessary in effective instruction. Appropriate use of assessment provides effective instruction (Tompkins, 2016).

School districts collect various data for analysis and interpretation in making informed decisions concerning the education of all students (Means et al., 2011). Educators are pressured to focus on high-stakes test scores, assuming Annual Yearly Progress indicates students are achieving (Anderson, 2007). District reports of educational outcomes and standardized student achievement scores are widely-used scales of achievement (Blank, 2011). Teachers are expected to use student assessment data to improve educational practices but may not receive training and assistance to support accurate data analysis for meaningful decision making (Means et al., 2011).

Student achievement is viewed very differently by parents, educators, policymakers, and state departments of education. Educators attempt to analyze achievement trends over time to identify specific targets to improve academic performance of students (Blank, 2011). Banatao (2011) indicated a strong relationship between meaningful school experiences and student learning. The methods used to

assess student achievement do not provide all students with the most proficient means of demonstrating their achievement (Guskey, 2001). High-stakes assessment scores are one indicator of achievement but are certainly not the only instruments to be considered (Edwards, Thornton, & Holiday-Driver, 2010). Achievement is so much more than just test scores, and educators must look at the whole child to determine academic success (Banatao, 2011).

Legislative mandates of educational accountability have provided lower-performing schools with programs to deliver effective instructional interventions and performance monitoring (Moors, Weisenburgh-Snyder, & Robbins, 2010). Effective interventions are implemented from formative assessments aligned to assess students' strengths and weaknesses (Gabrieli, 2010). Teachers are responsible for formative and summative evaluations to interpret student learning and inform future instruction (Hattie, 2012). Appropriately used assessment guides instruction and provides teachers with necessary information to implement effective decisions to design lessons (Reutzel & Cooter, 2016).

Reflective Practice

The skills of reflective practice must be explicit, developed, and practiced (Anderson & Freebody, 2012). Mertler (2014) defined reflection as "the act of critically exploring what you are doing, why you decided to do it, and what its effects have been" (p. 13). Implementing the reflective process in teacher preparation enables teachers to effectively utilize professional reflection skills as a classroom teacher (Snyder, 2012). Effective reflection enhances the performance and skills of new teachers (Behrstock-Sherratt & Coggshall, 2010). Teachers have the responsibility to evaluate the

contributions of actions to academic development (Powell, 2015). Critical reflection provides direction for professional growth and instructional improvement in the classroom (Anderson & Freebody, 2012). Carjuzaa and Kellough (2013) suggested students respond to reflective teachers. New teachers need opportunities to reflect on experiences with instructional strategies (Brown, 2012).

Effective teaching requires thoughtful reflection to improve the instructional process (Mertler, 2014). Opportunities to observe and reflect on experiences validate effective teaching practice (Behrstock-Sherratt & Coggshall, 2010). Effective reflection evaluates instructional strategies and interventions (Chesley & Jordan, 2012). Effective teachers recognize the importance of reviewing what has been taught in planning future instruction (Reutzel & Cooter, 2012). Powell (2015) stated the following factors must be considered in effective reflection: "reflective practice requires conscious effort; self-knowledge is vital; reading about and researching aspects of teaching; talking with other educators; and being deliberate – doing what we do for a reason" (p. 21). Professional reflection guides planning and development of high-quality instruction (Mertler, 2014). Self-evaluation and reflection lead to better performance (Stiggins & Chappuis, 2015). Reflective practices encourage self-evaluation and analysis of daily classroom activities (Parkay, 2016).

Beginning teachers need ongoing practice to reflect on both the skills of teaching and on student progress (D'Souza, 2012). Cuddapah and Burtin (2012) found new teachers benefit from reflective discussions with veteran educators. Instruction is improved with opportunities to communicate with other educators (Powell, 2015). Reflective practice is a guide to improvement (Stiggins & Chappuis, 2015). Critical

reflection encourages examination of who, what, why, where, and how of teaching practices (Mertler, 2014). Teacher reflection improves instruction and student learning (Tompkins, 2016). Reflecting on teaching experiences leads to understanding student abilities, new instructional practices, and higher student achievement (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009). Reflective practice provides a framework for new ideas and effective teaching (Carjuzaa & Kellough, 2013). Professional growth and teacher development is largely guided by ongoing reflective practice (Mertler, 2014).

Parent and Community Communication

Wong and Wong (2009) emphasized the importance of child, parent, and teacher relationships in effective classrooms. Authentic family collaboration is an important educator characteristic (Grant & Ray, 2013). Strong teacher and parent collaboration is needed to promote effective education of students (Scully, Barbour, & Roberts-King, 2015). Powell (2015) indicated concern for the student is reflected by concern for the family. The involvement of parents is a key component in the successful education of children (Ornstein et al., 2014). Parent involvement is a significant source of meaningful contributions to student learning (Reutzel & Cooter, 2012). Teachers are a significant instrument of public relations for the school (Powell, 2015). Effective teachers participate in significant family engagement (Grant & Ray, 2013).

Effective communication builds collaboration and active parent support of education (Slavkin, 2007). Grant and Ray (2013) found parent involvement to influence 10% to 20% of student achievement variance. Teachers who encourage parent involvement and communication report student attendance, achievement, and attitudes improve (Carjuzaa & Kellough, 2013; Ornstein et al., 2014). It is important to make

communication with parents a positive experience (Stiggins & Chappuis, 2015). Powell (2015) indicated the following positive communication tools to encourage parent involvement, "welcome letter, classroom letter, phone calls, electronic communication, and classroom webpage" (pp. 350-351). Communication is the key to building collaboration between parents and educators (Ryan & Cooper, 2013; Slavkin, 2007). Teachers who establish positive communication with parents improve educational opportunities for students (Scully et al., 2015). Student achievement and positive behavior are improved when families are involved in the classroom (Grant & Ray, 2013).

Parental involvement and communication enhance the quality of the teaching profession (Behrstock-Sherratt & Coggshall, 2010). Teachers who encourage parent involvement demonstrate higher expectations of student achievement (Sadker & Zittleman, 2010). Positive relationships and communication with parents are instrumental in effective teaching (Brown, 2012; Wong & Wong, 2012). Communities are a valuable resource of support and services to students and families (Powell, 2015). Parent and community support is crucial to the implementation of effective education practices (Sadker & Zittleman, 2010; Scully et al., 2015). Effective teachers engage with families to better instruct students (Ogle & Beers, 2012). Teachers who enhance parent and community involvement in schools promote student success (Carjuzaa & Kellough, 2013; Powell, 2015). Strong community relationships are a source of additional resources and support (Grant & Ray, 2013). Engaging parents provides support for teachers and a partnership in developing student success (Manning & Bucher, 2012). Students benefit when families and teachers develop comfortable communication and relationships (Grant & Ray, 2013).

Teacher-Student Relationships

Hattie and Yates (2014) defined the empathy gap as the inability to understand the experiences of another person, largely impacting the teacher-student relationship. The teaching profession involves building relationships not required in many professions (Carjuzaa & Kellough, 2013). Student interaction in the classroom should be nurtured and stimulated (Joyce et al., 2015). Teacher communications determine the tone of the classroom (Ogle & Beers, 2012). Building professional relationships with students communicates high expectations for achievement (Powell, 2015). Teachers who develop supportive relationships with students are successful in diffusing classroom disruptions (Carjuzaa & Kellough, 2013).

Students need clear, direct communication from teachers to guide learning in the classroom (Kaplan & Owings, 2015). Teacher expectations and attitudes are reflected in student performance (Scully et al., 2015). Developing a positive rapport with students provides groundwork for setting classroom guidelines (Ryan & Cooper, 2013). High-quality teacher-student relationships are critical in positive life adjustment patterns of students (Hattie & Yates, 2014). Inviting teacher and student interactions increases the level of learning and educational experience (Fisher & Frey, 2014). Encouraging student communication and reflection guides them in decisions that impact learning (Vacca, Vacca, & Mraz, 2014). Listening to student concerns aids in building positive relationships (Marzano, 2014a). Initiating student interactions and observation opportunities outside the classroom provides insight to their interests and skills (Carjuzaa & Kellough, 2013).

Teachers who have a positive rapport with students gain cooperation in following classroom rules and procedures (Kaplan & Owings, 2015). Authentic teacher communication with students strengthens learning (City, 2014; Nichols, 2014). Teacher guidance and communication impacts student goals and achievement (Marzano, 2012). Student respect is gained when teachers maintain the role of a professional (Carjuzaa & Kellough, 2013). When students believe a teacher listens to them and that learning is the central purpose of the class, they develop a level of trust and create a positive classroom environment (Hattie, 2012).

Communication with students needs to be "credible, honest, and helpful" (Stiggins & Chappuis, 2015, p. 283). Teachers must provide a positive classroom community and be developmentally responsive (Manning & Bucher, 2012). Student behavior and academic accomplishments are largely influenced by teacher expectations and interactions (Scully et al., 2015). Getting to know students is important in the role of professional educators (Brown, 2012). Chesley and Jordan (2012) recognized the importance of new teachers connecting with students to meet the diverse needs of students.

Technology

The average student spends approximately one hour each day on the internet, making technology an effective tool of education and academic evaluation (Hattie & Yates, 2014). Lever-Duffy and McDonald (2015) reported 99% of teachers have access to classroom computers on a daily basis. Effective integration of technology in the classroom may be a challenge for teachers (Parkay, 2016). Creative use of technology increases achievement outcomes (Behrstock-Sherratt & Coggshall, 2010). Digital media

is essential for teaching the current generation of students (Reutzel & Cooter, 2012).

Effective teachers must understand the potential role of technology in education

(Roblyer, 2016). Ohler (2010) indicated teachers need to facilitate the use of technology.

Lesson plans are enhanced by the effective integration of technology (Carjuzaa &

Kellough, 2013; Tompkins, 2016). Teachers and students have more access to

technology resources than during any other time in history (Ogle & Beers, 2012).

Students need teacher guidance to effectively utilize the technology-rich

environment (Powell, 2015). Effective teachers recognize the benefits of implementing

technology in a student-centered learning environment (Roblyer, 2016). New teachers

lack experience with integrating technology in lesson planning to ensure technology-rich

educational opportunities (Chesley & Jordan, 2012). Student learning is strengthened

when teachers are knowledgeable of new technologies (Parkay, 2016). The ability to

utilize technology as an instructional resource increases teacher effectiveness (Wiles &

Bondi, 2011). Students are engaged and empowered in classrooms that utilize

technology (Vacca et al., 2014). The effective use of the internet enhances students'

world experiences (Reutzel & Cooter, 2012). A recent focus on science, technology,

engineering, and math (STEM) provides new strategies to enhance technology use and

instruction in the classroom (Vasquez, 2014).

Technology impacts all career fields, including teacher preparation (Margolis,

Goode, & Ryoo, 2014). Classroom strategies involving technology increase the

engagement and motivation of students (Shumow & Schmidt, 2014). Teachers benefit

from opportunities to experience inquiry-based learning with technology (Margolis et al.,

2014). Technology is a significant key to connecting content and experiences to make

learning relevant (Hoachlander, 2014). Successful integration of technology in the classroom depends on the training and commitment of the teacher (Roblyer, 2016). Advancements in technology and media provide teachers and students with resources and information beyond the traditional textbook (Carjuzaa & Kellough, 2013). Effective teacher preparation involves an understanding of facilitating inquiry and supporting student learning (Margolis et al., 2014).

The integration of technology and instruction enhances both computer and academic skills (Gullen, 2014). Technology is an effective instructional resource for the information age of today (Roblyer, 2016). Competent use of technology is an important factor in academic success (Lever-Duffy & McDonald, 2015). The new generation of teachers experience technology as an integral part of daily life (Behrstock-Sherratt & Coggshall, 2010). Technology is used for many purposes in the classroom, allowing for diverse instruction (Reutzel & Cooter, 2012). Students must be prepared to use technology proficiently for future success (Ogle & Beers, 2012). Effective use of technology in the classroom is best implemented by teachers managing the time, skills, and productivity of students (Ohler, 2010). The implementation of technology in the classroom has changed the face of education and teacher preparation (Lever-Duffy & McDonald, 2015). Technology advancements make the role of effective classroom teachers essential to student achievement (Roblyer, 2016). Lever-Duffy and McDonald (2015) indicated integrating "technology enhances teaching and learning" (p. 620).

Summary

Teacher preparation programs have the responsibility of developing teachers who implement effective instructional strategies (Smith & Tyler, 2011). Educational

curriculum is determined at the district, state, and federal levels, giving teachers flexibility to determine instructional content and process based on student needs (Levy, 2008). Steele (2011) reported teachers develop through a progression of stages that guide classroom management and instruction: unaware, aware, capable, and inspired. Successful teaching requires subject knowledge, understanding of curriculum and standards, discipline and management techniques, and caring dispositions (Great Schools Staff, 2013).

New teachers begin with some degree of unawareness and develop skills over time (Steele, 2011). Daily reflection of events enables teachers to become more aware of student behaviors and classroom events that influence student achievement (Weissbourd, 2009). Teacher preparation must guide future teachers to effectively address the complex and complicated challenges of student learning (Ball & Forzani, 2010). Beginning teachers need adequate training to address the realities of teaching in classrooms of the 21st century (Chesley & Jordan, 2012). A new generation of teachers brings new opportunities and needed reforms to effectively guide and enhance the profession of teaching (Behrstock-Sherratt & Coggshall, 2010). Teacher preparation must transform from the traditional educational opportunities to professional learning that increases effectiveness (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009).

In the next chapter, the methodology utilized in this study is described. Following a brief overview of the study, the research design, population and sample, instrumentation, and data collection and analysis procedures are presented. A summary of the chapter is also provided.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Andrew Johnson (2012) defined research as methods of gathering data to provide answers to questions. Qualitative and quantitative research designs are approaches to gaining knowledge. Phillips and Carr (2010) indicated the power of the methodology is a way to measure research capability to identify patterns and differences prevalent in the data collected. Thomas and Brubaker (2013) suggested the variation of qualitative and quantitative research involves reporting amounts.

Qualitative research does not involve strict definitions of amounts, and quantitative data provide specific amounts (Bluman, 2015). The design approach is determined by the primary investigator's personal approach to life dilemmas (Phillips & Carr, 2010). The personal paradigms are influenced by the purpose, research setting, and needs of the research approach (Phillips & Carr, 2010). It is important for the primary investigator to analyze his or her paradigm to determine the research approach (Phillips & Carr, 2010).

Bluman (2015) characterized differences in research methods as qualitative techniques having variables categorized by specific attributes, while quantitative measures use numerical variables that are discrete or continuous. Fraenkel et al. (2015) provided a framework to determine research design and evaluation format in education. Mills (2011) found different research questions require varying methods of research approach, typically qualitative or quantitative design.

Problem and Purpose Overview

Recent changes in education put an even greater focus on the importance of well-trained teachers (MET Project, 2012). The United States is estimated to have four

million teachers, indicating teaching to be the largest profession (Powell, 2015).

Common core standards, increased accountability measures, new teacher evaluation

performance measures, and lack of resources and supports are challenges faced by public

school teachers (Anderson, 2007; Levy, 2008).

Pre-service teacher education programs are mandated to prepare new teachers for

the changing world of the education profession while addressing new structures in pre-

service assessments and certification requirements for highly qualified teacher status

(Darling-Hammond, 2010a). The high attrition rate of new teachers indicates many

teachers enter the classroom without adequate preparation (Teague & Swan, 2013).

Identifying gaps in pre-service training may guide teacher education programs to develop

needed changes for highly qualified classroom teachers.

First-year teachers are typically not prepared to assume the numerous

responsibilities of a veteran teacher (Teague & Swan, 2013; Wong & Wong, 2009).

Professional standards for teachers and pre-service requirements are transforming the

teaching profession to meet current policy initiatives (Darling-Hammond, 2010a). The

importance of effective teacher training is indicated by the number of new teachers

entering the profession (Darling-Hammond, 2010c). Teacher education programs have

the responsibility of training pre-service teachers who are highly qualified (Evers, 2011).

Many new teachers believe their training programs did not prepare them for the

teaching field, and career-change teachers find teaching the most difficult job to have

(Landsman et al., 2008). Teacher preparation programs are determined to increase a new

teacher's effectiveness and retention in the profession when compared to new teacher

alternative certification routes (Darling-Hammond, 2010a). Training and supports to

transition from student to teacher are important for first-year teachers (Teague & Swan, 2013). Darling-Hammond (2010a) found new teachers with little education-based course work or exposure to pre-service classroom teaching leave the profession at much higher rates than do teachers with significant training.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of first-year teachers regarding their preparatory programs. It is estimated 200,000 new teachers enter the profession each year in the United States (Sadker & Zittleman, 2010). The education profession is challenging and necessary for the preservation of America (Powell, 2015). Effective teacher training programs provide appropriate models of good teaching for pre-service candidates (Darling-Hammond, 2010a). A high number of new teachers leave the profession within the first five years, while the number of entering teachers remains constant (Teague & Swan, 2013). Darling-Hammond (2010a) found teacher qualifications to be an effective indicator of student success.

Successful teaching requires a personal commitment not found in many career paths (Powell, 2015). Approximately 50% of new teachers teach for fewer than five years, resulting in criticism of the quality of professional education programs (Bieler, 2012; Hobson et al., 2012; Wong & Wong, 2009). Often the least-experienced teachers are assigned the students with the most needs (Darling-Hammond, 2009a).

Teaching requires unique pedagogical skills and knowledge that are fundamental to pre-service teacher training (Ball & Forzani, 2010). Effective teacher preparation programs must prepare new teachers for the increasing demands of the profession (Chesley & Jordan, 2012). Teacher quality is a critical factor in student achievement

indicating a renewed focus on teacher preparation and retention in the career field
(Cochran-Smith & Power, 2010).

 Research questions. The following questions guided this study:

1.   What are building principals' perceptions of the effectiveness of first-year
teachers?

2.   What are building principals' perceived differences, if any, in the
effectiveness of first-year teachers graduating from traditional teacher preparation
programs and first-year teachers who choose alternative routes to the profession?

3.   What do first-year teachers perceive as essential elements of teacher
preparation programs that adequately prepared them to carry out classroom and district
expectations?

4.   What do first-year teachers perceive as weaknesses of teacher preparation
programs?

Research Design

A mixed method design was implemented for the study. A mixed method
approach allows for more than one way to gather and analyze data (Fraenkel et al., 2015).
This method of using both qualitative and quantitative research provides a more complete
body of research (Mertler, 2014). The survey, which was created by the primary
investigator, provided quantitative data for the study, and the interview protocol, which
was also developed by the primary investigator, was the qualitative instrument
implemented in the study (Spaulding & Falco, 2013).

Qualitative research techniques involve non-numerical information collected to
gain knowledge of how or why and are viewed as experience-based (Mills, 2011).

Spaulding and Falco (2013) indicated qualitative research provides an understanding of

how things work. Phillips and Carr (2010) found qualitative research is not easily

defined and involves various methods of data gathering. Thomas and Brubaker (2013)

described qualitative research as an analysis of historical and philosophical knowledge.

Mertler (2014) identified qualitative research techniques as open-ended and holistic.

Qualitative questions are presented to encourage detailed descriptive responses and

observations (Mills, 2011). The value of qualitative research is generally confined to

those involved in the research (Gay et al., 2012).

The collection tools of qualitative research for this study included interviews and

a survey (Mills¸ 2011; Spaulding & Falco, 2013). Qualitative techniques may be

narrative, participatory, or critical inquiry (Phillips & Carr, 2010). The method of

narrative inquiry in qualitative research typically involves collection of information using

observations, interviews, and artifacts (Phillips & Carr, 2010). Participatory inquiry

involves the gathering of data and informational reading (Phillips & Carr, 2010). The

technique of critical inquiry involves implementing a concept or practice and

documenting the information gained (Spaulding & Falco, 2013). Complex questions

involve multiple methods of analysis (Phillips & Carr, 2010).

Qualitative technique does not involve identifying variables or correlations, but

can explain and identify how something works (Spaulding & Falco, 2013). Qualitative

research is not controlled or manipulated and does not require a hypothesis for research

design (Phillips & Carr, 2010). Qualitative research is implemented in real-world

settings and provides information that is relevant in real-world situations (Gay et al.,

2012). Interviews and observations are the most common methods of collecting data in

qualitative research (Spaulding & Falco, 2013). The protocol guided open-ended

question interviews (Mills¸ 2011).

      A Likert-style survey was the quantitative method implemented in the mixed

method study. The quantitative method of gathering, analyzing, and interpreting

narrative and visual information was implemented to gain knowledge of the study (Mills¸

2011). Quantitative research is often statistics-based, involving data collection

techniques that are numerical to prove or disprove a given hypothesis (Phillips & Carr,

2010). Johnson (2012) defined quantitative research as experimental research where the

primary investigator's role is to set up the experiment. The technique involves setting up

the observation or experiment to identify a variable and determine a conclusion (Johnson,

2012).

      Quantitative techniques are a means to describe, predict, explain, or control an

area of interest by the gathering and analysis of numerical data (Gay et al., 2012). The

quantitative research method requires identification of the hypothesis and specific

research procedures with control of contextual factors (Mertler, 2014). Quantitative

approaches to research describe, investigate, and study phenomena (Gay et al., 2012).

This approach philosophically considers the research opportunities to be stable, uniform,

and capable of providing information that can be measured, understood, and generalized

(Mertler, 2014). Quantitative research identifies focused questions at the beginning of

the study (Mertler, 2014). Quantitative techniques modify complex variables to

measurements that are objective, numerical, and fixed (Phillips & Carr, 2010).

      The qualitative and quantitative aspects of the mixed method approach of research

are both effective, and one is not superior to the other (Mills, 2011). Qualitative data are

used to identify characteristics or elements, and quantitative data indicate how much or how many with numerical values (Phillips & Carr, 2010). The characteristics and techniques involved in both methods of research are an advantage to the study. The decision to implement the mixed method of qualitative and quantitative research design was based on the type of research, the research question format, and the information to be gained.

Population and Sample

The population of a study is the group of people from whom research information could be collected (Fraenkel et al., 2015). For this study, the population included first-year public school teachers and their building principals in south central Missouri. A list of teachers within the population was obtained from building principals for the 2015 school year. The current study involved 33 participants comprised of 16 first-year public school teachers and 17 building principals from 32 public school districts of south central Missouri. The study participants included 17 elementary-level and six secondary-level subjects. Fourteen of the participants were reported to be male, 10 were female, and nine did not provide identifying information.

The ideal study would include every member of the population of first-year teachers in Missouri schools; however, the large geographical area and unknown number of the population make the ideal study unrealistic (Fraenkel et al., 2015). The study of the target population is limited to a sample population in the appropriate setting (Spaulding & Falco, 2013). The primary investigator did not have direct contact with all participants (Spaulding & Falco, 2013). The sampling of the study included the

accessible population of Missouri public school principals and first-year teachers (Fraenkel et al., 2015).

Instrumentation

The instrumentation of the study included survey and interview questions. Quantitative data were collected from individual survey responses. The interview process involved collection of qualitative information for the study.

Quantitative tools of the study consisted of surveys (see Appendix A & Appendix B) that were provided to building principals and first-year teachers. The surveys, based on Missouri Standards for the Preparation of Educators [MOSPE] standards of teacher development, were used to collect subject perceptions of pre-service skills (Mertler, 2014; Spaulding & Falco, 2013). Building principals were requested to complete a survey constructed for their perceptions of new teacher skills. Principals were requested to identify and/or distribute individual surveys to first-year teachers.

Qualitative data were obtained through the interview instrument (see Appendix C) to identify commonalities of participants (Mertler, 2014; Spaulding & Falco, 2013). First-year teachers who agreed to participate in the survey were asked to volunteer for the interview portion of the study. Interviews of teachers in this study were scheduled with consent of building principals and were conducted outside of instructional time to limit academic interruption. Four male and eight female first-year teachers participated in the interview portion of the study. Interviews were recorded and transcribed for accuracy.

Data Collection

Once approval of the research project was given by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Lindenwood University (see Appendix D), a recruitment letter (see

Appendix E) was emailed to each first-year teacher and respective building principal.

Those responding to participate in the surveys were provided the consent form (see

Appendix F) and the surveys by mail. Building principals were requested to complete a

survey and distribute surveys to district teachers with fewer than two years of public

school teaching experience.

First-year teachers who agreed to participate in interviews were given a consent

form (see Appendix G) and an advanced copy of the interview questions. Interviews were

scheduled to gather personal reflections on effective teaching skills.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data analysis included descriptive statistics of percentages and

frequency of responses. The ranked data were analyzed using the Mann-Whitney *U* test

(Fraenkel et al., 2015). Participant responses from the surveys were analyzed for

statistically significant differences from identified teacher preparation programs,

traditional and alternative training. The Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS)

program was utilized for data analysis. The data are reported in the form of tables in

Chapter Four.

Effective research techniques and results must be valid and reliable. Qualitative

measures are not numerical, making these factors difficult to identify (Mills, 2011).

Qualitative research is judged by trustworthiness and goodness that respect the complex

and diverse research factors involved in studies (Phillips & Carr, 2010). Specific

guidelines that indicate research to be trustworthy include the following:

- Narrative descriptions of contextual and situational facts based on raw data
  that is well-documented;

- Data collection and interpretation that is deliberate and systematic;

- Clearly identifying primary investigator biases; and

- Implementation of critical reflection. (Phillips & Carr, 2010)

Qualitative validity and reliability are considered trustworthy and support research results (Mills, 2011). Validity and reliability of qualitative research are supported by triangulation through collaborating evidence (Sagor, 2011).

Qualitative research is a narrative and visual collection from the perspective of the participants over a period of time to understand an activity in the natural environment (Mills, 2011). These perspectives allow for an inductive analysis of data that allows flexibility and is open to explanations that are not predetermined assumptions (Sagor, 2011) and provides socially significant information that may challenge the researcher's assumptions and beliefs (Phillips & Carr, 2010).

Since data analysis should be designed to summarize information accurately for meaningful interpretation (Johnson, 2012), the responses from the interviews were carefully reviewed. This interview protocol included reading and documenting the data, comprehensively describing the data, and classifying the data into categories (Phillips & Carr, 2010).

Summary

The study was a mixed method data collection of the perceptions of effective teaching skills of new public school teachers. Qualitative and quantitative methods of research were implemented in the study; both are effective, and one is not superior to the other (Mills, 2011). Public school principals and first-year teachers participated in surveys and interviews. The information provides insight into the perceptions of new

teachers and principals concerning the highly qualified teaching skills acquired in teacher education programs.

Chapter Four contains the analysis of the data. The quantitative data consisted of survey responses. Interviews were conducted to gather perceptions of first-year teachers and their respective principals, which served as qualitative data. Tables are included to provide visual representations of the data.

Chapter Four: Analysis of Data

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of first-year teachers regarding their preparatory programs. The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MODESE) (2013) reported 59.9% of new hires in public schools are first-year teachers. A high number of new teachers leave the profession within the first five years, while the number of entering teachers remains constant (Teague & Swan, 2013).

The need for new teachers is compounded with increasing student population growth and retirements of veteran teachers (Sadker & Zittleman, 2010). Approximately 50% of new teachers teach fewer than five years (Bieler, 2012; Teague & Swan, 2013; Wong & Wong, 2009). The low retention rate of teachers gives significance to the frequent criticism of the quality of professional education programs (Hobson et al., 2012). Teaching requires unique pedagogical skills and knowledge that are fundamental to pre-service teacher training (Ball & Forzani, 2010).

The study involved identified first-year public school teachers and building principals from 32 public school districts of south central Missouri. Surveys with cover letters and informed consent were mailed to 100 first-year teachers and building principals. Research data were obtained from 33 completed surveys with 17 building principals and 16 first-year teachers participating. The identified respondents included 17 elementary-level participants and 6 secondary-level educators. Additional identifying information indicated 14 males and 10 females. The remaining participants did not indicate building level or gender. First-year teachers who agreed to participate in the interview data gathering process consisted of eight females and four males. All interview

participants were first-year teachers in elementary school settings. Building principals were not included in the interview data-gathering process for this research project.

Research Questions

The following questions were addressed in this study:

1. What are building principals' perceptions of the effectiveness of first-year teachers?

2. What are building principals' perceived differences, if any, in the effectiveness of first-year teachers graduating from traditional teacher preparation programs and first-year teachers who choose alternative routes to the profession?

3. What do first-year teachers perceive as essential elements of teacher preparation programs that adequately prepared them to carry out classroom and district expectations?

4. What do first-year teachers perceive as weaknesses of teacher preparation programs?

The quantitative tool of the study consisted of a Likert-style survey. The survey, based on MOSPE standards of teacher development, provided data revealing subject perceptions of pre-service skills (Mertler, 2014; Spaulding & Falco, 2013). Participants were requested to respond to each identified first-year teacher skill as strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, or strongly agree.

Building principals completed a 21-question survey constructed to identify perceptions of new teacher skills. Principals identified first-year teachers to whom surveys were distributed. First-year teachers were asked to complete a 20-question survey. Survey questions addressed first-year teacher skills in content knowledge,

classroom management, instruction, curriculum, assessment, communication, and technology.

Building principals and first-year teachers identified perceptions of teacher content knowledge and alignment with appropriate instruction as a potential strength (see Table 1). The data indicated 88% of building principals agreed, while 63% of first-year teachers agreed and 31% strongly agreed the standard is met. Over 90% of the identified elementary and secondary respondents agreed or strongly agreed first-year teachers demonstrate content knowledge aligned with appropriate instruction. Males responded positively with 94% indicating agree or strongly agree, while 83% of females responded favorably.

The data did not indicate any negative responses with 18% neutral responses. The data indicated first-year teachers are well-prepared in content knowledge, including various perspectives aligned with appropriate instruction. The results did not indicate content knowledge and appropriate instruction as a weakness of teacher preparation training and programs.

Table 1

Content Knowledge, Including Varied Perspectives Aligned with Appropriate Instruction

Measure	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*
Principal					2	12	15	88		
Teacher					1	6	10	63	5	31
Elementary					1	7	14	79	2	14
Secondary					1	10	4	70	1	20
Male					1	6	11	82	2	12
Female					1	17	7	66	2	17

Note. 33 total responses, 17 principals and 16 first-year teachers, 17 identified elementary participants and 6 secondary, 14 males and 10 females.

Classroom management skills of first-year teachers were addressed by three survey questions. Standards addressed included creating a positive classroom environment; classroom management; engagement; motivation; and managing time, space, transitions, and activities. First-year teachers' responses indicated 100% agreed or strongly agreed creating a positive classroom environment was a well-developed skill. Building principals responded positively with 77% agree or strongly agree, 17% neutral responses, and 6% strongly disagree.

Elementary-level first-year teachers and principals indicated 94% positive responses and 6% neutral responses. Secondary responses included 83% agree or strongly agree and 17% neutral. Identified male responses indicated 100% agreed or strongly agreed, while 80% of the females responded positively and 20% were neutral (see Table 2).

Table 2

Creating a Positive Classroom Environment

	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	
Measure	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*
Principal	1	6			3	17	9	53	4	24
Teacher							6	38	10	62
Elementary					1	6	10	59	6	35
Secondary					1	17	2	33	3	50
Male							8	57	6	43
Female					2	20	5	50	3	30

Note. 33 total responses, 17 principals and 16 first-year teachers, 17 identified elementary participants and 6 secondary, 14 males and 10 females.

Participating building principals and teachers revealed perceptions of first-year teacher skills involving classroom management, motivation, and engagement were varied (see Table 3). Positive perceptions of building principals were indicated by 24% strongly agree, 40% agree, 18% neutral, 12% disagree, and 6% strongly disagree. First-year teacher responses indicated perceptions of 43% strongly agree, 38% agree, 6% neutral, and 13% disagree in the area of classroom management, motivation, and engagement.

The research data indicated a notable difference of the perceptions of elementary and secondary respondents with 70% and 100% positive responses, respectively. Gender perceptions were indicated to be positive with 50% agree and 36% strongly agree male responses and 50% of females responding agree and 20% strongly agree. The research data indicated perceptions of participating building principals and teachers view first-year teachers as adequately prepared for classroom management, motivation, and engagement of students.

Table 3

Classroom Management, Motivation, and Engagement

Measure	Strong Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*
Principal	1	6	2	12	3	18	7	40	4	24
Teacher			2	13	1	6	6	38	7	43
Elementary			3	18	2	12	7	41	5	29
Secondary							4	66	2	34
Male			1	7	1	7	7	50	5	36
Female			2	20	1	10	5	50	2	20

Note. 33 total responses, 17 principals and 16 first-year teachers, 17 identified elementary participants and 6 secondary, 14 males and 10 females.

Survey data indicated first-year teachers' skills in managing time, space, transitions, and activities to be appropriately developed as perceived by participating building principals and teachers (see Table 4). Responses of agree were indicated by 47% and strongly agree by 13% of the participating building principals. First-year teacher responses included 44% agree and 25% strongly agree. Neutral responses were indicated by 31% of building principals and 25% of participating first-year teachers.

Research data indicated perceptions of disagreement by 12% of building principals and 6% of first-year teachers. Building-level responses were similar, indicating positive perceptions from 65% of elementary and 66% of secondary participants. No apparent differences were indicated in male or female responses with 50% of both reporting to agree and 21% of males and 10% of females responding strongly agree.

Table 4

Managing Time, Space, Transitions, and Activities

	Strong Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	
Measure	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*
Principal	1	6	1	6	5	31	8	47	2	13
Teacher			1	6	4	25	7	44	4	25
Elementary			1	6	5	29	8	47	3	18
Secondary			1	17	1	17	3	49	1	17
Male					4	29	7	50	3	21
Female			2	20	2	20	5	50	1	10

Note. 33 total responses, 17 principals and 16 first-year teachers, 17 identified elementary participants and 6 secondary, 14 males and 10 females.

Survey items provided to building principals and first-year teachers used to determine the classroom instructional skills of first-year teachers included engaging students in subject matter, meeting needs of all students, and developing lessons for diverse learners. Participants indicated perceptions of first-year teacher ability for analyzing instructional goals and differentiated instructional strategies, teaching for critical thinking, implementing cooperative learning, delivering effective instruction, and developing cooperative partnerships to support student learning. The ability to engage students in subject matter was perceived as strong by 63% agree and 31% strongly agree responses of first-year teachers and 53% agree and 65% strongly agree responses of participating principals.

Neutral responses were indicated by 35% of principals and 6% of teachers. Positive perceptions were indicated 64% agree and 18% strongly agree responses from elementary participants, with 50% agree and 17% strongly agree secondary-level responses. The responses were similar from both gender groups with 65% males

responding agree and 21% indicating strongly agree, while 60% of females responded

agree and 10% strongly agree (see Table 5).

Table 5

Engaging Students in Subject Matter

Measure	Strong Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*
Principal			1	6	6	35	9	53	1	6
Teacher					1	6	10	63	5	31
Elementary					3	18	11	64	3	18
Secondary					2	33	3	50	1	17
Male					2	14	9	65	3	21
Female					3	30	6	60	1	10

Note. 33 total responses, 17 principals and 16 first-year teachers, 17 identified elementary participants and

6 secondary, 14 males and 10 females.

Research data indicated the preparation of first-year teachers in meeting the

needs of every student appeared to be an area of potential weakness (see Table 6).

Perceptions of agree were indicated by 35% of building principals and 19% of first-year

teachers. Strongly agree responses were reported by 12% of building principals and

37% of first-year teachers. Neutral responses were provided by 29% of principals and

44% of teachers. Responses indicating negative perceptions of building principals were

designated by 18% disagree and 6% strongly disagree, while teachers did not respond

at these levels.

Reported perceptions of building-level participants were very similar with 53%

positive elementary responses and 50% positive secondary responses.   Gender

responses were somewhat different with 71% of males indicating agree or strongly

agree, while 30% of females indicated positive perceptions. Neutral responses were

reported from 29% of male participants and 40% of female participants. Perceptions of

disagreement were indicated by 30% of the participating females responding.

Table 6

Meeting the Needs of Every Student

Measure	Strong Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*
Principal	1	6	3	18	5	29	6	35	2	12
Teacher					7	44	3	19	6	37
Elementary			2	12	6	35	6	35	3	18
Secondary			1	17	2	33	2	33	1	17
Male					4	29	7	50	3	21
Female			3	30	4	40	1	10	2	20

Note. 33 total responses, 17 principals and 16 first-year teachers, 17 identified elementary participants and

6 secondary, 14 males and 10 females.

The skill of being adequately prepared to meet the needs of all students would

include the preparation to develop lessons for diverse learners. Differences of

participating building principals and teacher perceptions were indicated by study data

analysis (see Table 7). Building principals indicated 47% agreed first-year teachers met

the standard, while 28% of teachers agreed and 50% strongly agreed. Neutral

perceptions were reported from 35% of building principals and 12% of first-year

teachers. Disagreement was indicated by 18% of the principals, but no negative

perceptions were reported by participating teachers.

Elementary responses were positive with 47% reporting agree, 29% strongly

agree, 18% neutral, and 12% disagree. Positive responses were indicated by 33% of

secondary participants, while 50% indicated neutral perceptions and 17% disagreed.

Males indicated positive perceptions with 50% agree, 21% strongly agree, and 29%

neutral. Female participants reported 20% strongly agree, 30% agree, 20% neutral, and

30% disagree, indicating less positive perceptions of teacher effectiveness. Perceptions

of strongly disagree were not reported by any participants of the study concerning the

skill of first-year teachers developing lessons for diverse learners.

Table 7

Developing Lessons for Diverse Learners

	Strong Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	
Measure	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*
Principal			3	18	6	35	8	47		
Teacher					2	12	6	28	8	50
Elementary			2	12	3	18	8	47	4	29
Secondary			1	17	3	50	2	33		
Male					4	29	7	50	3	21
Female			3	30	2	20	3	30	2	20

Note. 33 total responses, 17 principals and 16 first-year teachers, 17 identified elementary participants and

6 secondary, 14 males and 10 females.

Survey responses of building principal perceptions appeared to be inconclusive in

the preparedness of first-year teachers to effectively analyze instructional goals and

provide differentiated instructional strategies. Building principals indicated 35% agree,

41% neutral, and 24% disagree first-year teachers were well-prepared in the skill. First-

year teacher responses indicated 31% strongly agree, 44% agree, 19% neutral, and 6%

disagree. Elementary and secondary perceptions were considerably different with 12% of

elementary first-year teachers responding strongly agree and 52% agree. Secondary-level

participants responded 33% agree. Survey data indicated 18% of elementary responses were neutral, and 18% were rated disagree. Neutral responses were reported by 50% of secondary participants, and 17% were reported to disagree.

Males reported perceptions were 57% agree, 7% strongly agree, 29% neutral, and 7% disagree. Female perceptions were varied with 10% strongly agree, 40% agree, 20% neutral, and 30% disagree. None of the participants indicated a response of strongly disagree (see Table 8). First-year teacher responses indicated they perceive their ability to analyze instructional goals and differentiate instructional strategies to be more effective than do building principals.

Table 8

Analyzing Instructional Goals and Differentiated Instructional Strategies

Measure	Strong Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*
Principal			4	24	7	41	6	35		
Teacher			1	6	3	19	7	44	5	31
Elementary			3	18	3	18	9	52	2	12
Secondary			1	17	3	50	2	33		
Male			1	7	4	29	8	57	1	7
Female			3	30	2	20	4	40	1	10

Note. 33 total responses, 17 principals and 16 first-year teachers, 17 identified elementary participants and 6 secondary, 14 males and 10 females.

First-year teacher skills to teach for critical thinking were perceived as strong by teachers participating in the study. Building principals provided varied responses with 41% agree, 41% neutral, 12% disagree, and 6% strongly disagree. First-year teacher perceptions of the preparedness to teach for critical thinking were indicted to be positive

with 38% strongly agree, 38% agree, and 24% neutral responses. First-year teachers did

not indicate disagree or strongly disagree responses concerning the ability to teach for

critical thinking. Building-level perceptions were similar with 41% elementary-level

responses agree, 18% strongly agree, 35% neutral, and 6% disagree. Data of secondary-

level participant responses included 50% agree, 33% neutral, and 17% strongly disagree

first-year teachers are adequately prepared to teach for critical thinking.

Gender responses were consistent with 43% of males indicating agree, 21%

strongly agree, 36% neutral, and no disagree or strongly disagree responses. Female

perceptions indicated 50% of females were reported to agree, 30% neutral, 10% disagree,

and 10% strongly disagree. Survey data indicated the perceptions of participating teacher

support the adequate preparation of first-year teachers to effectively teach for critical

thinking, while building principals are positive or neutral (see Table 9).

Table 9

Teaching for Critical Thinking

	Strong Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	
Measure	*n*	*%*	*n*	%	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*
Principal	1	6	2	12	7	41	7	41		
Teacher					4	24	6	38	6	38
Elementary			1	6	6	35	7	41	3	18
Secondary	1	17			2	33	3	50		
Male					5	36	6	43	3	21
Female	1	10	1	10	3	30	5	50		

Note. 33 total responses, 17 principals and 16 first-year teachers, 17 identified elementary participants and

6 secondary, 14 males and 10 females.

First-year teachers' ability to effectively implement cooperative learning in the classroom was perceived to be appropriate by participating building principals and first-year teachers (see Table 10). Responses of building principals indicated 70% agree and 56% of teachers strongly agreed, while 25% agreed. Neutral perceptions were reported by 24% of responding principals and 13% of first-year teachers. Negative responses were indicated as disagree by 6% of participating principals and 6% of teachers. Perceptions of elementary participants were reported to be 35% strongly agree, 41% agree, 18% neutral, and 6% disagree. Secondary respondents indicated perceptions of first-year teachers' classroom cooperative learning implementation skills to be appropriate with responses of 66% agree and 33% neutral.

Males more often perceived first-year teachers as prepared to implement cooperative learning with 21% strongly agree, 57% agree, 14% neutral, and 7% disagree. Females indicated 30% strongly agree, 30% agree, and 40% neutral. None of the participants reported perceptions of strongly disagree to first-year teachers' ability to effectively implement cooperative learning activity in the classroom.

Table 10

Cooperative Learning

Measure	Strong Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*
Principal			1	6	4	24	12	70		
Teacher			1	6	2	13	4	25	9	56
Elementary			1	6	3	18	7	41	6	35
Secondary					2	33	4	66		
Male			1	7	2	14	8	57	3	21
Female					4	40	3	30	3	30

Note. 33 total responses, 17 principals and 16 first-year teachers, 17 identified elementary participants and 6 secondary, 14 males and 10 females.

Building principals and first-year teacher perceptions of the ability to adequately address the effect of instruction on individual and class learning were indicated to be diverse (see Table 11). Agree and neutral responses were provided by 47% of principals. Perceptions of first-year teachers were indicated to be 37% strongly agree, 37% agree, and 26% neutral. First-year teacher responses were significantly positive compared to building principals. Elementary-level responses were reported to be 18% strongly agree, 53% agree, and 29% neutral. Secondary-level survey data indicated 33% agree and 66% neutral. Building-level perceptions were consistent in first-year teachers' understanding of the effects of instruction on individual and class learning.

Participating males' perceptions were indicated to be more positive than the female educators with 21% responding strongly agree, 50% agree, and 29% neutral, while 10% of the females responded strongly agree, 40% agree, and 50% neutral. Perceptions of these skills appeared to be positive or uninformed with neutral responses, and significant negative perceptions of first-year teacher skills were not indicated.

Table 11

Effects of Instruction on Individual/Class Learning

	Strong Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	
Measure	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	%	*n*	*%*
Principal			1	6	8	47	8	47		
Teacher					4	26	6	37	6	37
Elementary					5	29	9	53	3	18
Secondary					4	66	2	33		
Male					4	29	7	50	3	21
Female					5	50	4	40	1	10

Note. 33 total responses, 17 principals and 16 first-year teachers, 17 identified elementary participants and 6 secondary, 14 males and 10 females.

Research data indicated participating building principals and teachers perceived first-year teachers prepared to form cooperative partnerships in support of student learning (see Table 12). Responses of building principals were indicated to be positive with 24% strongly agree, 52% agree, and 24% neutral. Participating teachers responded 38% strongly agree, 38% agree, and 24% neutral.

Elementary-level responses were indicated to be positive with 29% strongly agree, 53% agree, and 18% neutral. Secondary-level responses included 33% strongly agree, 17% agree, and 50% neutral. It is undocumented if the neutral responses were a result of lack of information or opportunity to observe the first-year teachers involved in cooperative partnerships in support of student learning.

Gender perceptions indicated 36% of males strongly agreed, 57% agreed, and 7% were neutral concerning first-year teachers' ability to adequately deal with cooperative partnerships in support of student learning. Data indicating the perception of

participating females resulted in 20% strongly agree, 30% agree, and 50% neutral.

There were no responses of disagree or strongly disagree of the skill effectiveness of

first-year teachers.

Table 12

Cooperative Partnerships in Support of Student Learning

Measure	Strong Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	%	*n*	*%*
Principal					4	24	9	52	4	24
Teacher					4	24	6	38	6	38
Elementary					3	18	9	53	5	29
Secondary					3	50	1	17	2	33
Male					1	7	8	57	5	36
Female					5	50	3	30	2	20

Note. 33 total responses, 17 principals and 16 first-year teachers, 17 identified elementary participants and

6 secondary, 14 males and 10 females.

First-year teacher preparation to implement curriculum standards is a perceived

strength according to the research data (see Table 13). Thirty-eight percent of

participating first-year teachers responded strongly agree, 44% agree, and 18% neutral,

indicating confidence of teachers. Responses of building principals were 6% strongly

agree, 59% agree, and 35% neutral, indicating first-year teachers are prepared to

implement curriculum standards. Elementary-level responses included 24% strongly

agree, 52% agree, and 24% neutral. At the secondary-level, little variation of perceptions

was identified with 50% responding agree and 50% indicating neutral responses

concerning first-year teachers' preparation to implement curriculum standards.

Males responded positively with 21% strongly agree, 43% agree, and 36% neutral. Participating females agreed first-year teachers were prepared to implement curriculum standards, with 20% strongly agree, 60% agree, and 20% neutral. Responses of disagree or strongly disagree were not reported by participants indicating positive or uninformed perceptions of first-year teacher skills in this area.

Table 13

Implementation of Curriculum Standards

	Strong Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	
Measure	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*
Principal					6	35	10	59	1	6
Teacher					3	18	7	44	6	38
Elementary					4	24	9	52	4	24
Secondary					3	50	3	50		
Male					5	36	6	43	3	21
Female					2	20	6	60	2	20

Note. 33 total responses, 17 principals and 16 first-year teachers, 17 identified elementary participants and 6 secondary, 14 males and 10 females.

First-year teacher skills in implementing assessments are important in effective teacher preparation. The research data indicated mixed perceptions of the first-year teacher skills among participating teachers and principals (see Table 14). Principals reported first-year teachers understand and encourage student learning, growth, and development with 12% indicating strongly agree, 59% agree, 24% neutral, and 5% disagree. New-teacher perceptions of the skills were reported to be stronger with 38% strongly agree, 50% agree, and 12% neutral.

Elementary-level participants' perceptions were indicated to be more positive than secondary reporters. Strongly agree responses were indicated by 18%, with 64% agree, and 18% neutral at the elementary level. Secondary-level data revealed 17% strongly agree, 50% agree, and 33% neutral. Participating males indicated positive perceptions with 29% strongly agree, 57% agree, and 14% neutral responses. The study data indicated female perceptions were confident of first-year teacher skills with corresponding responses of 20% strong agree, 60% agree, and 20% neutral.

Table 14

Understanding and Encouraging Student Learning, Growth, and Development

	Strong Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	
Measure	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*
Principal			1	5	4	24	10	59	2	12
Teacher					2	12	8	50	6	38
Elementary					3	18	11	64	3	18
Secondary					2	33	3	50	1	17
Male					2	14	8	57	4	29
Female					2	20	6	60	2	20

Note. 33 total responses, 17 principals and 16 first-year teachers, 17 identified elementary participants and 6 secondary, 14 males and 10 females.

First-year teacher use of student assessment data to analyze and modify instruction was a perceived area of weaknesses reported by participants (see Table 15). Reporting principals indicated 35% disagree and 35% neutral perceptions of the first-year teacher skill, while 30% reported to agree first-year teachers were prepared to use student assessment data to analyze and modify instruction. First-year teacher participants

indicated positive perceptions with 25% strongly agree, 38% agree, 25% neutral, and

12% disagree concerning preparedness to implement this skill.

Elementary responses indicated preparedness with 18% strongly agree, 41%

agree, 18% neutral, and 23% disagree. Secondary perceptions were very different with

17% agree, 50% neutral, and 33% disagree. Gender responses were varied with males

indicating 14% strongly agree, 43% agree, 21% neutral, and 21% disagree. Female

perceptions were reported as 10% strongly agree, 30% agree, 30% neutral, and 30%

disagree in participant perceptions of first-year teachers' preparedness to use student

assessment data to analyze and modify instruction. Building principals and participating

teachers did not respond strongly disagree to the question.

Table 15

Use of Student Assessment Data to Analyze and Modify Instruction

Measure	Strong Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*
Principal			6	35	6	35	5	30		
Teacher			2	12	4	25	6	38	4	25
Elementary			4	23	3	18	7	41	3	18
Secondary			2	33	3	50	1	17		
Male			3	21	3	21	6	43	2	14
Female			3	30	3	30	3	30	1	10

Note. 33 total responses, 17 principals and 16 first-year teachers, 17 identified elementary participants and

6 secondary, 14 males and 10 females.

Participating building principals perceive first-year teacher preparedness to use

assessment data to improve learning as an area of needed improvement (see Table 16).

Building principal responses were 41% agree, 35% neutral, 24% disagree, and no

responses to strongly agree or strongly disagree. First-year teacher perceptions were

more positive with 25% strongly agree, 44% agree, 19% neutral, and 12% disagree.

Elementary-level perceptions of preparedness were reported to be more positive than

participants at the secondary level. Elementary-level participants reported 18% strongly

agree, 35% agree, 29% neutral, and 18% disagree. First-year teachers at the secondary

level were perceived to be less prepared with 33% agree, 50% neutral, and 17% disagree.

Gender data indicated males generally perceived first-year teachers as prepared to

use assessment data to improve learning. Research data indicated male responses as 14%

strongly agree, 43% agree, 29% neutral, and 14% disagree. Female responses were 10%

strongly agree, 30% agree, 40% neutral, and 20% disagree. Participants of the study did

not respond strongly disagree to the survey item.

Table 16

Assessment Data to Improve Learning

Measure	Strong Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*
Principal			4	24	6	35	7	41		
Teacher			2	12	3	19	7	44	4	25
Elementary			3	18	5	29	6	35	3	18
Secondary			1	17	3	50	2	33		
Male			2	14	4	29	6	43	2	14
Female			2	20	4	40	3	30	1	10

Note. 33 total responses, 17 principals and 16 first-year teachers, 17 identified elementary participants and

6 secondary, 14 males and 10 females.

Participant responses reflected first-year teachers are well prepared in verbal and

nonverbal communication (see Table 17). Building principals indicated positive

perceptions of first-year teacher communication skills with 12% strongly agree, 59% agree, 24% neutral, and 6% disagree responses. First-year teacher responses indicated higher perceptions of preparedness than principals with responses of 38% strongly agree, 50% agree, 6% neutral, and 6% disagree. Perceptions from building-level and gender perspectives were reported to be similar. Elementary-level participants responded 18% strongly agree, 70% agree, 6 % neutral, and 6% disagree. Responses at the secondary level included 17% strongly agree, 50% agree, and 33% neutral.

Males responded 36% strongly agree, 57% agree, and 7% neutral. Females indicated perceptions of first-year teachers' preparedness for verbal and nonverbal communication with 70% agree, 20% neutral, and 10% disagree responses. No strongly disagree responses were indicated by participating building principals or first-year teachers concerning the effective preparation of using verbal and nonverbal communication.

Table 17

Verbal and Nonverbal Communication

Measure	Strong Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	n	$\%$	n	$\%$	n	$\%$	n	$\%$	n	$\%$
Principal			1	6	4	24	10	59	2	12
Teacher			1	6	1	6	8	50	6	38
Elementary			1	6	1	6	12	70	3	18
Secondary					2	33	3	50	1	17
Male					1	7	8	57	5	36
Female			1	10	2	20	7	70		

Note. 33 total responses, 17 principals and 16 first-year teachers, 17 identified elementary participants and 6 secondary, 14 males and 10 females.

Data collection indicated first-year teachers are perceived to be prepared to effectively use technology and media communication tools in education (see Table 18). Participants indicated building principals and first-year teachers had positive perceptions of teacher preparedness. Perceptions of strongly agree were indicated by 18% of participating building principals and 25% of teachers. Agree was indicated by 64% of principals and 56% of participating first-year teachers indicating the use of technology and media communication to be a strength. Thirteen percent of first-year teachers indicated a neutral response, and 6% disagreed. A neutral response was reported by 18% of building principals.

Elementary-level responses included 29% strongly agree, 43% agree, 12% neutral, and 6% disagree. Secondary-level participants responded 66% agree and 33% neutral. Gender responses were consistent with positive perceptions indicated. Male responses included 14% strongly agree, 57% agree, and 29% neutral. Responses from participating females were 30% strongly agree, 50% agree, 10% neutral, and 10% disagree. Participants in the study did not respond strongly disagree to teacher preparation of the survey item.

Table 18

Technology and Media Communication Tools

	Strong Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	
Measure	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*
Principal					3	18	11	64	3	18
Teacher			1	6	2	13	9	56	4	25
Elementary			1	6	2	12	9	43	5	29
Secondary					2	33	4	66		
Male					4	29	8	57	2	14
Female			1	10	1	10	5	50	3	30

Note. 33 total responses, 17 principals and 16 first-year teachers, 17 identified elementary participants and 6 secondary, 14 males and 10 females.

Building principals and participating teachers indicated differences in perceptions of self-assessment skills of first-year teachers (see Table 19). Six percent of principals responded strongly agree and 24% agree, while 50% of first-year teachers indicated strongly agree and 31% agree perceptions of first-year teacher self-assessment skills. Neutral responses were reported from 53% of principals and 19% of first-year teachers. The large difference in the neutral responses of building principals and first-year teachers is notable. Strongly disagree was reported from 6% of principals, 11% perceptions of disagree were reported by principals, and no negative responses were reported from participating teachers.

Elementary-level participants indicated positive perceptions with 29% strongly agree, 36% agree, 29% neutral, and 6% disagree. Secondary-level responses were 33% agree, 50% neutral, and 17% disagree. Male and female positive responses were indicated by 36% strongly agree, 28% agree, and 36% neutral of participating males and 10% strongly agree, 40% agree, 30% neutral, and 20% disagree perceptions of females.

Table 19

Self-Assessment

	Strong Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	
Measure	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*
Principal	1	6	2	11	9	53	4	24	1	6
Teacher					3	19	5	31	8	50
Elementary			1	6	5	29	6	36	5	29
Secondary			1	17	3	50	2	33		
Male					5	36	4	28	5	36
Female			2	20	3	30	4	40	1	10

Note. 33 total responses, 17 principals and 16 first-year teachers, 17 identified elementary participants and 6 secondary, 14 males and 10 females.

Perceptions of both building principals and participating teachers indicated preparedness to implement roles, responsibilities, and collegial activities as first-year teachers (see Table 20). Twenty-four percent of building principals indicated perceptions of strongly agree, and 31% of first-year teachers strongly agreed. Fifty-nine percent of participating principals responded agree, and 44% of participating first-year teachers indicated agree responses. Neutral perceptions were indicated by 37% of principals and 25% of participating teachers.

Building-level perceptions were indicated to be different with 24% strongly agree, 64% agree, and 12% neutral responses at the elementary level. Secondary-level participants responded 17% strongly agree, 33% agree, and 50% neutral concerning first-year teacher preparedness to implement roles, responsibilities, and collegial activities. Data analysis based on gender responses indicated 36% of males strongly agree, 50% agree, and perceptions of 14% were reported to be neutral. Responding female perceptions included 70% agree and 30% neutral concerning first-year teacher

preparedness to adequately participate in the expected roles, responsibilities, and collegial

activities of educators.

Table 20

Roles, Responsibilities, and Collegial Activities

	Strong Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	
Measure	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*
Principal					3	37	10	59	4	24
Teacher					4	25	7	44	5	31
Elementary					2	12	11	64	4	24
Secondary					3	50	2	33	1	17
Male					2	14	7	50	5	36
Female					3	30	7	70		

Note. 33 total responses, 17 principals and 16 first-year teachers, 17 identified elementary participants and 6 secondary, 14 males and 10 females.

Data concerning the preparedness of first-year teachers from traditional or alternative programs were collected from building principals. The majority of elementary building principals strongly indicated first-year teachers who have graduated from a traditional teacher preparation program more effectively meet class and district expectations than those who have received alternative preparation (see Table 21). Positive perceptions of building principals were indicated by responding 29% strongly agree, 29% agree, 24% neutral, 12% disagree, and 6% disagree.

Elementary principal perceptions were positive with 44% strongly agree and 33% agree, while 40% of secondary respondents agreed. Secondary principals indicated neutral perceptions more often with 40%, as opposed to 11% of elementary respondents. Negative responses were similar with 11% elementary and 20% secondary indicating

disagree. Female perceptions were indicated to be positive with 60% strongly agree,

20% agree, and 20% neutral, while male participants indicated 11% strongly agree, 44%

agree, 22% neutral, and 22% disagree.

Table 21

First-year Teachers Who Have Graduated from a Traditional Teacher Preparation

Program More Effectively Meet Class and District Expectations than First-year Teachers

Who Received Alternative Preparation

	Strong Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	
Measure	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*
Principal	1	6	2	12	4	24	5	29	5	29
Elementary			1	11	1	11	3	33	4	44
Secondary			1	20	2	40	2	40		
Male			2	22	2	22	4	44	1	11
Female					1	20	1	20	3	60

Note. 33 total responses, 17 principals and 16 first-year teachers, 17 identified elementary participants and

6 secondary, 14 males and 10 females.

Supporting quantitative data analysis included mean and ranked mean data using

the Mann-Whitney *U* test (Fraenkel et al., 2015). The mean rank is the rank difference

correlation based on the number of participating subjects (Gay et al., 2012). Mean rank

analysis confirmed building principals perceived effective preparation of first-year

teachers in the areas of management, cooperative partnerships, technology and

communication, and roles and responsibilities (see Table 22).

Weaknesses identified by building principal mean rank data were first-year

teacher skills in developing lessons for diverse learners and self-assessment. Mean rank

data supported building principals perceived first-year teachers who have graduated from

a traditional teacher preparation program more effectively meet class and district expectations than first-year teachers who received alternative preparation. Secondary building principals and males indicated less favorable perceptions of first-year teachers from alternative preparation programs than other participants in the study.

Table 22

Mann-Whitney U-Test

Measure		#	*Mean*	*Mean Rank*
Content	Principal	17	3.88	14.35
knowledge,	Teacher	16	4.25	19.81
including varied	Elementary	17	4.05	12.15
perspectives,	Secondary	6	4.00	11.58
aligned with	Male	14	3.85	12.36
appropriate	Female	10	4.10	12.70
instruction				
Creating a	Principal	17	3.88	13.18
positive	Teacher	16	4.62	21.06
classroom	Elementary	17	4.29	11.79
environment	Secondary	6	4.33	12.58
	Male	14	4.07	13.71
	Female	10	4.10	10.80
Classroom	Principal	17	3.64	14.97
management,	Teacher	16	4.12	19.16
motivation, and	Elementary	17	3.82	11.29
engagement	Secondary	6	4.33	14.00
	Male	14	3.78	13.71
	Female	10	3.70	10.80

Table 22

Mann-Whitney U-Test

Measure		#	*Mean*	*Mean Rank*
Managing time, space, transitions, and activities	Principal	17	3.52	15.56
	Teacher	16	3.87	18.53
	Elementary	17	3.76	12.09
	Secondary	6	3.66	11.75
	Male	14	3.71	13.64
	Female	10	3.50	10.90
Engaging students in subject matter	Principal	17	3.58	13.15
	Teacher	16	4.12	21.09
	Elementary	17	4.00	12.41
	Secondary	6	3.83	10.83
	Male	14	3.71	13.61
	Female	10	3.80	10.95
Meeting the needs of every student	Principal	17	3.39	14.56
	Teacher	16	3.93	19.59
	Elementary	17	3.70	12.15
	Secondary	6	3.50	11.58
	Male	14	3.42	14.61
	Female	10	3.20	9.55
Developing lessons for diverse learners	Principal	17	3.29	11.71
	Teacher	16	4.37	22.63
	Elementary	17	3.82	13.26
	Secondary	6	3.16	8.42
	Male	14	3.21	13.82
	Female	10	3.40	10.65
Analyzing instructional goals and differentiated instructional strategies	Principal	17	3.11	12.79
	Teacher	16	4.00	21.47
	Elementary	17	3.58	12.88
	Secondary	6	3.16	9.50
	Male	14	3.21	13.43
	Female	10	3.20	11.20

Table 22

Mann-Whitney U-Test

Measure		#	*Mean*	*Mean Rank*
Teaching for	Principal	17	3.17	12.71
critical thinking	Teacher	16	4.12	21.56
	Elementary	17	3.70	12.68
	Secondary	6	3.00	10.08
	Male	14	3.21	14.11
	Female	10	3.20	10.25
Cooperative	Principal	17	3.64	13.03
learning	Teacher	16	4.00	21.22
	Elementary	17	4.05	12.94
	Secondary	6	3.66	9.33
	Male	14	3.71	12.75
	Female	10	3.90	12.15
Effect of	Principal	17	3.41	13.24
instruction on	Teacher	16	4.12	21.00
individual/class	Elementary	17	3.88	13.29
learning	Secondary	6	4.00	8.33
	Male	14	3.50	13.75
	Female	10	3.60	10.75
Cooperative	Principal	17	4.00	16.24
partnerships in	Teacher	16	4.12	17.81
support of	Elementary	17	4.70	12.59
student learning	Secondary	6	3.83	10.33
	Male	14	4.00	14.61
	Female	10	3.70	9.55
Implementation	Principal	17	3.70	14.12
of curriculum	Teacher	16	4.18	20.06
standards	Elementary	17	4.00	13.15
	Secondary	6	3.50	8.75
	Male	14	3.71	11.93
	Female	10	4.00	13.30

Table 22

Mann-Whitney U-Test

Measure		#	*Mean*	*Mean Rank*
Understanding	Principal	17	3.76	14.29
and encouraging	Teacher	16	4.25	19.88
student learning,	Elementary	17	4.00	12.24
growth, and	Secondary	6	3.83	11.33
development	Male	14	3.85	13.07
	Female	10	4.00	11.70
Use of student	Principal	17	2.94	13.41
assessment data	Teacher	16	3.75	20.81
to analyze and	Elementary	17	3.52	13.18
modify	Secondary	6	2.83	8.67
instruction	Male	14	3.00	13.36
	Female	10	3.20	11.30
Assessment data	Principal	17	3.17	13.97
to improve	Teacher	16	3.81	20.22
learning	Elementary	17	3.52	12.65
	Secondary	6	3.16	10.17
	Male	14	3.14	13.36
	Female	10	3.30	11.30
Verbal and	Principal	17	3.76	14.44
nonverbal	Teacher	16	4.06	19.72
communication	Elementary	17	3.82	12.50
	Secondary	6	3.68	10.58
	Male	14	3.92	14.93
	Female	10	3.60	9.10
Technology and	Principal	17	4.00	16.68
media	Teacher	16	4.00	17.34
communication	Elementary	17	4.05	13.00
tools	Secondary	6	3.66	9.17
	Male	14	3.92	11.71
	Female	10	4.00	13.60

Table 22

Mann-Whitney U-Test

Measure		#	*Mean*	*Mean Rank*
Self-assessment	Principal	17	3.11	11.79
	Teacher	16	4.31	22.53
	Elementary	17	3.88	13.29
	Secondary	6	3.16	8.33
	Male	14	3.28	14.14
	Female	10	3.40	10.20
Roles, responsibilities, and collegial activities	Principal	17	4.05	16.94
	Teacher	16	4.37	17.06
	Elementary	17	4.11	13.06
	Secondary	6	3.66	9.00
	Male	14	4.00	14.54
	Female	10	3.70	9.65
First-year teachers who have graduated from a traditional teacher preparation program more effectively meet class and district expectations than first-year teachers who received alternative preparation.	Principal	17	3.64	9.00
	Elementary	9	4.11	8.83
	Secondary	5	3.20	5.10
	Male	9	3.78	6.17
	Female	5	4.40	9.90

Note. 33 total responses, 17 principals and 16 first-year teachers, 17 identified elementary participants and 6 secondary, 14 males and 10 females.

Data analysis implementing the *Mann-Whitney U test* to support findings of building principals' and first-year teachers' perceptions of effective teacher preparation.

The survey questions summary (see Table 23) provides mean analysis data of the study participants' responses. Survey data identified a significant strength of first-year teachers to be creating a positive classroom environment, with a mean score of 4.24.

Mean data indicated elementary principals perceived first-year teachers who have graduated from a traditional teacher preparation program more effectively meet class and district expectations than do first-year teachers who received alternative preparation. The mean data findings indicated first-year teacher use of student assessment data to analyze and modify instruction as an area of concern.

Table 23

Survey Questions Summary

Measure	Mean
Content knowledge, including varied perspectives, aligned with appropriate instruction	4.06
Creating a positive classroom environment	4.24
Classroom management, motivation, and engagement	3.88
Managing time, space, transitions, and activities	3.69
Engaging students in subject matter	3.90
Meeting the needs of every student	3.60
Developing lessons for diverse learners	3.81
Analyzing instructional goals and differentiated instructional strategies	3.54
Teaching for critical thinking	3.63
Cooperative learning	3.96
Effect of instruction on individual/class learning	3.75
Cooperative partnerships in support of student learning	4.06
Implementation of curriculum standards	3.93
Understanding and encouraging student learning, growth, and development	4.00
Use of student assessment data to analyze and modify instruction	3.33
Assessment data to improve learning	3.48
Verbal and nonverbal communication	3.96
Technology and media communication tools	4.00
Self-assessment	3.69
Roles, responsibilities, and collegial activities	4.06

Table 23

Survey Questions Summary

Measure	Mean
First-year teachers who have graduated from a traditional teacher preparation program more effectively meet class and district expectations than first-year teachers who received alternative preparation.	3.64

Note. 33 total responses, 17 principals and 16 first-year teachers, 17 identified elementary participants and 6 secondary, 14 males and 10 females.

Study questions concerning teacher perceptions of essential elements of preparation programs and weaknesses of preparation were addressed by qualitative measures. Qualitative data were obtained by an interview instrument to identify commonalities of participants (Mertler, 2014; Spaulding & Falco, 2013). First-year teachers who agreed to participate in the survey were asked to volunteer for the interview portion of the study. The nine female and three male participants were provided informed consent before the interview process. Interviews of teachers in this study were conducted outside of instructional time to limit academic interruption. Interviews were recorded and transcribed for accuracy.

Interview data indicated all 12 participants completed a bachelor degree program. One interviewee was enrolled in an elementary education master degree program, and two participants had completed additional coursework for certification with bachelor degrees other than education. The two interviewees were not considered non-traditionally prepared first-year teachers, because they did complete a traditional teacher preparation program for certification.

One participant served as teacher-of-record at a small rural school to fulfill the student teacher requirement portion of the teacher preparation program. Eleven of the 12 interviewees completed a teacher preparation program with elementary education certification. One obtained certification in K-12 special education, and six subjects had acquired additional certificates by passing the Praxis exam to be highly qualified in content areas. Ten of the respondents taught in elementary education classrooms, one in early childhood, and one in a special education setting.

First-year teachers interviewed agreed organization, structure, and positive reinforcement were important elements of successful classroom management. Most indicated developing effective classroom management skills was an ongoing development goal they would continually improve. They recognized the need to implement clear rules and procedures on the first day of school to maintain focus and guide students.

First-year teachers indicated practice in classroom management was a concern in teacher preparation. Participants indicated they felt capable of developing appropriate classroom management skills, but lacked the opportunities to implement plans before teaching. Participants expressed the preparation programs addressed planning and effective classroom management, but lacked the experience to provide confidence to initially be comfortable as a first-year teacher.

Interview information indicated participating first-year teachers were prepared to implement effective classroom instruction. Interviewees indicated they implemented a variety of instructional strategies to meet diverse academic needs. First-year teachers reported proficient implementation of cooperative learning and small group activities.

Providing opportunities for hands-on activities and peer tutoring were identified as important classroom instruction tools. One first-year teacher indicated opportunities to practice classroom instruction at a variety of grade levels would be beneficial in preparation programs. Another reported a significant reliance on textbooks and teacher manuals during the first year of teaching. All interviewees agreed they felt prepared for classroom instruction, but additional pedagogical preparation would benefit first-year teachers.

First-year teachers interviewed indicated they were prepared to implement the required classroom assessments. All reported they administered formal and informal assessments during the first year. Teachers interviewed appeared to be comfortable administering end-of-the-year high-stakes assessments. One first-year teacher stated continuous observation was an important informal assessment utilized. Another reported the frequent use of assessments assisted in documenting student progress and guiding instruction. Each indicated assessment was a vital part of daily instruction. First-year teachers participating in the interview process appeared to understand and utilize instructional assessments.

Interview volunteers were asked to identify strengths and weaknesses of their teacher preparation programs. All first-year teachers interviewed reported they believed they were well-prepared for the first teaching experience. One reported a specific strength of the pre-service program was the reality of teaching provided by field experiences and instructors who were veteran classroom teachers. Each participant indicated the experience and efforts of program instructors were the most important factors in their preparation.

Weak areas in program preparation included factors most participants indicated to be the real experience of teaching. Most reported challenges such as time management, preparing the classroom environment, and parent conferences as activities that were addressed early in the teacher preparation program and should have been reviewed at the end. The single-most identified need was having the confidence and being prepared to conference with parents. Insights of first-year teachers provided valuable information to identify strengths and weaknesses of teacher preparation programs.

Summary

High attrition rates of novice teachers indicate pre-service preparation programs lack critical components. An estimated 1.7 million teachers are expected to leave the profession in the near future (O'Connor et al., 2011). Significant reform in education impacts teacher training and ultimately student performance. Identifying essential elements of effective teaching provided necessary data to guide teacher preparation. Building principals and first-year teachers are active sources of information concerning the effectiveness of teacher preparation.

The study involved analysis of the perceptions of first-year teachers and building principals of the skills of first-year teachers to be effective in the classroom. Data collection tools of the study were Likert-style surveys and open-ended interviews to identify participant perceptions. The identified participant perceptions of strengths and weaknesses of first-year teachers allowed the investigator to answer research questions. Data were analyzed to gain research information concerning perceptions of diverse groups participating in the study. Qualitative and qualitative data were utilized to analyze

research questions. Research data provided the basis to draw conclusions, identify

implications, and provide recommendations for teacher preparation programs.

Research analysis indicated effective first-year teachers demonstrate skills of

content knowledge, classroom management, instruction, curriculum implementation, use

of assessments, reflective practice, communication, and technology. Data analysis

identified building principals' perceptions of the effectiveness of first-year teachers and

differences between traditional and alternative teacher education preparation programs.

Perceptions of first-year teachers revealed essential elements and weaknesses of teacher

preparation programs. Teacher preparation must be accountable for teacher competence

(Darling-Hammond, 2010b).

In Chapter Five, the findings and conclusions of this study are presented.

Implications for practice are discussed. Recommendations for future research are

offered.

Chapter Five: Summary and Conclusions

Effective teaching involves helping students increase knowledge, develop skills, and build values (Joyce et al., 2015). Successful teacher preparation involves both the art and science of effective teaching (Brown, 2012; Marzano, 2012). First-year teachers need the support of a teaching environment that encourages learning (Hobson et al., 2012). Current federal and state mandates guide the quality of teacher education preparation (Darling-Hammond, 2010a). Teachers must be prepared for the accountability of student achievement (Hochberg & Desimone, 2010).

The complexity of the teaching profession involves the implementation of mandates, policies, curriculum, pedagogy, and management practices (Moore & Whitfield, 2011). Teacher preparation involves characteristics beyond content knowledge and pedagogy (Johnston, Almerico, Henriott, & Shapiro, 2011). Retention of teachers is highly impacted by teacher preparation (Scherer, 2012).

The need for new and innovative quality training for classroom teachers is magnified by the high attrition rate of new teachers (Thomas et al., 2013). Projected teacher shortages make effective preparation a national concern (Sadker & Zittleman, 2010). Teague and Swan (2013) estimated new teacher employment and training costs to be approximately $50,000 per teacher. Investing in teacher education provides financial and student achievement gains (Wei et al., 2009).

Spaulding and Falco (2013) identified challenges and commonalities that impact the training of quality educators. Marzano's framework of effective classroom pedagogy includes instructional strategies, classroom management strategies, and classroom curriculum design (Marzano & Pickering, 2007). In this chapter, a review is presented of

the findings from the current study. Conclusions are drawn, implications for practice are shared, and recommendations for future research are provided.

Findings

The study involved data gathered from 17 building principals and 16 first-year teachers. The respondents of the study are identified as 17 elementary-level and six secondary-level educators. Fourteen of the participants are male, and 10 identified as female. The participants responded to Likert-style survey questions, and 12 first-year teachers were interviewed. The research data were analyzed to determine study findings. The study was guided by the following questions:

1. What are building principals' perceptions of the effectiveness of first-year teachers?

2. What are building principals' perceived differences, if any, in the effectiveness of first-year teachers graduating from traditional teacher preparation programs and first-year teachers who choose alternative routes to the profession?

3. What do first-year teachers perceive as essential elements of teacher preparation programs that adequately prepared them to carry out classroom and district expectations?

4. What do first-year teachers perceive as weaknesses of teacher preparation programs?

Survey questions were analyzed to answer research question one and to determine building principals' perceptions of the effectiveness of first-year teachers. Building principals' perceptions included strengths and weaknesses of the

effectiveness of first-year teachers. Research data analysis indicated building

principals find first-year teachers to be effectively prepared in the following areas:

- content knowledge aligned with appropriate instruction;

- create positive classroom environments;

- classroom management, motivation, and engagement of students;

- manage time, space, and transitions;

- provide cooperative learning activities;

- form cooperative partnerships to support student learning;

- implement curriculum standards;

- demonstrate technology and communication skills;

- understand and encourage student learning, growth, and development; and

- participate in expected roles, responsibilities, and collegial activities.

The survey results indicated building principals perceive first-year teachers to be

effectively prepared in many significant areas. Principals largely influence teacher

selection (Mertz, 2010).

Research data revealed areas in which first-year teacher preparation was

viewed as less effective. Building principals identified weakness in the effectiveness

of first-year teachers in the areas of instruction and assessment. Perceived

instructional and assessment weaknesses of first-year teachers included the

following:

- meeting the needs of every student;

- developing lessons for diverse learners;

- analyzing instructional goals to differentiated instruction;

- teaching for critical thinking;

- self-assessment; and

- using student assessment data to analyze, modify instruction, and improve student learning.

Survey results indicated building principals' perceived weakness in specific areas that are important in the effectiveness of first-year teachers. Darling-Hammond stated, "Curriculum development, assessment, and differentiated instruction" have been identified as areas of weakness in teacher preparation (as cited in Scherer, 2012, p. 18). Quality teaching is impacted by the supports and the environment of the district (Darling-Hammond, 2010b).

The perceptions of building principals concerning the effectiveness of first-year teachers are very important in analyzing and improving teacher preparation programs. The survey data indicated specific areas of first-year teacher effectiveness that are critical to success in the classroom. The current generation of teachers will guide positive change in schools (Behrstock-Sherratt & Coggshall, 2010). The skills identified as well-prepared are crucial to first-year teacher success and professional growth. Areas of weakness identified are of concern for the academic growth and development of students.

The research data indicated building principals generally view first-year teachers as effectively prepared, with specific areas of needed improvement. The identified areas of weakness provide relative data for teacher preparation program improvement and needed professional development. Johnston et al. (2011) stated, "The possession of knowledge and skills does not guarantee successful instructional implementation in the

classroom" (p. 393). First-year teachers often need frequent and consistent administrative support and feedback (Colasacco, 2011).

The second question of the study was to evaluate perceptions of building principals concerning the effectiveness of first-year teachers from traditional and alternative teacher preparation. Approximately 20% of classroom teachers are from alternative programs (Cochran-Smith & Power, 2010). Data indicated building principals' perceptions are more positive concerning the effectiveness of first-year teachers who graduated from traditional teacher preparation programs over first-year teachers who chose alternative routes to the profession.

The traditional teacher preparation program is at the university-level education department (Powell, 2015). The majority of building principals indicated first-year teachers from a traditional teacher preparation program are more effective than those from alternative routes. Teachers from alternative programs are often "over-whelmed by the realities" of teaching (Cuddapah & Burtin, 2012, p. 68). A small number were in disagreement with that perception. Elementary principal perceptions were slightly more positive than those of secondary principals concerning first-year teacher preparation of traditional programs over alternative preparation.

More female than male principals perceived first-year teachers from a traditional teacher preparation program to be more effective in the classroom. The survey data indicated building principals perceive first-year teaches from traditional preparation programs to be more effective in the classroom that those from alternative training experiences. Cuddapah and Burtin (2012) stated, "Many alternate-route teachers enter

classrooms with neither training in pedagogy nor field experience, they often have idealistic views of what it means to be the teacher" (p. 68).

The primary investigator examined what first-year teachers perceive as essential elements of teacher preparation programs that adequately prepared them to carry out classroom and district expectations. Teachers who lack essential preparation elements are less likely to remain in the profession (Scherer, 2012). Through interviews, first-year teachers shared the skills they perceive as essential to success in the classroom. First-year teachers indicated the following to be elements of teacher preparation programs crucial to the development of effective classroom teachers:

- effective classroom management;

- organization and structure;

- positive reinforcement for students;

- implementation of clear rules and procedures;

- effective classroom instruction;

- instruction to meet diverse needs;

- cooperative learning and small group activities;

- hands-on and peer tutoring opportunities;

- implement and analyze classroom assessments;

- effectively administer and utilize formal and informal assessments; and

- monitoring student progress.

Perceptions of first-year teachers are instrumental in identifying essential elements of teacher preparation programs to provide improved training and professional development activities.

First-year teacher perceptions provide first-hand knowledge and experience of the necessary elements of effectiveness in the classroom. The experiences and self-assessment of first-year teachers provided valuable information to guide and improve teacher preparation programs. The teaching profession and student achievement is strengthened when common practices are identified (Ball & Forzani, 2010). Teacher training should focus on the task of teaching as well as knowledge and philosophy (Cochran-Smith & Power, 2010).

The purpose of the fourth question of the research study was to identify what first-year teachers perceived as weaknesses of teacher preparation programs. First-year teacher interviews were implemented to identify perceived areas of weakness of teacher preparation programs. Challenges of first-year teachers that could be more effectively addressed in teacher preparation included the following:

- time-management;

- parent teacher conference experiences;

- preparing the classroom environment; and

- time for realistic opportunities to experience classroom teaching.

Addressing the identified weaknesses in preparation programs would enhance the necessary confidence essential to be an effective first-year teacher. Reform of teacher preparation programs is needed to meet professional expectations (Chesley & Jordan, 2012). Teacher quality is influential to student achievement and encompasses many concepts (Cochran-Smith & Power, 2010).

Scherer (2012) indicted preparation courses with appropriate application to classroom experience help first-year teachers to be effective. Student feedback enables

teachers to modify actions and decisions to improve achievement (Hattie & Yates, 2014).

New teachers benefit from ideas and support of veteran teachers and principals (Danaher

et al., 2009). First-year teachers interviewed agreed they felt prepared for their first

classroom, but preparation in the identified areas of weakness would have increased their

effectiveness.

Conclusions

Building principal and first-year teacher perceptions of the effectiveness of

teacher preparation programs were gathered through surveys. Interviews were conducted

with first-year teachers to gain further insight into their attitudes and opinions. A survey

tool was utilized to gather data concerning building principals' perceptions of first-year

teacher effectiveness in specific skills. The survey addressed the teacher standards of the

MODESE (2013) concerning classroom management, instruction, curriculum,

assessment, communication, and technology. The meeting of these standards would

imply the effectiveness of teachers based on state expectations. Research data indicated

differing perceptions in the effectiveness of certain components of teacher preparation.

These data guided the primary investigator to conclude building principals perceived

first-year teachers as effective and have experienced effective preparation.

Effective teachers are skilled classroom managers (Chesley & Jordan, 2012).

Classroom management involves many daily practices and planning (Ornstein et al.,

2014; Wong & Wong, 2009). Teacher preparation programs must provide new teachers

fundamental skills of classroom management (Chesley & Jordan, 2012). The study

results do not support Goodwin's (2012) report indicating veteran teachers believe new

teachers are not adequately prepared for classroom management. The research data of

this study indicated participating principals perceive first-year teachers to be effective classroom managers and to be prepared for the roles, responsibilities, and collegial activities that come with teaching.

The role of classroom teacher includes implementing school policies and assisting with programs to identify and plan solutions in school issues (Carjuzaa & Kellough, 2013). Survey findings confirmed building principals perceive first-year teachers effectively create positive classroom environments; demonstrate classroom management, motivation, and engagement; and manage time, space, transitions, and activities. Principals and teachers work in a complex system with the goal of improving student achievement (Marzano, 2013).

The teacher is the primary classroom element to student success (Reutzel & Cooter, 2012). Data obtained in the study indicated areas of strength and weaknesses concerning instruction and curriculum. Providing all students effective instruction is an essential skill for new teachers (Cuthrell et al., 2010). Effective instruction of teachers improves the education of diverse learners (Smith & Tyler, 2011). New teachers often need a large repertoire of effective teaching strategies (Cuddapah & Burtin, 2012).

The study data confirmed building principals perceive first-year teachers lack adequate instructional preparation. Building principals identified weaknesses of first-year teachers in the areas of meeting the needs of every student, developing lessons for diverse learners, teaching for critical thinking, and analyzing instructional goals and differentiated instructional strategies. Teachers must be capable of dealing with unique needs of diverse students (Darling-Hammond, 2010b). Building principals perceive first-year teachers as prepared to implement cooperative learning, curriculum standards, and

cooperative partnerships to support student learning. Effective instruction is guided by assessment analysis (Scherer, 2012).

Use of data is necessary to make informed decisions. Hattie (2012) indicated the evaluation and assessment of student progress is an essential element of teaching. Chesley and Jordan (2012) determined experience with assessment is a weak area of teacher preparation. The study data indicated building principals perceive first-year teachers are prepared to understand and encourage student learning, growth, and development. Areas of weakness as reported by building principals included teacher self-assessment and the use of student assessment data to analyze and modify instruction to improve learning. Teachers have the responsibility of gathering assessment information and using it to make effective instructional decisions (Stiggins & Chappuis, 2015). Self-reflection provides valuable information concerning student learning and instruction (Ogle & Beers, 2012).

Ryan and Cooper (2013) emphasized the importance of teachers being effective communicators. The quality of teaching is improved by effective communication (Behrstock-Sherratt & Coggshall, 2010). Results of the survey revealed first-year teachers demonstrate the skills to be effective verbal and nonverbal communicators. Parent and family involvement improves academic performance, student attendance, and classroom behavior (Carjuzaa & Kellough, 2013). Participating principals perceive first-year teachers adequately use technology and media communication. Appropriate implementation of technology is an effective tool for communication in education (Roblyer, 2016). The data indicated building principals perceive first-year teachers to be prepared as effective communicators.

The primary investigator examined building principals' perceived differences, if any, in the effectiveness of first-year teachers graduating from traditional teacher preparation programs and first-year teachers entering the field from alternative routes to the profession. Traditional teacher licensure requires attaining state and national standards (Ryan & Cooper, 2013). Darling-Hammond (2010a) suggested quality teachers are knowledgeable, effectively design and implement instruction, and assess learning. Moore and Whitfield (2011) stated teaching is more than meeting coursework requirements. Alternative methods of teaching certification lack specific criteria of content and processes (Scribner & Heinen, 2009). Alternative preparation is a phrase to identify the many routes to teacher licensure in response to shortages in specific areas of education (Perry, 2011).

The results of the study indicated building principals perceive first-year teachers graduating from traditional teacher preparation programs more effectively meet class and district expectations than first-year teachers who choose alternative routes to the profession. Building principals at the elementary level perceive first-year teachers from traditional teacher preparation programs to be more prepared than do secondary-level principals. Female principals also reported more positive perceptions of first-year teachers from traditional programs than did male principals of first-year teachers from traditional programs.

Varying perceptions of the group could be the result of lack of experience with teachers from alternative preparation avenues. Most teachers from alternative programs are content area teachers. Perry (2011) indicated the distinction of traditional programs is blurred by the variation of the estimated 130 alternative programs. Teacher preparation

programs have the responsibility to train highly qualified teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2010a). Alternative tracks to certification may involve little or no formal teacher preparation, with the expectation of on-the-job training (Darling-Hammond, 2010a).

Perceptions of building principals and first-year teachers varied in significant areas. Teachers expect principals to provide guidance and support to promote professional growth (Colasacco, 2011). Brown (2012) made the statement, "You don't know what you don't know" (p. 26) in regards to new teacher perceptions. The study addressed what first-year teachers perceive as essential elements of teacher preparation programs that adequately prepared them to carry out classroom and district expectations. The framework for student achievement is made up of effective instructional strategies, classroom management, and curriculum design (Marzano & Pickering, 2007). Effective teachers are well-prepared and continually grow professionally (Darling-Hammond, 2012a). Teacher preparation programs have the charge of producing highly qualified teachers (Evers, 2011).

Teague and Swan (2013) recognized first-year teachers must transition from student to teacher. Perry (2011) suggested significant professional growth of teachers occurs during the first two years of teaching. First-year teachers participating in the study identified effective classroom management skills as important elements of teaching. Study participants indicated organization, structure, positive reinforcement, and the implementation of clear rules and procedures to be essential elements of teacher preparation.

Participants recognized skills to implement effective classroom instruction as a necessary requirement of teacher preparation programs. First-year teachers considered

the ability to effectively provide instruction to meet diverse needs, to implement

cooperative learning and small group activities, and to provide hands-on and peer

tutoring opportunities as important first-year teacher skills. Interviews of first-year

teachers indicated the ability to implement and analyze classroom assessments as

important in teacher preparation. First-year teachers involved in the study indicated the

skills to effectively administer and utilize formal and informal assessments are essential

in guiding daily instruction and monitoring student progress.

The survey tool and interview process provided data to identify areas first-year

teachers perceive as weaknesses of teacher preparation programs. Teague and Swan

(2013) indicated first-year teachers lack essential preparation skills to be effective

teachers. High-quality teacher preparation is important in the retention of effective

classroom teachers (Sadker & Zittleman, 2010).

Information provided by first-year teachers indicated areas that could be more

effectively addressed in teacher preparation include time-management, parent teacher

conferences, and preparing the classroom environment. First-year teacher data suggested

additional time for realistic opportunities to experience classroom teaching in preparation

programs would provide the necessary confidence essential to be an effective first-year

teacher. Teacher preparation programs providing realistic experiences for pre-service

teachers bridge the gap between the college classroom and the K-12 classroom

(Grossman et al., 2009). The effectiveness of teachers is improved by implementing

skills in real settings (Perry, 2011). Darling-Hammond (2010b) suggested teacher

effectiveness and professional retention increase with effective teacher preparation.

Implications for Practice

The perceptions of first-year teachers and building principals regarding teacher preparation programs were examined. Behrstock-Sherratt and Coggshall (2010) found first-year teachers considered their effectiveness to be a priority. Kumi-Yeboah and James (2012) reported many teachers change careers before they gain enough experience to be effective.

Staffing public schools presents a challenge with an estimated two million teachers leaving the profession before retirement (Huling et al., 2012). Darling-Hammond (2010a) encouraged investments in teacher training, strengthened accountability, mentoring, and professional development to share expertise. Positive perceptions and areas of concern were identified by first-year teachers and building principals.

Building principal and first-year teacher perceptions indicated program preparation to be effective in several areas. Results of the study indicated first-year teachers are prepared to implement classroom management and to provide positive environments. First-year teachers effectively demonstrate subject knowledge and engage students in cooperative partnerships to support learning. The study indicated building principals perceive first-year teachers to perform expected roles, responsibilities, and collegial activities. First-year teachers are prepared to understand and encourage student learning, growth, and development, and are able to use technology and media communication tools. The survey and interview data indicated first-year teachers have acquired knowledge and pedagogical skills fundamental to teaching.

The data also indicated perceived areas of concern to both first-year teachers and principals. Weaknesses identified provided data to analyze and modify teacher preparation instruction. Areas of concern to building principals included the following:

- meeting the needs of every student;

- developing lessons for diverse learners;

- analyzing instructional goals and differentiated instruction;

- teaching for critical thinking;

- effects of instruction on individual/class learning;

- use of student assessment data to analyze and modify instruction;

- assessment data to improve learning; and

- self-assessment.

The identified areas of concern bring to question the quality of teacher preparation programs. Teacher knowledge and actions significantly impact student learning (Mertz, 2010).

Significant concerns of the study are the differences between building principals and first-year teachers in perceptions of specific skills. Study data indicated building principals and first-year teachers generally agree concerning strengths and weaknesses for the preparedness of first-year teachers; however, there are specific areas in which building principals do not perceive first-year teachers to be as prepared as the teachers reported themselves to be. First-year teachers perceive their preparation to be more positive than building-principal perceptions in the following areas:

- analyzing instructional goals and differentiated instructional strategies;

- teaching for critical thinking;

- effects of instruction on individual/class learning;

- use of student assessment data to analyze and modify instruction;

- assessment data to improve learning; and

- self-assessment.

The study failed to assume building principals and first-year teachers would have common perceptions of specific skills. Mertz (2010) suggested there is no clear decision-making model for principals to implement in teacher selection. Behrstock-Sherratt and Coggshall (2010) found 70% of the study participants preferred frequent classroom observations and principal feedback.

Implications of the study include the value of identifying perceived weaknesses. Areas of concern to both building principals and first-year teachers regarding assessment of data to improve learning and use of student assessment data to analyze and modify instruction should be addressed in professional preparation programs. The areas identified require opportunities to be involved in actual classroom data analysis and assessments. Many teacher preparation programs lack the appropriate field experience placements and hours for pre-service teachers to gain these skills. Increased opportunities to assess real students and use data to guide lesson planning and improve learning are a suggestion for program improvement.

Another significant implication of the study is the difference between building principal and first-year teacher perceptions of preparedness in significant areas. The MODESE (2013) identified expected skills professional teachers should acquire. First-year teachers need the experience to accurately identify effectiveness, as Kumi-Yeboah and James (2012) suggested.

More effective mentoring programs to assist first-year teachers with essential self-assessment skills would provide the voice of experience new teachers lack. Building principal perceptions were often reported to be neutral in skill areas, bringing to question the opportunity to observe the first-year teacher skills. It is suggested building principals and first-year teachers have early conversations to identify perceptions of skills characteristics. Frequent observations and discussions to document the demonstrated skills would be important in providing more parallel perceptions.

The future of education will be highly influenced by the quality of teacher preparation (Wei et al., 2009). Enhancing the positive skills and improving the weak areas of first-year teachers are necessary for the academic success of students. The collaboration and communication of teacher preparation program faculty, principals, and teachers will provide the high quality teachers of the future. Principals are charged with the responsibility of filling positions with the most effective teachers (Mertz, 2010).

Recommendations for Future Research

This study was based on the research of Marzano (2010, 2012; Marzano et al., 2011; Marzano & Pickering, 2007) and Linda Darling-Hammond (2009a, 2009b, 2010a, 2010b, 2010c, 2012a, 2012b, 2013; Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Darling-Hammond et al., 2009). Marzano's framework of effective teaching includes research-based data to guide preparation programs (Marzano & Pickering, 2007). Findings of the current study indicated specific strengths and weaknesses of first-year teachers. The effective training of teachers is significant to the academic progress of students (Joyce et al., 2015). The data presented in this study suggest further studies would benefit teacher preparation and educational outcomes.

The ability to implement and use assessment data is an indicated weakness of teacher preparation. The use and understanding of formative assessment is necessary for effective teaching (Crossouard & Pryor, 2012). Further studies to identify specific gaps in the ability to effectively use and analyze assessments in teacher preparation would strengthen training programs. Teachers are expected to use student assessment data to improve educational practices and need training and support to implement data analysis for effective instructional decisions (Means et al., 2011).

Differences were identified between perceptions of principals and first-year teachers concerning effective teaching skills of first-year teachers. The complex teaching profession requires implementation of mandates, policies, curriculum, pedagogy, and management practices (Moore & Whitfield, 2011). Further studies to identify specific characteristics that guide principals' perceptions would provide needed clarification of expectations for first-year teachers. Behrstock-Sherratt and Coggshall (2010) indicated effectiveness is important to first-year teachers. Principals are the model and establish the expectations of staff (Bieler, 2012).

Research indicates 50% of new teachers teach fewer than five years (Bieler, 2012; Teague & Swan, 2013; Wong & Wong, 2009). Many first-year teachers feel isolated while expected to perform as well as experienced teachers (Wong & Wong, 2009). Perry (2011) stated, "The largest gains in effectiveness occur during the first five years of teaching" (p. 4). A study to identify first-year teacher perceptions of available resource supports and appropriate mentoring would provide vital data for teacher success. A high percentage of teachers who leave the profession report the decision was due to lack of administrative support (Behrstock-Sherratt & Coggshall, 2010). Teachers may lack the

training and support expected to implement effective educational practices (Means et al., 2011).

Much of the research indicated the need for effective continuing professional development for first-year teachers. New teachers expect to continue learning and embrace collaboration (Bieler, 2012). Effective professional development opportunities support teachers and meet school accountability standards (Hochberg & Desimone, 2010). Effective professional development includes long-term opportunities (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009).

The study results indicated specific perceived strengths and weaknesses of first-year teacher preparation programs. Effective education programs to train pre-service teachers are necessary to student academic growth (Perry, 2011). Retention of classroom teachers is improved with effective preparation (Scherer, 2012). Additional research will provide important data to guide effective first-year teachers.

Summary

Effective teacher preparation highly impacts student achievement and the economy of the United States (Cochran-Smith & Power, 2010; Tucker, 2012). Landsman et al. (2008) stated new teachers believe training programs do not prepare them. The results of this study did not support this statement.

The study of first-year teacher perceptions identified challenges and commonalities that impact the training of quality educators as indicated by Spaulding and Falco (2013). It is estimated 1.7 million teachers in the United States will not continue teaching in the next decade (O'Connor et al., 2011). The effectiveness of teachers will inevitably direct the country's future (Darling-Hammond, 2010a).

Mandates at federal and state levels currently guide the quality of teacher education preparation (Darling-Hammond, 2010a). The need for new and innovative quality teacher preparation is indicated by the high attrition rates of new teachers (Thomas et al., 2013). The current hiring and training costs of new teachers is estimated to be approximately $50,000 per teacher (Teague & Swan, 2013). Investing in teacher education provides financial and student achievement gains (Wei et al., 2009). This study of new teacher perceptions identified challenges and commonalities that impact the training of quality educators (Spaulding & Falco, 2013).

A major factor in academic growth of students is the quality of the classroom teacher (Adamson & Darling-Hammond, 2011). The ability to implement effective instruction is a significant responsibility of teacher preparation programs (Smith & Tyler, 2011). First-year teachers need an understanding of curriculum governed at the district, state, and federal levels to determine instructional content and process based on student needs (Levy, 2008). Teaching skills develop through a progression of stages that guide classroom management and instruction: unaware, aware, capable, and inspired (Steele, 2011).

Effective teaching requires first-year teachers demonstrate subject knowledge, understand curriculum and standards, apply discipline and management techniques, and maintain caring dispositions (Great Schools Staff, 2013). First-year teachers start with some unawareness and develop effective skills over time (Steele, 2011). Daily professional reflections encourage awareness and skill development that influence student achievement (Weissbourd, 2009).

The study involved identification of perceptions of first-year teachers and building principals of the effective skills of first-year teachers in the classroom. The study was based upon a Likert-style survey and open-ended interviews to identify participant perceptions. The data collected indicated participant perceptions of strengths and weaknesses of first-year teachers to answer research questions of the study. Building principals perceive first-year teachers to demonstrate effective teaching skills.

Data collected indicated building principals perceive first-year teachers who graduated from traditional teacher preparation programs to be more effective than those from alternative training programs. Cuddapah and Burtin (2012) found new teachers from alternative preparation programs needed additional training to be effective. Improvements to alternative preparation will advance teacher learning and student achievement (Heineke et al., 2010). A goal of alternative certification is to provide a diverse pool of teachers to fill shortages and increase retention in the profession. Teachers from pre-service programs are more prepared, effective, and have higher retention rates (Darling-Hammond, 2010a).

First-year teachers reported essential elements of teaching preparation to include skills of effective classroom management, implementation of effective classroom instruction to include meeting diverse needs, and a large repertoire of teaching strategies. The ability to implement and analyze classroom assessments and to effectively administer and utilize formal and informal assessments was reported as essential to effective teaching. The study findings indicated first-year teachers felt prepared as effective classroom teachers.

Weaknesses of teacher preparation programs are reported to be time management, effective conferencing skills, preparation of the classroom environment, and adequate field experiences. Powell (2015) indicated field experience to be an important component of teacher preparation. Field experience opportunities provide valuable insights, demonstrations, and interactions for pre-service teachers (Carjuzaa & Kellough, 2013).

Perceived areas of concern to both first-year teachers and principals were identified through this study. Indicated weaknesses included assessment of data to improve learning and use of student assessment data to analyze and modify instruction. The identified areas of concern provide a framework for quality teacher preparation programs.

Teachers who are not adequately prepared leave the profession at much higher rates (Scherer, 2012). Darling-Hammond (2009a) stated education will be improved by "a commitment to a highly knowledgeable, highly skilled, professional, well-supported teaching force with strong professional accountability" (p. 56). First-year teachers from effective preparation programs demonstrate critical knowledge and high-quality skills (Darling-Hammond, 2010b). Attrition rates are decreased with increased initial preparation for teaching (Darling-Hammond, 2010a).

Appendix A

Building Principal Survey

	The overall skills/training of new teachers in the district enables them to address the following issues adequately:	Strongly Agree 5	Agree 4	Neutral 3	Disagree 2	Strongly Disagree 1
1	Content knowledge, including varied perspectives, aligned with appropriate instruction	5	4	3	2	1
2	Engaging students in subject matter	5	4	3	2	1
3	Understanding and encouraging student learning, growth, and development	5	4	3	2	1
4	Meeting the needs of every student	5	4	3	2	1
5	Implementation of curriculum standards	5	4	3	2	1
6	Developing lessons for diverse learners	5	4	3	2	1
7	Analyzing instructional goals and differentiated instructional strategies	5	4	3	2	1
8	Teaching for critical thinking	5	4	3	2	1
9	Cooperative learning	5	4	3	2	1
10	Creating a positive classroom environment	5	4	3	2	1
11	Classroom management, motivation and engagement	5	4	3	2	1
12	Managing time, space, transitions, and activities	5	4	3	2	1
13	Verbal and nonverbal communication	5	4	3	2	1
14	Technology and media communication tools	5	4	3	2	1
15	Use of student assessment data to analyze and modify instruction	5	4	3	2	1

16	Assessment data to improve learning	5	4	3	2	1
17	Effect of instruction on individual/class learning	5	4	3	2	1
18	Self-assessment	5	4	3	2	1
19	Roles, responsibilities, and collegial activities	5	4	3	2	1
20	Cooperative partnerships in support of student learning	5	4	3	2	1
21	First-year teachers who have graduated from a traditional teacher preparation program more effectively meet class and district expectations than first-year teachers who received alternative preparation.	5	4	3	2	1

Appendix B

First-year Teacher Survey

	My teacher preparation training adequately equipped me to address the following issues:	Strongly Agree 5	Agree 4	Neutral 3	Disagree 2	Strongly Disagree 1
1	Content knowledge, including varied perspectives, aligned with appropriate instruction	5	4	3	2	1
2	Engaging students in subject matter	5	4	3	2	1
3	Understanding and encouraging student learning, growth and development	5	4	3	2	1
4	Meeting the needs of every student	5	4	3	2	1
5	Implementation of curriculum standards	5	4	3	2	1
6	Developing lessons for diverse learners	5	4	3	2	1
7	Analyzing instructional goals and differentiated instructional strategies	5	4	3	2	1
8	Teaching for critical thinking	5	4	3	2	1
9	Cooperative learning	5	4	3	2	1
10	Creating a positive classroom environment	5	4	3	2	1
11	Classroom management, motivation, and engagement	5	4	3	2	1
12	Managing time, space, transitions, and activities	5	4	3	2	1
13	Verbal and nonverbal communication	5	4	3	2	1
14	Technology and media communication tools	5	4	3	2	1

15	Use of student assessment data to analyze and modify instruction	5	4	3	2	1
16	Assessment data to improve learning	5	4	3	2	1
17	Effect of instruction on individual/class learning	5	4	3	2	1
18	Self-assessment	5	4	3	2	1
19	Roles, responsibilities, and collegial activities	5	4	3	2	1
20	Cooperative partnerships in support of student learning	5	4	3	2	1

Appendix C

Interview Questions

What is your highest degree?

What areas of certification have you acquired?

Was certification through an alternative method?

What grade/content area are you teaching?

Describe your classroom management skills as a new teacher.

Describe your instructional skills as a new teacher.

Describe your student assessment skills as a new teacher.

Where did you complete your teacher preparation program?

Describe the strengths of your teacher preparation program.

What areas of your teacher preparation program do you believe could be improved?

Appendix D

IRB Approval Letter

LINDENWOOD

LINDENWOOD UNIVERSITY   ST.CHARLES, MISSOURI

DATE: April 22, 2015

TO: Vida Jane Ward
FROM: Lindenwood University Institutional Review Board

STUDY TITLE: [596985-1] A Study of the Perceptions of First-year Teachers as Prepared
                                    Classroom Teachers
IRB REFERENCE #:
SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project

ACTION: APPROVED
APPROVAL DATE: April 22, 2015
EXPIRATION DATE: April 22, 2016
REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this research project. Lindenwood University Institutional Review Board has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a study design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

This submission has received Expedited Review based on the applicable federal regulation.

Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the study and insurance of participant understanding followed by a signed consent form. Informed consent must continue throughout the study via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require each participant receive a copy of the signed consent document.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this office prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure.

All SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported to this office. Please use the appropriate adverse event forms for this procedure. All FDA and sponsor reporting requirements should also be followed.

All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must be reported promptly to the IRB.

This project has been determined to be a Minimal Risk project. Based on the risks, this project requires continuing review by this committee on an annual basis. Please use the completion/amendment form for this procedure. Your documentation for continuing review must be received with sufficient time for review and continued approval before the expiration date of April 22, 2016.

Please note that all research records must be retained for a minimum of three years.

If you have any questions, please contact Megan Woods at (636) 485-9005 or mwoods1@lindenwood.edu. Please include your study title and reference number in all correspondence with this office.

If you have any questions, please send them to mwoods1@lindenwood.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within Lindenwood University Institutional Review Board's records.

Appendix E

Recruitment Letter

Dear _____:

I am conducting a mixed design study as a requirement for my doctoral degree at Lindenwood University. The title of my study is, *Perceptions of First-year Teachers as Prepared Classroom Teachers*. I am requesting input from first-year teachers and building principals in Missouri public schools. You were selected to participate in this study because of your knowledge and/or experience in the area of this research.

I hope you will agree to participate by completing a brief survey. Also, you may be asked to participate in an interview so you can share perceptions of your experience as a first-year teacher.

The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Your responses will be confidential and completely anonymous.

Attached to this letter is a consent form for you to read. If you have any questions about this research, please feel free to contact me via email or phone. Completion of this survey indicates voluntary consent to participate in this study.

Thank you for taking the time to assist me in this research.

Jane Ward
Doctoral Student
Lindenwood University

Appendix F

Lindenwood University

School of Education
209 S. Kingshighway

St. Charles, Missouri 63301
INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

<survey>

Study Title: *Perceptions of First-year Teachers as Prepared Classroom Teachers*

Principal Investigator: Jane Ward

Telephone: 417-███████   E-mail: ████████████████

Participant _____ Contact info _____

1. You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Jane Ward under the guidance of Dr. Sherry DeVore. The purpose of this research is to gain an understanding of the preparedness of first-year teachers.

2. a) Your participation will involve:
    - ➢ Voluntary completion of a brief survey.
    - ➢ Returning the survey via enclosed envelope to the primary investigator within 14 days from the time the survey was distributed.

    b) The amount of time involved in your participation will be approximately 10 minutes.

    c) Approximately 100 principals and first-year teachers will be involved in this study.

3. There are no anticipated risks associated with this research.

4. There are no direct benefits for you participating in this study. However, your participation will contribute to the knowledge about first-year teachers and teacher education preparation programs.

5. Your participation is voluntary and you may choose not to participate in this research study or to withdraw your consent at any time. You may choose not to answer any questions that you do not want to answer. You will NOT be penalized in any way should you choose not to participate or to withdraw.

6. We will do everything we can to protect your privacy. As part of this effort, your identity will not be revealed in any publication or presentation that may result from this study and the information collected will remain in the possession of the investigator in a secured file cabinet and will be discarded after three years.

7. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, or if any problems arise, you may call the Investigator, Jane Ward (417█████) or the Supervising Faculty, Dr. Sherry DeVore (417-881-0009). You may also ask questions of or state concerns regarding your participation to the Lindenwood Institutional Review Board (IRB) through contacting Dr. Jann Weitzel, Vice President for Academic Affairs, at 636-949-4846.

I have read this consent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I may retain a copy of this consent form for my records. I consent to my participation in the research described above by completing the survey.

Revised 8-8-2012

Appendix G

Lindenwood University

School of Education
209 S. Kingshighway

St. Charles, Missouri 63301
__INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH ACTIVITIES__

\<interview\>

Study Title: *Perceptions of First-year Teachers as Prepared Classroom Teachers*

Principal Investigator: Jane Ward

Telephone: █████████   E-mail: ████████████████

Participant _____   Contact info _____

1. You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Jane Ward under the guidance of Dr. Sherry DeVore. The purpose of this research is to gain an understanding of the preparedness of first-year teachers.

2. a) Your participation will involve:
   - An interview with the primary investigator, Jane Ward, <u>which will be audio recorded for accuracy.</u>

   b) The amount of time involved for the interview will be approximately 45 minutes.
   - You will receive a copy of the interview questions prior to the actual interview session.

   c) Approximately 12 first-year teachers will be involved in this study.

4. There are no anticipated risks associated with this research.

4. There are no direct benefits for you participating in this study. However, your participation will contribute to the knowledge about first-year teachers and teacher education preparation programs.

5. Your participation is voluntary and you may choose not to participate in this research study or to withdraw your consent at any time. You may choose not to answer any questions that you do not want to answer. You will NOT be penalized in any way should you choose not to participate or to withdraw.

6. We will do everything we can to protect your privacy. As part of this effort, your identity will not be revealed in any publication or presentation that may result from this study and the information collected will remain in the possession of the investigator in a secured file cabinet and will be discarded after three years.

7. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, or if any problems arise, you may call the Investigator, Jane Ward (417) or the Supervising Faculty, Dr. Sherry DeVore (417-881-0009). You may also ask questions of or state concerns regarding your participation to the Lindenwood Institutional Review Board (IRB) through contacting Dr. Jann Weitzel, Vice President for Academic Affairs, at 636-949-4846.

I have read this consent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I may retain a copy of this consent form for my records.

I consent to the interview.

_____ _____
Signature of Participant   Date

_____ _____
Signature of Primary Investigator   Date

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Vita

Jane Ward is a lifelong Missouri resident. She completed undergraduate studies in 1985 at Missouri State University in Springfield where she earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education. Jane completed her Master of Education degree in Special Education at Arkansas State University in 1989. She earned a second Master of Education degree in Guidance and Counseling at Arkansas State University in 1993. She returned to Missouri State University and completed her Specialist in Education degree with an emphasis in Special Education Administration.

Jane Ward began her teaching career at Oregon County R-IV School District in Alton, Missouri, from 1986 to 2000. During this time she taught early childhood, elementary, middle school, and high school students. She served as school counselor and special services director. She is currently employed at Missouri State University as an instructor in the College of Education.