CRITICAL QUESTIONS IN EDUCATION

Academy for Educational Studies
academyforeducationalstudies.org
Steven P. Jones, Director

Academy Mission Statement
The mission of the Academy for Educational Studies is to foster a community of inquirers and provide a public space for debate and dialogue about important questions in education. The Academy encourages those interested in education, teaching, and learning to engage in thoughtful reflection, discussion, and critique of educational theory and practice. Involving people from across the state, region and country, the Academy promotes this vital dialogue by arranging education conferences and symposia and by creating publishing opportunities connected with Academy events. The Academy supports research efforts of graduate and undergraduate students and assists in the design and delivery of teacher education courses at both the graduate and undergraduate levels.

CQIE is indexed in EBSCOHOST Education Research Complete, CITEFACTOR, Gale/Cengage Learning, & Google Scholar.

** Cover design by Jessica A. Heybach

** Our thanks to the cadre of scholars who serve as reviewers without whose services the journal could not exist.

Critical Questions in Education: Volume 11, Issue 3

The Academy for Educational Studies

November 15, 2020

Colleagues and Friends of the Academy:

As I sit here writing this introduction to Volume 11, Issue 3 of *Critical Questions in Education*, our current president has yet to concede victory to Joe Biden and Kamala Harris—we could be on our way to a constitutional crisis. In addition, the Covid-19 worldwide pandemic, now a year since its onset, is raging: two days ago saw 184,000 new cases, with hospitalizations and deaths also at their highest level yet. This is certainly a moment to be remembered in history. Wear those masks and cross those fingers that both the election recount and pandemic come to a swift end.

This issue of *CQIE* has four intriguing manuscripts and a book review. Christopher Beckham leads off with an age-old question: what is education's broader purposes? Beckham's argument begins from a not-so-old contention, that education should be narrowly focused on college and career readiness. Beckham's piece is followed by a research article (by Anna Schwan and colleagues) that reports on an investigation of mentor and teacher self-perception regarding a statewide mentoring program.

Gina L. Salano's manuscript details how powerful service-learning projects in higher education so often become marginalized. Salano's article takes up a program known as LIFE, one she instituted and was then eliminated. The final manuscript critically analyzes the impact of one of my least favorite pre-service teacher education processes—EdTPA. One of my least favorite because it takes decision making out of the hands of seasoned experts and into the hands of corporate America. This issue closes with a review of A. Doucet, e. al's book, Fourth Industrial Revolution: Standing at the Precipice, by Susan L. Wienand.

Happy reading.

PAX,

Eric C. Sheffield, Editor
Critical Questions in Education

Critical Questions in Education

Eric C. Sheffield, Managing Editor

Contents

Manuscripts

Review

Beyond College and Career Readiness: Education's Broader Purposes

Christopher Beckham, Morehead State University

Abstract

> *This essay argues that emphasizing "college and career-readiness" as the major goal of public education is too narrow a purpose for education. College and career readiness, if pursued exclusively, may deprive students of the problem-solving skills they need to live well-adjusted, flourishing lives. The purposes of education that were identified by diverse thinkers from the past may offer a better goal for education: aiming to produce good people. An argument is made that this goal can be pursued by utilizing a liberal arts curriculum featuring core texts. Examples from secondary literature on the value of such an approach are provided.*

Keywords: *purposes of education; liberal arts education: core texts; problem-solving in education; education for flourishing; college and career readiness*

When my children were nearing the end of their elementary school years, I asked them a question. "What do you think schools are for?" Both readily answered: "To teach us stuff." Then I said, "What sort of stuff?" My son replied that schools needed to teach students "important things about how to live in the grown up world." I liked how the conversation was going. I wondered, though, just what sort of "things about how to live in the grown up world" he thought he needed to know. So, when I asked him if he could elaborate, he said "You know, things like how to do my taxes and how to get a good job." I was hoping he might have a more philosophical answer—such as "how I can be a happy person," or "how to be a good person." After all, I certainly think that if I had to narrow down the purpose of education to just one thing, I would say it has to teach me something about how to live a flourishing life, which I take to be a good one, and a happy one. The answers my son and daughter gave, though, in some ways parallel what the public school curriculum in Kentucky these days is all about. They seemed to be tapping into the larger conversation about education that they heard day in and day out. That conversation served as a catalyst for me to have many further conversations with others and do much thinking about the purposes of education, and how we communicate those purposes to today's students.

This essay is a brief reflection on the purposes of education and the curricula that serves these purposes. I offer a mild critique of the prevailing view about education in my own Commonwealth of Kentucky, and I enlist some others whose views I share to make this central argument: education should help us with "solving the problem" of living a good life. As part of that argument, I claim that a rich, text-based liberal arts education is the best vehicle to teach us how to do that.

The Current Situation in Kentucky: The Purpose of Education
is To Achieve College and/or Career Readiness

Policy-makers and politicians in the Commonwealth of Kentucky decided in 2009 that Kentucky schools had one essential task--to ensure that all graduates were either "college and/or career ready." They gave a name to this goal, calling it "Unbridled Learning."[1] All students were therefore bound for one or two possible destinations after K-12 graduation--they would either go on to college (where they would presumably prepare for some professional career), or else they should be ready to go into some job, technical or otherwise (but one that did not require a four year degree). K-12 schools must prepare students for one of these two trajectories, and this objective defined the mission of scores of Kentucky K-12 schools. Elaborate and complicated accountability measures accompanied this central goal. Determinations by certain benchmarks were made to see if schools adequately prepared students for either or both of these destinations. High stakes testing also formed part of the accountability measures, and this testing dominated the educational landscape in the Commonwealth.

Tensions about education pitched toward strictly vocational ends do not end at the K-12 level in Kentucky. In 2016, the Governor of Kentucky put forward a budget bill that would cut state appropriations to higher education in an attempt limit funding for subjects associated with "arts and humanities." The governor stated that students could study whatever they wished in college, but in his budget, tax dollars would not be used to subsidize students studying "French Literature," but would be used to subsidize engineering students. State colleges and universities were criticized for having programs in "interpretive dance," which would never contribute anything to the state's economy, so the argument ran.[2] This line of reasoning is not new; Ronald Reagan made similar arguments as Governor of California in 1967. In an article that traced the shifting fortunes of liberal learning at the collegiate level, Dan Berrett, Senior Editor at *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, began his tale with Governor Reagan warning that in a time of economic austerity, the state government could not subsidize "intellectual luxuries" at the state universities, namely, ones that had little to do with direct preparation for a particular job in some growing sector of the economy.[3]

As a taxpayer, interested observer, and parent, I have thought many hours about this goal of "college and career readiness," and how years of precious time will be spent in Kentucky schools for the Commonwealth's students. I am certainly in favor of students going on to college after their high school graduation. Furthermore, I know how my text-driven, liberal arts-based college education broadened my own horizon and continues to give me guidance along life's way. I certainly am in favor of all students graduating and finding good jobs that pay living wages. Only a foolish person would say he or she is not in favor of college and career readiness. However, it is not a fool's errand to ask if this is a rather limited goal for schools to pursue as the *sine qua non* of their existence. Neil Postman, for instance, was blunt in his assessment about making employability the most important result of an education. In his book *The End of Education*, Postman

---

1. Nancy Rodriguez, "Input sought on Unbridled Learning Accountability Model", *Kentucky Teacher*. July 31, 2014 https://www.kentuckyteacher.org/news/2014/07/input-sought-on-unbridled-learning-accountability-model/. Retrieved June 26, 2019.

2. Mike Wynn, "Bevin's Budget Would Cut College Funding. Courier Journal. January 26, 2016. https://www.courier-journal.com/story/news/politics/ky-legislature/2016/01/26/bevins-budget-would-cut-college-funding/79174172.

3. Dan Berrett, "The Day the Purpose of College Changed: After February 28, 1967, The Main Reason to Go Was To Get A Job," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, January 26, 2015. https://www.chronicle.com/article/The-Day-the-Purpose-of-College/151359 .

warned that making education revolve around economic concerns undermined the very humanity of students and was far too narrow a purpose to sufficiently guide education.[4]

After asking my children the question about the purpose of education, I began asking my teacher education students. They are the next generation of teachers—hope and promise rests with them. They are not yet bound by state educational policy. They are free to form their own judgments on the purposes of schools. I anticipated much candor and thoughtfulness. Almost invariably, though, the answer came back that schools needed to teach things that they were presently not teaching--things that students now need to know but somehow did not learn in school. There is a nagging sense that my students have that they were somehow underprepared for all the challenges that they now seem to face. So when I asked them "what is the purpose of education?" their easy and almost knee-jerk response is remarkably similar to my children's "how to live in the grown up world" answer. When I asked them to elaborate, the top three responses would be as follows: "(1) how to balance a checkbook, (2) how to change a tire, and (3) how to do my taxes." These three things are not (apparently) taught in school, but my students think they should be.

When I got these answers, I stopped and asked them what it is that they do learn in school, even if they think it is not quite what they should be learning. They most often say "whatever we need to know to do well on the tests." Testing is a touchy subject for many graduates of Kentucky schools. They know what it meant for their schools if they did poorly on the accountability measures. Just bring up their high school experience to a classroom full of 18 and 19 year olds and it does not take long before the gushers of emotion overflow with what a "waste of time" they thought testing was in comparison of the real business of life. Like them, I do not believe that merely accumulating isolated facts is equivalent to being educated. As Mortimer Adler once quipped, "the telephone book is full of facts, but it doesn't contain a single idea."[5] And like Adler, I do not believe anyone would say that a person who has memorized the phone book can be called "educated" simply on the basis of accumulating all that factual knowledge. It is one thing to be a good test taker, but that specific skill is not one that is widely utilized in most careers that I know anything about. So while the standardized tests and assessments my students (and my children) take may indeed show how much factual knowledge has been accumulated, I have to agree once more with Adler who in his later career constantly warned that one should not regard the results produced by standardized testing as evidence of what he called "genuine learning."[6]

What Is the Purpose of Education?

This question often results in a multitude of contested answers. I learned the broad outlines of the various arguments on purpose in education as a doctoral student in the history and philosophy of education, and now teach my own students the basic arguments as well. However, this is a question that is more than a merely "academic" inquiry. Billions of dollars are spent on education in the United States. Countless hours are spent in classrooms by students and teachers alike. Setting an adequate purpose for the enterprise of educating students is an urgent matter.

Having now lived in the grown up world a good long while, I am pretty sure that while learning how to balance a checkbook, change a tire, and prepare taxes are important skills, they are maybe *not* the most essential bits of knowledge one needs to acquire. Calculators, spreadsheets,

4. Neil Postman, *The End of Education: Redefining the Value of School* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 31.

5. Mortimer J. Adler, *Reforming Education*: *The Opening of the American Mind.* Ed. Geraldine Van Doren. (New York: Collier Books, 1990), 226.

6. Adler, *Reforming Education*, 167.

roadside assistance (or the owner's manual of the car) and certified public accountants are there to help us if we need them. Furthermore, I have had enough career changes to know (and have watched friends and family do the same) that the career you prepare yourself for in school or college is not necessarily the one you end up doing for the rest of your life. I agree with Eva Brann, who warned schools against taking up vocational education when students are too young an age in her book *Paradoxes of Education In A Republic*. Her concerns with an undue emphasis on vocational studies for young students are summarized with this quote:

> [T]here is a premature vocationalism. Here people too young to know themselves and too uneducated to learn easily are encouraged to acquire specific skills for immediate economic reasons.[7]

In this meticulously argued book, she encouraged both schools and colleges to consider the merits of an education centered on reading, discussion and contemplation, particularly through wide reading in what are sometimes called "core texts." Brann called for an education that centered on literacy in such a way as empowered students to "be able to reflect, and specifically to reflect by reading works of others, [in a] recovery of meaning."[8] She warned that too much emphasis on vocationalism in education with an emphasis on "today's world" might result in graduates being stuck in "uncongenial careers" that are not economically viable in "tomorrow's world."[9] I agree with her. Education should be about more than the rather limited purposes so many have implemented in recent decades. Brann's argument can be bolstered with other diverse voices, including from among those who exerted substantial leadership within American society and education. Consideration of three such persons who argued that the purpose of education differs from mere "college and career readiness" follows.

John Adams (1735-1826) was the first Vice President and then second President of the United States. Adams' contributions to the founding of the United States are many. His advocacy for the fledgling nation overseas during the throes of the American Revolution helped ensure the country's survival. Further, Adams was the only President among the first five who did not own slaves. And John Adams has another distinction that even fewer have: he was a President whose son, John Quincy Adams, also became President.

While serving as an ambassador to the Dutch during the Revolutionary War, the senior Adams received a letter from John Quincy in 1781 that detailed his school activities. Ambassador Adams wrote back with pleasure noting that young John Quincy was underway in learning Latin, which by 1781 was certainly not essential for most vocations. Adams noted that in reading Latin literature there was a great deal to be learned about human nature, politics, and history. In the closing words of his letter, though, he imparted some fatherly advice about the purpose of education to his son: "You will ever remember that all the End of study is to make you a good Man and a useful Citizen.—This will ever be the Sum total of the Advice of your affectionate Father."[10] Adams was clear in what he thought the purpose of education was. It was to make a person good and an effective citizen. The subjects studied should contribute to this purpose.

---

7 . Eva T. H. Brann, *Paradoxes of Education In A Republic* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 27.

8. Brann, 16.

9. Brann, 28.

10. John Adams to John Quincy Adams, 18 May 1781," Founders Online, National Archives, https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/04-04-02-0082. [Original source: The Adams Papers, Adams Family Correspondence, vol. 4, October 1780–September 1782, ed. L.H Butterfield and Marc Friedlaender. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973, pp. 117–118.].

Adams, like several other of the Founders, wrote extensively about the importance of education in the life of the Republic; this letter to John Quincy is not the only instance of his commenting on the importance of study. Many of his other writings highlight this theme of education as a means to producing good people and useful citizens.[11] Perhaps the elder's admonition about the purposes of learning reverberated in his son's mind long into the future. In addition to serving as a President, J.Q. Adams should also be remembered for his defense of the Mendi Africans in the famous *Amistad* case, and throughout his life, Adams was an opponent of slavery.[12] John Quincy Adams seemed to take his father's advice in the service to his country: he strove to live a life of service and virtue.

An additional support for a purpose of education beyond college and career readiness is found in the writings of Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929-1968). His legacy as a Civil Rights leader continues to provide inspiration fifty years after his death. While he was still an undergraduate student at Morehouse College in Atlanta, King wrote to *The Maroon Tiger*, his campus newspaper in 1947. His essay was entitled "The Purpose of Education." His eloquence and insight was already evident, despite his young age. King noted that as he discussed the subject of education with his classmates certain statements his peers made concerned him. Too many of his classmates were confused about the purpose of education in his view. King believed that while education was certainly meant to give students a capacity to think to the height of their powers, it must go further than that. He argued that an education that only fortified the intellect stopped short of education's full promise. He wrote that the purpose of education was to build up the student in both "intelligence and character." Any education that left off character development was not worthy of being regarded a "true" education in his view.[13]

King called for an education that merged character development with building up the reasoning capacity of students. Good character consisted of treating others fairly, kindly, and with charity. Good thinking demanded that these character traits accompany acts of individual brilliance. In this short essay, King alluded to some of the horrors that had recently occurred on the global stage (he was writing only two years after the end of World War II), and he pointed to acts of discrimination and prejudice in the United States. He understood that an education that focused on building up the intellect in technical prowess without building up character could lead to tragedy. There is consistency between what Dr. King wrote and what John Adams wrote. Education must assist with our becoming thoughtful people committed to the common good.

As one final example, I will turn to an educator, Professor Richard Mitchell, who lived from 1929 to 2002. Though not as widely known as either Dr. King or President Adams, Mitchell was a college professor in New Jersey, teaching classics, English, and courses for those seeking teacher certification. He wrote a number of books and also published a newsletter called the *Underground Grammarian*. During the height of his popularity while publishing this newsletter, Mitchell came to the attention of Johnny Carson, and he appeared on the Tonight Show a few

---

11. As another example, see his document "Thoughts on Government" written in 1776, which enjoyed wide circulation among the delegates to the First Continental Congress. His pamphlet urged "the instruction of the people in every kind of knowledge that can be of use to them in the practice of their moral duties…and of their political and civil duties as members of society…ought to be the care of the public…in a manner that never yet has been practiced in any age of nation." The sense is that education forms the whole person, not for a narrow vocational interest, but rather, for participation in civil affairs and daily living. John Adams, "Thoughts On Government," in *The American Republic: Primary Sources*. Bruce Frohnen, ed. (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2002), 196-199. See also Elwood P. Cubberley, *Public Education in The United States* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1934), 90.

12. For a fuller account, see https://www.nps.gov/people/john-quincy-adams-and-the-amistad-event.htm

13 .See https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/king-papers/documents/purpose-education. Original Source: Clayborne Carson, Ralph Luker, and Penny A. Russell, eds. *The Papers of Martin Luther King, Jr. Volume I: Called to Serve, January 1929-June 1951.* Website date accessed July 3, 2019 and September 8, 2020.

times. Appearing on a late night talk show is something few academics manage to do, and illustrates that there was a time that Mitchell's writing had the attention of several notable people in the United States, even if he never was a household name. Mitchell's books often use satire to make profound points—and the follies and foibles of modern education were frequent targets of his wit. In his book *The Gift of Fire*, Mitchell wrote that one of the purposes of education was to "make us good."

> There are such nourishing and reasonable, and even obvious, ways of describing and understanding education, and then pursuing it, that some strange species of credit must be given to our schoolers, who have ingeniously concocted countless other ways that are debilitating, silly, and unlikely…there is the understanding of education with which I began, education as that which makes us able to be good. Able. A disarming proposition. Who can be against the ability to be good?[14]

Perhaps the statements that I have cited—the points made by Eva Brann, John Adams, Martin Luther King, Jr. and Richard Mitchell—provide enough compelling evidence that there were and are many diverse voices who would argue against a narrow vocationalism in education, calling instead for an education's whose central purpose focuses on the production of "good" people, capable of thoughtfulness and civic virtue. I recognize that "goodness" is a contested notion, and not everyone has the same definition of it. However, like Mitchell, I think few will object that goodness should not be a human aspiration, whatever its exact nature might be.

Now, suppose for a moment that the question of the purpose of education were to be agreed on, as I have stated it. Suppose, if only for the sake of argument, my readers all agreed that education should, as its ultimate goal, be about the creation of a thoughtful, good person. For the sake of the argument, I will call this person a "flourishing person." The adjective "flourishing" seems to take in what I personally mean by "happy and good." Those who read this essay may recognize these as the terms that are often associated with educational perennialism.[15] I recognize that this is not a new argument, but it is one that should not be assumed to be familiar to all. This argument needs to be renewed in every generation and set beside other arguments for the purpose of education, such as the prevailing one in Kentucky today, that of "college and career readiness."

I believe the next question that should be asked is this: "what is one necessary attribute in life to achieve this condition of flourishing?" I would reply that it is the ability to effectively solve problems. I further believe that "problem solving" is certainly a skill that any public school with a competent teaching staff can provide its students over the course of 13 years. As to just what I mean by "problem-solving," I mean nothing more complicated than the ability to reason well, and to think well, and then to apply the results of that thinking to difficulties and challenges of life that are encountered. I think good thinking can lead to living the flourishing kind of life that I believe Adams, Dr. King, Jr., Mitchell and Eva Brann had in mind.

If anything is a "life skill," surely good thinking about how to live a good life is a one such skill. Thinking is a skill that can exist on a sliding scale of sorts--not all students need to have the same level of accomplishment in this area. There is room for individual difference—but everyone should be taught how to think to the best of his or her ability. Not everyone who goes through

---

14. Richard Mitchell, *The Gift of Fire*, chapter 9. Retrieved from https://sourcetext.com/the-gift-of-fire-chapter-nine/. Date accessed July 3, 2019.

15. For a concise explanation of the perennial philosophy, see George F. Kneller, *Introduction to the Philosophy of Education* (New York: John Wiley and Sons Inc., 1964), 107-113.

school or college is going to become a medical doctor who holds life and death in her hands as she wields the scalpel; not everyone is going to become a major diplomat who tries to think through the implications of this high level discussion or that policy decision that can affect the lives of millions of people. Thus, not everyone needs the particular skill of scalpel wielding or world diplomacy. However, I suppose we all need to know how to think, how to reason, and any sort of job beyond the most basic ones will call on one's ability to reason clearly.

This is not a particularly original argument to make, but I think it is one that still has merits. I believe that the arguments put forward by Aristotle and St Thomas Aquinas on human nature can still inform the work of educators. These thinkers believed that there exists a hierarchy in nature; that there is a kind of vegetative nature, an animalistic nature, and then there is a human nature. They argued that what makes humans "human" is this capacity of reasoning. Furthermore, they both argued that human happiness is bound up in the reasoning of the human person. As reason is perfected, the happiness of the individual is more fully realized.[16] I believe they thought that good thinking led to good living. I believe this is the kind of good living that is urged on us by the people whose views I have previously cited. Education can and should contribute to this kind of good living.

Many decisions that students will make require careful thought. Of course, many things in their lives will be rather mundane, and not that much thought has to go into some, maybe even several, of the day to day decisions and activities they do. However, there are always those decisions that do matter more than others, wherein we should do some of our most careful and deliberate thinking, and that is when our education has the greatest chance to "pay off." Who will I marry? Will I marry? What career should I pursue? Where should I live? How do I cope with grief? How do I raise my children? Should I have children? How do I become a graceful loser or a gracious winner? How do I set my priorities about how I spend my discretionary income? Should I tell the truth, always, even it if costs me in the short or long run? How do I talk with my mother or father about giving up his or her car keys or other aspects of independence? How do I answer my children who ask me why some people are prejudiced? What do I say when a friend asks for advice about leaving spouse and children behind to pursue a dream of becoming a shepherd in the Outer Hebrides?

In those situations and maybe dozens (hundreds?) more, we hope that we can benefit from the accrued effects of our education. Individuals need to know how to think, and they hopefully want to know how to think *carefully*, at that. I suppose that it is possible just to blurt out whatever comes immediately to mind, and then do it. It is always possible to act on mere impulse and not put a moment's thought into things and deal with the consequences later. And, sometimes, people do. But not always. Sometimes they "stop and think." And yet, how well prepared are we, by our education, for these critical moments and questions? These seem to be the kinds of problems that people need to know how to solve more so than many of the other kinds of problems schools focus on. Can we be taught how to find answers to these perplexities and to discover reasoned guidance to life's most essential questions? If a person cannot be given "the" answers, can he or she nevertheless be taught how to think through the problems and put forward at least tentative, but still reasonable, solutions? Can "good" solutions that tend to the personal and public good be found for those dilemmas?

I believe it is possible to educate persons in such a way so as to enable them to do the kind of thinking that leads to good outcomes for themselves and others. I do not think that emphasizing

---

16. Thomas Aquinas, *The Cardinal Virtues*. Trans. Richard J. Regan (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2005), viii.

"college and career readiness," as we have in Kentucky, is the best way to achieve this kind of education. It is simply not a broad enough purpose for education. Nor do I believe that teaching that focuses on proficiency in standard testing will necessarily result in producing people who can stand up to the "tests" of life all that well. My belief is that the traditional liberal arts curriculum is still the best curriculum there is to teach students the "thinking skills" that will best serve them throughout the long round of life's many difficulties and problems. Most particularly, I think that a liberal arts curriculum that includes reading what are sometimes called "core texts" is *one* of the best things we can do, particularly if we are interested in learning how to solve or at least attempt to solve our specifically human problems in good ways. Here I am thinking of the problems that relate to human goodness, character, and to use my chosen word, "flourishing." Many of the world's core texts centered on these very issues.

To be clear, when I say that schools should teach students how to think, and then I immediately reference problem solving, I have something different in mind than learning how to build even more powerful and intrusive cellular phones, for instance. I am not after solutions to the kinds of technical problems that very few of us will ever be called on to solve. Richard Mitchell, who raised similar concerns in *The Gift of Fire*, decried that educators had replaced "nourishing and reasonable…ways of describing and understanding education" with ones that were "debilitating, silly, and unlikely."[17] Mitchell rightly noted that the kind of "problem-solving" in schools today mostly revolved around figuring out at what time trains would arrive at stations and how to manipulate diagrams of certain figures to get certain other kinds of figures. These are problems, to be sure, but they are not the kinds of problems that in the long run matter all that much, as Mitchell eloquently noted. And yet, as he argued, and I am now, schools spend an exorbitant amount of time in schools teaching students how to solve these kinds of problems, and often to the exclusion of providing the kind of education that focuses on solving the actual problems of human nature.[18] The kind of problem solving in connection with our education that I have in view is found in this quote from Thomas Jefferson in a letter to John Page in 1763:

> The most fortunate of us all in our journey through life frequently meet with calamities and misfortunes which may greatly afflict us: and to fortify our minds against the attacks of these calamities and misfortunes should be one of the principal studies and endeavors of our lives.[19]

Calamities and misfortunes seem to be our common lot. And it is the proper work of education to "fortify our minds" against these calamities and misfortunes. As Martin Luther (the Protestant Reformer, not Martin Luther King, Jr.) once remarked "Those wise men [Virgil and other classical poets] knew, what experience of life proves, that no man's purposes ever go forward as planned, but events overtake all men."[20] Whenever a calamity or misfortune arrives, we search for solutions, if in fact they may be found. In the event that we have faced similar problems before, we may use our memory, and turn back to some previously learned answer based on experience. Certainly not all our problems lend themselves to that kind of solution, however. Many of the

---

17. Mitchell, *The Gift of Fire*, Chapter 9. https://sourcetext.com/the-gift-of-fire-chapter-nine/. Date accessed July 3, 2019.

18. Mitchell, *The Gift of Fire*, Chapter 5. https://sourcetext.com/the-gift-of-fire-chapter-five/. Date accessed July 3, 2019.

19. From Thomas Jefferson to John Page, 15 July 1763," Founders Online, National Archives, accessed April 11, 2019, https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-01-02-0004. [Original source: The Papers of Thomas Jefferson, vol. 1, 1760–1776, ed. Julian P. Boyd. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950, pp. 9–11.]

20. Martin Luther, *The Bondage of the Will.* Trans. J.I. Packer and O.R. Johnston. *(Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing Group, 1990)*, 83.

problems we face are unique—to us, anyway, but they are not always unique to the whole of human experience.

In those circumstances where personal experience is no guide, we could appeal to things we have read and learned. By tapping into the world-wide body of literature known as the "great books," and by teaching through the means of the liberal arts, public schools can build up the fund of "experiences" students have, and they can seek to train them to use their reason as they explore them. Not everything in life has to be learned through the "hard way" of direct, personal experience. Exploring the way luminaries of the past have struggled with their problems holds much promise for training students "how to think." As Lee S. Shulman put it, when people are the beneficiaries of a liberal education, they come to understand that they are heirs to the past in significant ways, and the knowledge that one generation possesses is due in part from the intellectual gains made in former times.[21] There is a past worth learning from, after all, and access to this past can be gained through the liberal arts curriculum, which most usually includes courses in history, literature, and some of the rudiments of clear thinking and writing. As William C. Bagley explained in his book *Craftsmanship In Teaching*, all of human experience has been "crystallized in books."[22] Acquaintance with good books therefore gives us access to how others who have gone before us have grappled with the essential human problems.

Many human problems hover at the level of personal relationships or making personal choices that call on us to forgo momentary pleasures for the sake of long-term gains, and science may not have the answers to all these kinds of problems. Many of them are moral, ethical, political, and for lack of a better term, *personal*. And yet it is just here that the sharpest contrast between present-day education and past times education lies. There is not much room in "college and career ready" curricula for reading core texts—and often, for the liberal arts subjects themselves. The objections are easy to imagine: "well, if you are going to be an English professor, sure you need to read those old books, but not if you are going to be an engineer." I am not so sure that objection has merit. There may come a day in the not too far off future that we will wish many more of our scientists had read Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and thought long and hard about it. We may already be living in such times. As the late president of St. John's College Stringfellow Barr once wrote

> The atomic bomb has dramatized…what happens when we cultivate one field [of study] hard and leave the others to lie fallow. …[humankind] simply cannot afford to know so much more about nuclear physics than it does about the moral and political problems that the atom raises.[23]

Barr went on in that essay to defend liberal arts education, especially the reading of the great books, as one best suited to the times, and perhaps even the *only* education versatile enough to help students meet the myriad of problems that lay ahead in their lives.

---

21. Lee S. Shulman, "Aristotle Had It Right: On Knowledge and Pedagogy" in *The Wisdom of Practice: Essays on Teaching, Learning, and Learning to Teach*, Ed. Suzanne M. Wilson. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004), 407.

22. William C. Bagley, "Education and Utility," in *Craftsmanship In Teaching* (New York: Macmillan, 1911), 109. "[H]uman experience is crystallized in books…when a discovery is made in any field of science,—no matter how specialized the field and no matter how trivial the finding,—the discovery is recorded in printer's ink and placed at the disposal of those who have the intelligence to find it and apply it."

23. Stringfellow Barr, "Education: Now and to Come: Liberal Education: A Common Adventure." *The Antioch Review* 15.3 (1955): 300–312. https://www.jstor.org/stable/4609810

The research and anecdotes from Earl Shorris's excellent book *Riches For the Poor: The Clemente Course in the Humanities* might further support the point that learning in a liberal arts curriculum really does enable students to learn how to solve problems, particularly the problem of finding a flourishing life. In his book, Shorris recounted his experience teaching humanities to impoverished adult learners in New York City. They were students who previously had no access to a liberal arts education but were invited to participate in a project called "The Clemente Course."[24]

Those who agreed to participate were held to a rigorous schedule of reading difficult books and then discussing them with their highly qualified instructors. Shorris and his participants found that more than anything, it was the acquisition of knowledge, the kinds of knowledge that were contained in the books the students were reading, that led to breaking cycles of poverty and helping these adults find their "voice" and thereby seek change. The students found that what they learned helped them toward solving problems of various kinds—be it the systemic problem of their poverty or the situational problems for which they needed solutions.

Shorris provides numerous compelling anecdotes about how people from varied backgrounds found the inspiration in the humanities and liberal arts to change the trajectory of their lives. He related how one of the project's partners, Rafael Pizzaro, grew up reading texts by authors such as "Dante and Sophocles," cultivating an interest in the humanities, and attending a liberal arts college. Pizzaro told the story how his brother did not follow the same path, but instead chose the life of the streets and ended up in prison after committing serious crimes. As Shorris told it, Pizzaro believed that the only tangible difference between the path of his life and his brother's life was the influence of the humanities.[25] Later, Shorris told the story of a man named David Howell, a participant in the Clemente course.[26] Shorris once received an unexpected phone call from Howell, who relayed the news that he had been involved in tense work situation.[27] Howell explained that he had gotten into a heated exchange with a co-worker, but the tension was defused as Howell considered how Socrates might respond given a similar situation. And as Shorris told it, Howell's moment of reflection about Socrates' reasonableness led to a much happier ending for his own story.[28] These two "real world problems" were provided real world solutions by way of liberal arts encounters with core texts. These anecdotes from Earl Shorris' book demonstrated how what Howell and Pizarro learned in the humanities to chart a better way. The humanities do teach us valuable "real life" lessons when taught well.

Shorris's book was not just a collection of stories, though. He discussed how statistical and behavioral research was conducted with the Clemente Course's students. He worked with a researcher who employed a variety of highly-regarded research questionnaires, scales and inventories, and pre- and post-test information with participants in the Clemente Course. The empirical research demonstrated to Shorris' and others' satisfaction that the anecdotes that participants told about how the humanities had helped them were corroborated with statistical data. The research suggested that studying the humanities had given the participants "improved problem definition and formulation" and many other social and cognitive gains.[29]

A quote from Mortimer Adler summarizes why I believe a text-centered, liberal arts education offers the best approach to teach the kind of problem-solving students most need.

---

24. https://clementecourse.org/
25. Earl Shorris, *Riches for the Poor: The Clemente Course in the Humanities* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2000), 124-125.
26. Shorris, *Riches for the Poor*, 148.
27. Shorris, *Riches for the Poor*, 148.
28. Shoriss, *Riches for the Poor*, 149.
29. Shorris, *Riches for the Poor*, 153-154.

> There are some human problems, after all, that have no solution…These are matters about which you cannot think too much, or too well. The greatest books can help you think about them, because they were written by men and women who thought better than other people about them.[30]

However, despite the evidence that Shorris offered, and despite the pleas that Adler, Stringfellow Barr, Eva Brann, and many others have made, the liberal arts curriculum continues its decline in American public education, at both the secondary and post-secondary levels. The reasons for this decline are probably many, and it is outside the purpose of this essay to recount all the reasons. The decline has been probably hastened by the emphasis on the so-called "STEM" subjects of "science, technology, engineering and manufacturing," but there are other factors to consider.

Debates about the canon have also contributed to the decline of the use of "great books" in liberal arts education. Proponents of the liberal arts and core texts must honestly and forthrightly deal with the issues raised by utilizing a canon limited to a Euro-centric and male dominated list of authors. It is encouraging to see how some teachers are working through the issues surrounding which books to read and which to set aside in the K-12 curriculum. For example, in *The Record* of Kappa Delta Pi professors Katherine Landau Wright and Matthew Thomas engaged in a thoughtful discussion on the continued use of certain classic core texts in K-12 classrooms while making room for more recent titles from diverse authors. In "Who Cares About *The Grapes of Wrath*? Arguments For Balancing Choice And Classical Literature," both Wright and Thomas agree there can be no one perfect list of core texts, but there nevertheless is much to be gained when a student's education includes reading seminal texts chosen from among diverse authors. They highlight the importance of selecting books that deal with what they call "global themes;" ones that help students grapple with issues of "universal application" such as friendship, aging, and what they term other "transcendent values." Reading core texts that deal with these issues also hones students' ability to become discerning, thoughtful readers.[31]

Defending the liberal arts curriculum and its use of core texts is a complex position to take in today's educational situation. The issue of the canonicity within the "great books" curriculum poses one problem, and the fact that technical, career-oriented subjects will be the default subject matter for the "college and career ready" curricular approach poses another. With the emphasis on career and technical subjects, students may well be learning how to solve problems related to manufacturing and robotics, but they may be leaving schools inadequately prepared for many of the "human life problems" that will be waiting.

Nevertheless, I remain hopeful that there can still be a place for the liberal arts and core texts in both school and collegiate curricula. If the liberal arts and core texts are to retain even a small foothold in the curriculum, then those of us who continue to believe in their relevance and ability to contribute to the living of a good life must speak up and advocate their use, if even in a different sort of way, and with an awareness of the need for greater sensitivity in their selection and use. For those of us in teacher education, there exists a unique opportunity to speak about the wider purposes of education beyond its mere utilitarian ends of career preparation and teaching us how to do mechanical tasks that can be learned on our own, outside the classroom. Reminding our students that life can be lived with joy and even happiness, and that the liberal arts and core texts

---

30. Mortimer Adler and Charles van Doren, *How To Read A Book* (New York: Touchstone, 2014. [orig published 1940]), 332.
31. Katherine Landau Wright and Matthew Thomas, "Who Cares About *The Grapes of Wrath*? Arguments for Balancing Choice and Classical Literature," *Kappa Delta Pi Record*. Vol. 55, No. 4, 148-153.

offer thoughtful perspectives on how to achieve such a joyful and potentially happy life, remains a much needed task.

Christopher Beckham is an assistant professor of education at Morehead State University. He teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in the history and philosophy of education.

Mentor and New Teacher Self-Perceptions Regarding the Effectiveness of a Statewide Mentoring Program

Anna Schwan, Cheryl Wold, Andrea Moon, Alan Neville,
& Janeen Outka, Northern State University

Abstract

This qualitative study examined the impact of mentor and new teacher pairings on the self-reported benefits of a statewide mentoring program for new teachers. Participants included 147 new teachers and 89 mentors in a Midwestern, rural state. Teacher demographics included all grade levels, different content areas, job alike and job not-alike pairings, and in-district and out-of-district pairings. Results indicated that the most similar pairings, i.e. same district and same position, reported the most positive mentoring experience. Several themes were identified by the mentors and new teachers as being benefits of the experience. Major themes identified by mentor teachers included reflection, positive interactions, collaboration, improved instruction, and improvement. Major themes identified by new teachers included improved instruction, collaboration, positive interaction, improvement, direction, and sense of community.

Keywords: mentoring, new teachers, mentor/mentee pairings

As teachers continue to flee the profession, school districts deliberate the reasons for attrition and work to cope with the cost associated with replacing a teacher. The nation was short 110,000 teachers for the 2017-2018 school year (Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, and Carver-Thomas, 2016), and about 8% of teachers leave the profession every year (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). Research suggests that teachers require three to seven years of experience in order to be considered highly qualified (Long, 2010), yet many teachers never make it that long. Shaw and Newton (2014) reported that over one third of teachers quit within the first five years.

While it is impossible to retain every teacher who enters the field, it is prudent for school districts to study and work to prevent teacher attrition as much as possible (Callahan, 2016). Research has shown that establishing organized meaningful mentoring programs can be beneficial in reducing some of the reasons that teachers leave the profession (Breaux & Wong, 2003; Callahan, 2016; Darling-Hammond, 2012; White & Mason, 2003). Lipton and Wellman (2018) highlighted the many benefits of a mentoring program, stating that,

> Novices who participate in high quality induction programs that include a comprehensive mentoring component have consistently shown that they increase beginning teacher retention, improve student achievement, and reduce the waste of financial and human resources

associated with teacher turnover. Beginning teachers that are supported early in their careers have increased effectiveness in their classrooms, higher satisfaction, and greater commitment than those that do not experience these supports. (p. xv)

Mentoring programs vary greatly in their structure and content (Ingersoll and Strong, 2011; Israel, Kamman, McCray & Sindelar, 2014; Polikoff, Desimone, Porter, & Hochberg, 2015; & Radford, 2018). Defining mentoring and the components that make up a successful program is critical for success. According to Ingersoll and Strong (2011), "Mentoring is the personal guidance provided, usually by seasoned veterans, to beginning teachers in schools" (p.203). Radford (2017) defined the role of a mentor stating that mentors "need to be reflective practitioners, know how to facilitate adult learning, as well as observe and provide feedback (p. 3). Zachary (2012) declared the mentoring process to be one where the "mentor and mentee work together to achieve specific, mutually defined goals that focus on developing the mentee's skills, abilities, knowledge, and thinking; it is in every way a learning partnership (p. 3).

In 2011, Ingersoll and Strong compiled the results of 15 empirical studies conducted since the 1980s on the effects of mentoring programs, and suggested that mentoring is based on Zey's mutual benefits model:

> This model is based on the premise that individuals enter into and remain part of relationships to meet certain needs, for as long as the parties continue to benefit. Zey extended this model by adding that the organization as a whole (in this case the school) that contains the mentor and mentee also benefits from the interaction. (p. 203)

New teachers, as they become submerged in the job and isolated in their classrooms, have the tendency to forget some of the rewarding reasons for entering the teaching profession. State and local policy makers have renewed the emphasis on mentoring as a main strategy to address new teachers' isolation, frustration, and attrition (Kardos & Johnson, 2008). Kent, Green, and Feldman (2012) discussed mentoring as essential for helping new teachers experience a resonating success that encourages retention. In addition, the current body of literature has emphasized the critical importance of mentoring in recent years (Lipton & Wellman, 2018; Radford, 2017; Ingersoll and Strong, 2011; & Flanagan, 2006). Specifically, participants in mentoring programs have experienced gains in student achievement which increases self-efficacy and higher job satisfaction (Ingersoll & Strong, 2012).

The number of teachers who need to be replaced each school year is startling. Ingersoll and Strong (2011) found that the number of new teachers hired rose from 50,000 in 1987-1988 to 200,000 in 2007-2008. In 2018 an estimated 112,000 teaching positions went unfilled (Yan, Chiaramonte, & Lagamayo, 2019). Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2017) reported:

> A high rate of teacher attrition is a primary contributor to teacher shortages nationally. The profession has a national attrition rate about 8% annually, and research shows that the number of teachers leaving each year accounts for close to 90% of annual teacher demand. Furthermore, less than a third of national teacher attrition is due to retirement. In other words, each year schools nationwide must hire tens of thousands of teachers as a result of beginning and mid-career teachers leaving the profession. (p.1)

Mentoring provides many benefits for new teachers. Ingersoll and Strong (2011) found that, "Almost all of the studies that we reviewed showed that beginning teachers who participated

in some kind of induction had higher satisfaction, commitment, or retention" (p.225). Additionally, they found that these beginning teachers kept students on task better, developed good lesson plans, used effective discussion techniques, had positive classroom environments, adjusted instruction appropriately, and managed classrooms effectively. As a result, most of the studies reviewed indicated that when new teachers participated in mentoring programs their students showed greater academic gains.

Effective mentoring programs require a systematic approach for training and professional development. The Texas Teacher Mentor Advisory Committee (TTMAC) discussed seven critical components of a successful mentoring program which include mentor selection, mentor assignment, mentor training, mentor roles and responsibilities, program design and delivery, funding and accountability (TTMAC, 2015). Barrera, Braley, and Slate (2010) stressed the value of a mentoring program with specific goals, and Darling-Hammond (2009) noted the importance of utilizing highly qualified teacher mentors as means of retaining teachers. Similarly, White and Mason (2003) found that highly qualified mentors led to greater student achievement, enhanced teacher enthusiasm, and better student behavior.

The pairing of mentors and new teachers also impacts the program's success. Flanagan (2006) found that the pairing of mentors and new teachers is important, "Three main criteria for the match surfaced: (a) the mentor and mentee should be in close proximity; (b) they should be in the same subject area, or; (c) the same grade level" (p. 140). Hobson et al. (2009) reported, "... that the success of beginning teacher mentoring is, in part, a function of the way mentors are selected and paired with mentees" (p. 211). Mentor and new teacher pairings have been significant in past studies (Abell, 1995; Hobson, 2009; Kardos & Johnson, 2008; & Lozinak, 2016).

The purpose of this study was to identify mentor and new teacher self-reported perceptions, derive themes, and discuss the impact of mentor and new teacher pairings. A growing body of literature indicates that the relationship between mentor and new teacher poses benefits for both (Huling & Resta, 2001; Hanson & Moir, 2008; Hobson, Ashby, Malderez, & Tomlinson, 2009; Jewell, 2007). The primary focus of the aforementioned studies emphasized the benefits of serving as a mentor, but research that investigates mentor and new teacher pairings is somewhat limited, and thus prompted our investigation.

Research Questions

1. What were the self-reported perceptions of mentors and new teachers participating in a statewide mentor program?
2. What is the relationship between mentor and new teacher pairings and their self-reported perceptions?
3. How many new teacher participants in this study remained in the teaching profession at the beginning of the following school year?

Methods

The intent of this study was to investigate mentor and new teacher self-perceptions of their participation in a statewide mentoring program. Mentors and new teachers participating in a formal statewide mentoring program during the 2018-2019 school year, who enrolled in a university course for graduate credit, were surveyed. Qualitative data were collected from a questionnaire that consisted of six open-ended questions provided to the participants near the end of the school year and mentoring partnership. The questionnaire, which was given to the participants as a paper

copy and collected by the instructor of the university course was purposely developed to investigate mentors' and new teachers' perceptions. The researchers' role in this study was not to discover the meaning but rather to interpret, organize, and represent meaning (Merriam, 2002). Participants' identifying information appeared on the questionnaire, but the data have been handled in a way that carefully preserves confidentiality.

Researchers read the responses several times and reflected on how to organize the data based on themes identified in the literature. This process was originally identified as "sensitizing" (Blumer, 1954) and described by Hobson, Ashby, Malderez, and Tomlinson (2009) and Orland-Barak and Hasin (2010) implying that the data were read with regard to the literature in this area. Two of the researchers initially reviewed 25% of the total responses independent of the research team to establish inter-rater reliability in identifying the themes.

Each individual researcher listed themes and grouped them based on similarities. The dominant themes that emerged were documented along with supporting quotations from the questionnaires. The team met to discuss individual findings, utilized the constant comparative method for creating categories and themes (Merriam, 1998), and came to a consensus about overarching themes that prevailed throughout responses of mentors and new teachers. The researchers then read new literature based on the overarching themes, and compared new findings to those already established in order to validate and/or further investigate.

While the open-ended questions were not specifically aligned to articulated objectives of the state-wide program (The purposes of the statewide mentoring program were: 1) direct classroom observation and consultation; 2) assistance in instructional planning and preparation; 3) support in implementation and delivery of classroom instruction; and 4) other assistance intended to enhance the professional performance and development of the beginning teacher), they were intended to gather useful information about the success and efficacy of the program and to derive whether or not the purposes carried out proficiently by the program. Questions were structured to capture efficacy rather than logistics, and they were designed to broadly encompass the purposes of the mentor program. Questions for the mentors and new teachers were identical. Six open-ended questions posed to new teacher and mentor participants:

1. Please describe how your participation in the SDDOE Mentor Program positively impacted you and your teaching.
2. Please describe how your participation in the SDDOE Mentor Program positively impacted your students.
3. Please describe how your participation in the SDDOE Mentor Program positively impacted your district, colleagues, families, and/or community.
4. Please describe BOTH the benefits and challenges of working with a new teacher/mentor who was in your building.
5. Please describe BOTH the benefits and challenges of working with a new teacher/mentor who teaches the same grade levels as you.
6. Please describe BOTH the benefits and challenges of working with a new teacher/mentor who teaches the same content area as you do.

Participants

Participants in this study included a sample group of 147 new teachers and 89 mentor teachers who applied and were selected to participate in a statewide mentoring program during the

2018-2019 school year. The purposes of the statewide mentoring program were: 1) direct classroom observation and consultation; 2) assistance in instructional planning and preparation; 3) support in implementation and delivery of classroom instruction; and 4) other assistance intended to enhance the professional performance and development of the beginning teacher.

Program requirements included a commitment to a two-year formal mentoring relationship, yearly participation in a one-day kickoff event for mentors and their new teachers, yearly participation in a one-day mentor training event for mentors, yearly participation in three webinar trainings for mentors, a minimum of 34 mentoring contact hours each year, of which 18 were required to be face-to-face hours, and yearly attendance at a two-day culminating mentor academy event for both mentors and new teachers.

The statewide mentoring program funded travel costs including transportation, meals, and lodging for mentors and new teachers to attend the mentor training, kick off events, and the summer academy. Mentors and new teacher partners who worked in different cities were also provided with travel costs for up to four round trip visits to each other. Additionally, mentors were paid a $1,500 stipend for each year of service as a mentor. Through a state department of education collaboration, both mentors and new teachers who successfully completed two years of the mentor program and all requirements herein were granted automatic renewal of their state teaching certificates.

Mentors selected for participation in the statewide mentoring program were required to have a minimum of five years of teaching experience, one of which was within the last seven years in a school or other education-relation field, and to have a valid teaching certificate. New teachers were required to be within the first two years of teaching. Upon selection, mentors were matched with new teachers based on the following factors: geographic location, same building or district, job-alike position, or administrator request. Furthermore, participants of this study elected to enroll in a course for college credit and submit responses to the researchers' open-ended questions as part of the course requirements.

Data Collection

Data were collected at the culmination of the 2018-2019 statewide mentoring program cycle. As part of the requirements for obtaining college credit, participants responded to the researchers' open-ended questions knowing that their responses would be used in this study. The researchers developed a clear response protocol and provided a template on which to respond to ensure accurate and credible responses. Participants willingly provided their responses and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) was carefully followed to ensure that confidentiality was preserved. No teacher names or school districts were identified.

Data Analysis

Researchers analyzed and interpreted the data using Creswell's (2012) six-step process, which has been identified as an effective qualitative methodology. First, the responses of the participants were analyzed by hand. Each researcher read their participants' responses numerous times and highlighted key words, such as collaboration, as they examined the detailed descriptions. Next, researchers reviewed the data to gain a general sense of the data. At this point, the researchers determined that sufficient themes could be derived from the current responses and no additional data would be needed. During this step, the responses were divided into text segments to identify codes, while at the same time examining these codes for any overlap and redundancy. Once these

codes were identified, the researchers returned to the data once again to determine if any new codes emerged. During this process, specific quotes of the participants were highlighted that supported the codes that had been identified. In the next step, these codes were used to narrow the data into five to seven relevant themes. Next, using an Excel spreadsheet to track the codes, the researchers tallied the exact numbers for each theme and tables were developed to represent the findings. Once this information was identified, the researchers interpreted the findings to discover the meaning compared to the literature on mentoring. Finally, the results were validated through member checking (Creswell, 2012).

Results

The analysis of the data revealed significant benefits for both new teachers and mentors. The researchers identified six dominant themes (by highest percentage) that emerged from new teacher responses: improved instruction, collaboration, positive interaction, improvement, direction, and sense of community as reported in Figure 1. The researchers then identified five dominant themes (by highest percentage) that emerged from mentor responses: reflection, positive interaction, collaboration, improved instruction, and improvement as reported in Figure 2. Sample statements from new teachers and mentors can be found in Table 1.

Table 1
New Teacher and Mentor Theme-related Statements

New Teacher	Mentor
Experience gave me new perspectives	Reflect on my own teaching
Experience directly benefited my students	New and refreshing ideas for my classroom
Helped me develop confidence	Positive energy is contagious
I gained a confidant	Sense of wanting to help each other
Having a designated person took pressure off	Gained new teaching strategies
Helped me learn the nuances of school and district	Exposed me to out of the box activities

Note. Bulleted statements from new teacher and mentor teacher comments that were related to major themes identified from aggregate.

New Teacher Themes
Improved Instruction

Improved instruction was identified as a dominant theme by the new teachers. Hobson, Ashby, Malderez, and Tomlinson (2008) identified the following benefits for mentees: reduced feeling of isolation, increased confidence and self-esteem, professional growth, and improved regulation and problem-solving capacities. Additionally, they noted that mentees have reported benefits such as behavior and classroom management skills, as well as the ability to manage their time and caseloads. These findings are consistent with some comments from our new teachers such as:

> My mentor made sorting out some management logistics with a new math curriculum easier. She also helped me open up and try new things throughout the year with management...Having her there to help guide me in reflecting on my teaching by watching my videos was crucial because she was able to point out some things that I never would have

seen or caught both good and bad to help make my instruction more effective. (New teacher respondent 120)

Collaboration

Collaboration was an expected theme identified by new teachers, as one would presume new teachers to benefit from collaboration with an experienced teacher. Bieler (2012) noted, "today's new teachers may have a different disposition toward collaboration" (p. 48) and that they "longed for collaboration" (p. 48). This collaboration is different from the more traditional closed-door approach. Many of the new teachers described collaboration in various ways such as brainstorming ideas, bouncing ideas around, and talking problems out with another teacher. One of the new teachers identified yet another important benefit of collaboration for the students: "In a less direct manner, I think it is good for our students to see we are continuing to develop ourselves as a professional and working together with other teachers. The mentor program is an easy way to model collaboration and self-improvement" (New teacher respondent 101). "My mentor and I worked collaboratively to improve our teaching and our classrooms" (New teacher respondent 86). One new teacher found herself better collaborating with other teachers as a result of the program:

> With this program, I was able to obtain many new relationships with not only my mentor, but also other teachers I observed within our district! It has helped me to reach out to other educators within my community, not only the educators I work with on a daily basis. (New teacher respondent 19)

Positive Interaction

New teachers described positive interactions as an important theme as well. Hobson et al. (2009), noted that one of the most commonly identified benefits for new teachers was the positive interactions between during the mentoring experiences which were described as, "the provision of emotional and psychological support, which has been shown to be helpful in boosting the confidence of beginner teachers, enabling them to put difficult experiences into perspective, and increasing their morale and job satisfaction," (p.209). One new teacher wrote, "Being in the Mentor Program impacted me and my teaching positively by initiating conversations between myself and a veteran teacher" (New teacher respondent 108). Another described the positive interactions in this way:

> Through the mentoring program I have gained a confidant. I feel as though I can communicate with my mentor about anything, personal and professional, that comes along with the job. Being a new teacher can be stressful, and it was reassuring to know that I regularly had someone to talk to about any issues I was struggling with." (New teacher respondent 104)

"Having another teacher invested in what I am doing is amazing" (New teacher respondent 73). "Thank you so much for this program. My mentor has become a treasure in my life. I appreciated her guidance this year and look forward to another year with her" (New teacher respondent 94).

Improvement

Mathur et al. (2013) found new teachers involved in mentoring programs gained improved decision-making ability. An unexpected by-product of improved decision-making abilities is the connection to higher job satisfaction among new teachers (Mathur et al., 2013). One new teacher noted, "My participation in the mentor program has helped me grow more confident in all areas associated with being an educator…" (New teacher respondent 109). New teacher respondent 101 explained the improvement theme this way, "As mentioned above the increased experience I gained directly benefitted my students." Another new teacher explained, "Overall, I feel I have grown faster as a teacher through the mentor program than I would have without" (New teacher respondent 19). "Meeting with my mentor leaves me feeling affirmed in what I am doing for my students" (New teacher respondent 56). New teacher respondent 89 commented:

> The Mentor Program has positively impacted both myself and my teaching by providing me with the resources necessary to be successful. By providing me a designated mentor to work with, I have gained valuable knowledge in my content area (ELA) and in the management of a classroom.

Direction

Direction was an additional theme voiced by new teacher respondents. One of the new teachers in this study wrote:

> The program helped make the first year of teaching easier by knowing I was not doing it all alone, and make the second year enjoyable because I could see myself growing as a teacher and improving in my teaching techniques. It gave me the confidence I needed to know that I was going in the right direction and that if I struggled with something I could ask questions to help ease my stress and anxiety. (New teacher respondent 105)

Another new teacher described the direction theme in this way, "Participating in the [state] Mentor Program has provided me with a positive direction and start to my career" (New teacher respondent 110). New teacher respondent 55 commented, "My mentor helped me prioritize what is important in my classroom." New teachers found it important to be able to seek content-related advice. One teacher noted:

> She also has a lot of insight into the content area, giving super helpful suggestions when needed for content-specific things. I can ask for suggestions for things like that from teachers in my own district, but their ideas may not work for my content area. (New teacher respondent 90)

Sense of Community

New teachers identified sense of community as another consistent theme. New teachers spend their early career challenges in professional isolation (Johnson and The Project on the Next Generation of Teachers 2004; Kardos and Johnson, 2007). Faculty relationships can be formed and strengthened through mentoring programs. These programs set the stage for teachers to speak with one another and reflect on their practice (Mathur et al., 2013). A new teacher participating in

this study commented, "Being able to build a relationship with my mentor before the start of the school year helped give me a sense of belonging within the school district, which made it easier to connect with other staff and students" (New teacher respondent 82). New teacher respondent 108 described the community theme by writing, "Through these meetings, we were really able to hear about new ideas, get a pulse for how our colleagues are doing, share struggles and positives, and just learn more about one another." Another new teacher explained the sense of community theme this way:

> My participation in the Mentor Program gave me someone to help navigate the challenges faced when dealing with community members and families. I was able to have a better sense of the duties required of me not just for my students, but for the entire community. (New teacher respondent 62)

Traditional defining of a mentoring program has commonly encompassed benefits to the mentee (Bieler, 2012; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Pitton, 2006; Shields & Murray, 2017). Lozinak (2016) explains that the relationship between mentor and mentee should be carefully derived, but the sometimes unintended education of the mentor has not been traditionally discussed in Western educational literature (Weinstein, 2014). While assimilating new teachers into schools is critical, the mentoring experience can be extremely advantageous and rewarding for both the mentee and the mentor. Molitor (2014) found that mentors who received training directly related to understanding the role of the mentor reported several benefits including increased confidence, reflection, networking, and relationship-building. Mathur et al. (2013) also found that mentorship program helped mentors with their ability to reflect on their own teaching. This opportunity for reflection on professional practice leaves veteran teachers feeling refreshed (Lafluer & White, 2010). Mentors often find the experience not only to be rewarding to them as a person but as well as for their practice as a whole (Lafleur & White, 2010).

Mentor Themes

Reflection

A consistent benefit articulated by mentors was increased reflection. Participants indicated that mentoring has given them an opportunity to reflect on their current practice, their students, and teaching in general. A teacher's ability to analytically reflect is a critical attribute in the intricate world of teaching (Parsons & Stephenson, 2005). Finding time to systematically reflect is difficult, and providing opportunities for experienced teachers to practice this skill is a realized benefit of the mentoring program for the mentors. The quotes below indicate an embrace of those opportunities.

> I love being able to have time set aside for classroom observations, collaboration, and reflection. Mentoring makes you take a second look at yourself, strategies and overall best practices that you have become out of touch with as you have been doing things "your way" for so long. (Mentor respondent 95)

> I learned that when teachers stop reflecting, they stop learning and therefore they stop being effective as teachers. This idea haunted me. While I do not believe that after only a few

years of teaching, I have stopped reflecting, this experience allowed me new tools to be able to reflect more widely, more deeply, and more personally. (Mentor respondent 90)

The mentoring program helped train me to better understand how to help teachers. Not only a mentee, but also other teachers in my district. An unintended result, I was able to reflect and examine where I needed help too. I've been able to network… and also learned plenty from my new teacher the past 2 years. (Mentor respondent 85)

Positive Interaction

A constructive relationship between mentors and new teachers prevails as a dominant outcome in this study as well as in other studies of mentor programs (Billingsley, Carlson, & Klein, 2004; Wong, 2004; Sparks, Tsemenu, Green, Truby, Brockmeier, & Noble, 2017), and collegial interaction is extremely important for a positive environment (Hall & Hord, 2006). The comments below indicate positive interaction as a benefit for mentors.

I was able to include some new technology with my students, who benefited from keeping the material new and engaging. I ensured the interventions were research-based and were implemented with fidelity, even to a higher degree than I had been doing previously. I looked to keep material fresh and exciting and to find new material, instead of reusing some from many years, so that my new teacher could also see how to bring in outside supplemental materials to meet individual needs. I also feel my students got a refreshed and rejuvenated teacher out of me by my interactions with my new teacher. (Mentor respondent 89)

Collaboration

Mentors' partnerships with their new teachers provide extraordinary valuable reciprocal interactions (Boreen, Johnson, Niday, & Potts, 2000), and numerous mentors indicated that collaboration was a positive outcome of their experience in the program. Crafted conversations and collaborations provide an opportunity for mentors to share knowledge, gain new ideas which increases self-esteem (Ford & Parsons, 2000). Mentors describe their experiences with collaboration in the quotes below.

The mentor program utilizes our professionalism, our skills and our experiences to help ignite and keep new teachers motivated and encouraged to stay in the profession. My involvement in the mentor program has brought other teachers into my life to collaborate with and to discuss fresh ideas to bring back to our classrooms and communities. (Mentor respondent 88)

Anytime you step out of your regular routine it forces you to look at things in a different manner. I was inspired by my mentee to try some new approaches in my classroom. Together we explored what worked, what didn't, and used what we discovered to enhance our teaching. Our students benefited from our collaboration. (Mentor respondent 52)

Improved Instruction

Mentors who commented that the mentoring process improved instruction identified acts such as conducting new research, implementing engaging teaching strategies, producing more authentic assessments, and carefully constructing learning outcomes. Mentors appear to recognize their impact as a role model and as a result, improved their own instruction. Mentors stated:

> Going with my "new teacher" and observing other classrooms was a terrific way for us to see other ways of teaching. We observed a teacher that teaches art with a more Teaching Artistic Behavior (TAB) approach. After observing her and a more veteran teacher in a different district, we then met and were able to communicate what is working about the two different styles of teaching and what might not be the most beneficial part of how they taught or the way it was taught. Then we could take some aspects of what we were seeing and integrate them into our own classrooms. (Mentor respondent 68)

> I have found that working with my mentee has made me reevaluate some of my methods and has helped me to add more variety to my teaching. It has been great for me to have a younger teacher to work with that is closer to the age of the kids I am working with. The added perspective has helped me a lot. My students now receive better instruction from both myself and my mentee as we work together to continually improve our craft. I think this was guided and refined by the mentor program. I believe I would have done a lot of the same things to help him as a new teacher to be more successful, but the Mentor Program has provided guidelines and topics of discussion that have steered this process in a more effective direction. (Mentor respondent 1)

Improvement

Overall improvement emerged as an overarching theme among mentors, referencing benefits such as obtaining new ideas and strategies from their mentees as well as enjoying the increased collaboration involved in mentoring. Hobson, Ashby, Malderez, and Tomlinson (2008, p. 208) identified the following benefits for mentors: positive impact on professional and personal development and learning through self-reflection or critical reflection on their own practice. Haack (2006) found that mentoring can be a win-win exchange for both parties in that "youthful creative energy and idealism for wisdom and experience" (p. 4). The quotes below give an example of the restoration experienced by two of the mentor participants.

> Because of my revitalization as a reflective practitioner, my students were positively impacted. As my new teacher and I were constantly evaluating lessons, parent interaction, classroom environment and more, I took these new ideas and revelations into my classroom. I believe that my students next year are actually the ones that will have benefited the most, because so much of what we talked about this year sparked new and exciting ideas for the upcoming school year. (Mentor respondent 90)

> My participation in this year's mentor program allowed me to gain new insight and appreciation for teaching again. I think, after a few years of teaching, we forget all of the nuts and bolts that went into getting us to where we are now. The first year brings up a lot of

"how to" situations and reflection points for your new teacher. During this program I was forced to rethink many situations and theories that I had about why I do what I do in the classroom. As a result of my new teacher talking through and asking questions about her year, I was able to take into consideration a viewpoint that was different than my own. This viewpoint opened my eyes to different ways that I could be doing things in my classroom. I also found that my new teacher had several ideas in which she shared that I absolutely loved. (Mentor respondent 4)

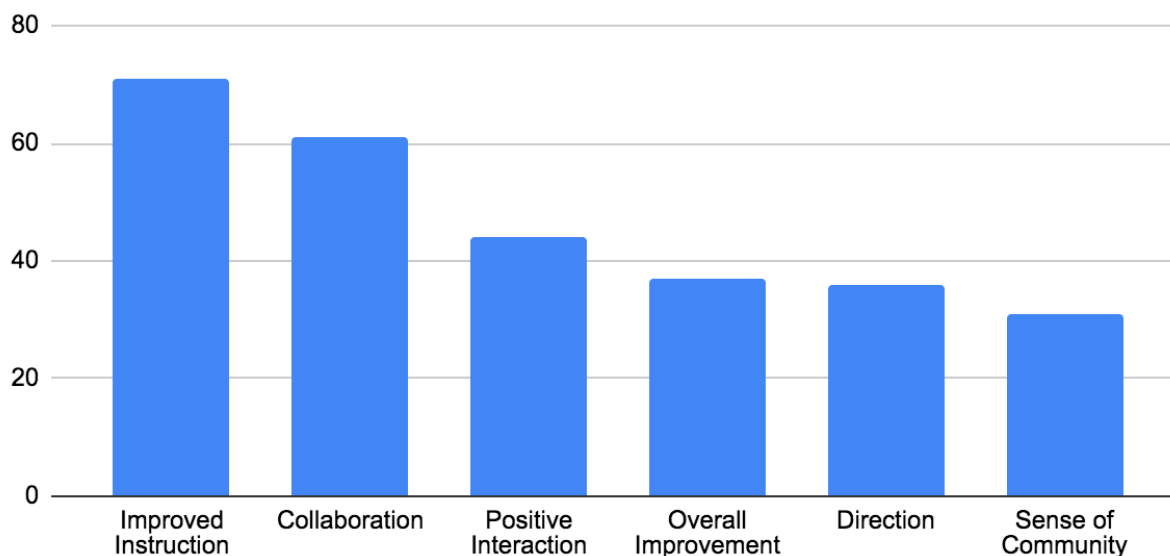**Figure 1. New Teacher Self-Reported Benefits of Mentoring**

Figure 2. Mentor Teacher Self-Reported Benefits of Mentoring
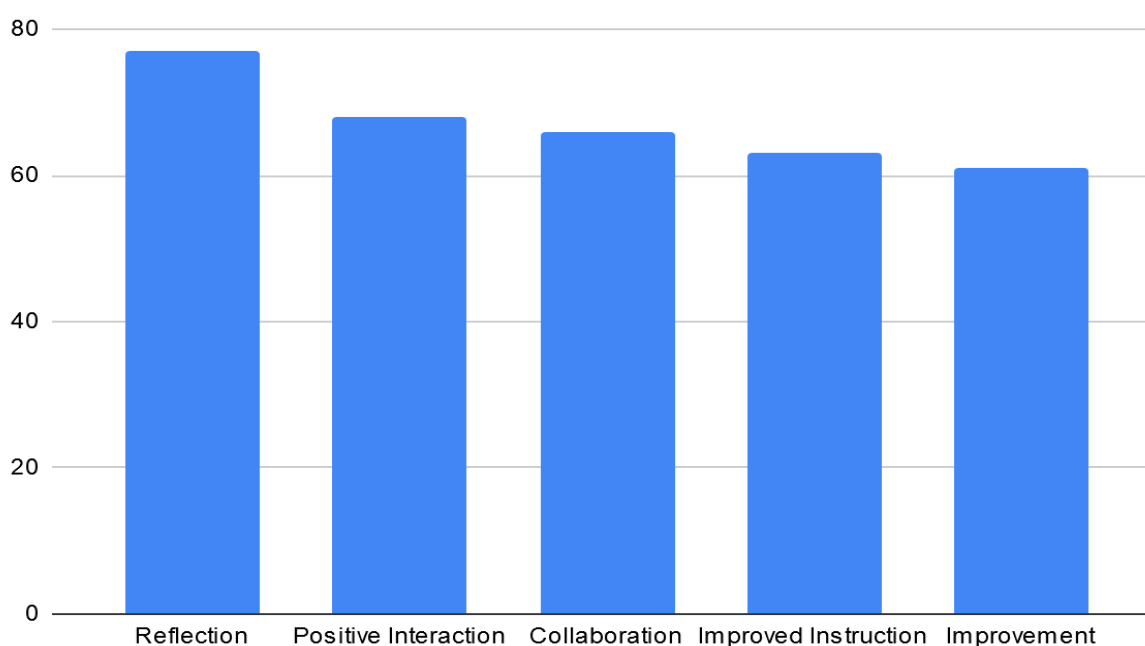
Figure 3: New Teacher Comparisons by Pairings
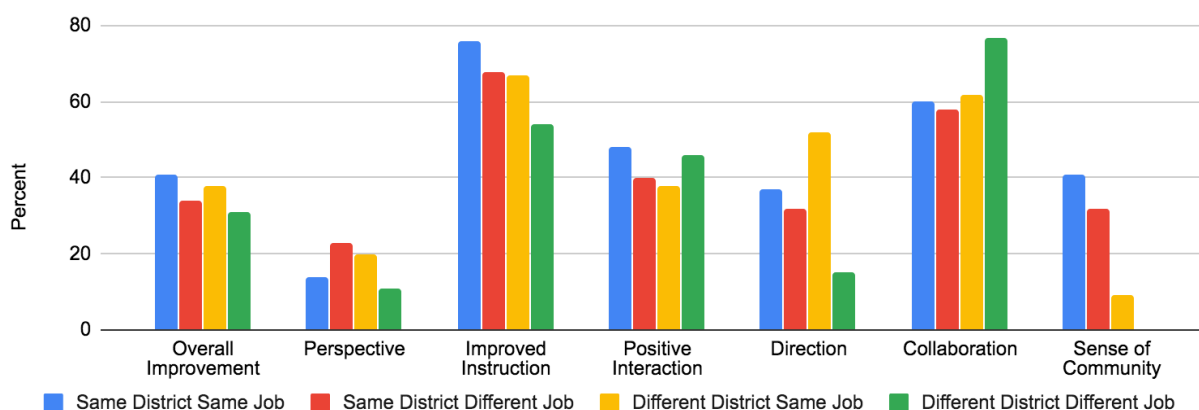
Figure 4: Mentor Comparison by Pairings
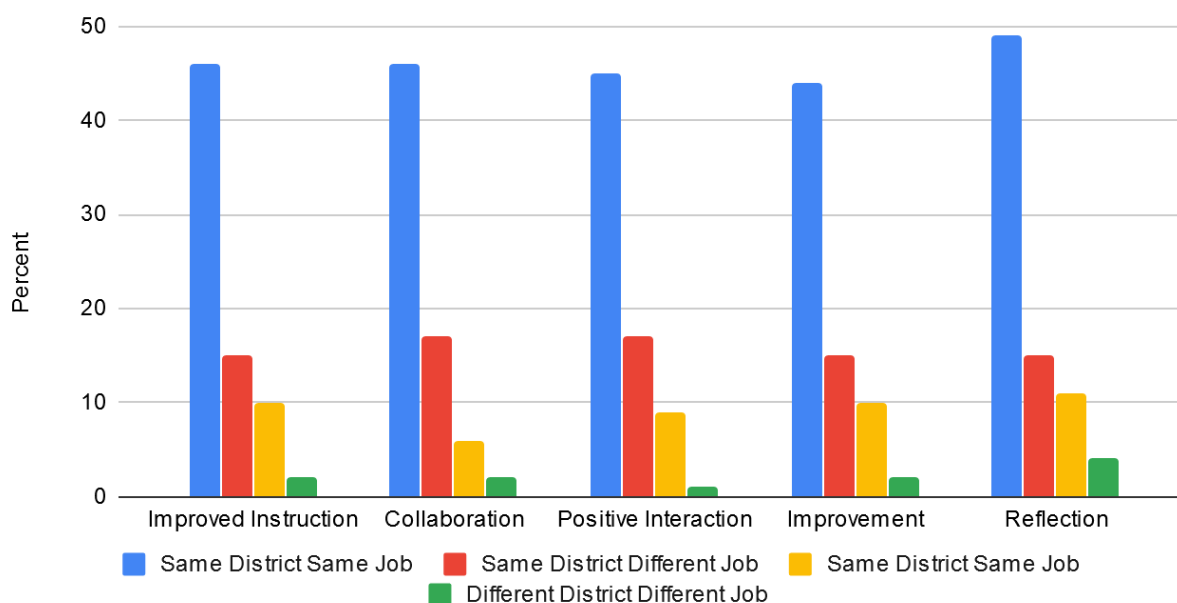
Impact of Pairings for New Teachers

New teachers paired with mentors in the same district and who had the same or similar job identified the following themes more frequently than the other new teacher participants: overall improvement, improved instruction, positive interaction, and sense of community. New teachers paired with mentors in the same district, but with different jobs identified the theme of perspective more frequently than the other new teacher participants. New teachers paired with mentors in a different district, but the same or similar job identified the theme of direction more frequently than the other new teacher participants. New teachers paired with mentors in a different district, but with different jobs identified the theme of collaboration more frequently than the other new teacher participants.

Impact of Pairings for Mentors

Mentors paired with new teachers in the same district and who had the same or similar job identified the following themes more frequently than the other mentor participants: improved instruction, collaboration, positive interaction, improvement, and reflection.

Retention of New Teachers

"Beginning teachers have the highest turnover rate of any group of teachers" (Ingersoll, Merrill, & Stuckey, 2014, p. 24). Perda (2013) found that more than 41 percent of new teachers leave teaching within five years. Hellsten et al. (2009) noted that support and success in the first few years in the professional lifespan of a teacher are critical to long-term success. Providing new teachers with mentors is one strategy in supporting new teachers and combating high rates of attrition. Mentoring has shown a positive impact on new teachers, and current research shows more evidence of mentoring programs for new teachers (Porumb, 2015). "Beginning teachers with a same-subject mentor are less likely to leave their school and to leave teaching after one year" (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004, p. 33). Of the 147 new teacher participants of this study, there was a 93% retention rate in teaching within the state.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of the pairings new teachers and mentors in a statewide mentoring program. This research study attempted to answer these three research questions:

1. What were the self-reported perceptions of mentors and new teachers participating in a statewide mentor program?
2. What is the relationship between mentor and new teacher pairings and their self-reported perceptions?
3. How many new teacher participants in this study remained in the teaching profession at the beginning of the following school year?

Research Question 1: Mentor pairings appeared to have a positive effect on the perceptions of mentors when the mentor and new teacher were more similar than different. The satisfaction was greater when the pairings resulted in individuals working in the same district and in a similar job. More dissatisfaction was reported when the two were in different districts and different jobs. This study examined the perceptions of participants in relation to whether the new teacher and mentor were job similar or not, and if the new teacher and mentor worked in the same district or not.

Research question 2: Mentor pairings appeared to have a positive effect on the perceptions of new teachers when the mentor and new teacher were more similar than different. The satisfaction was greater when the pairings resulted in individuals working in the same district and in a similar job. More dissatisfaction was reported when the two were in different districts and different jobs.

Research Question 3: Participating in a statewide mentoring program had a positive effect on the retention of new teachers. Almost all (93%) of the new teachers participants of this study remained in the same job in the second year.

Limitations

One limitation of the study was that some participants interpreted the questions differently and as a result provided additional information not related to the specific question. Researchers had to sort through these lengthy responses to find the relevant information. Another limitation was that it is not possible to determine whether the mentoring program had a causal effect on the findings as the results of this study involved self-reported perceptions. There could have been other unknown factors influencing the results such as the experiences and characteristics of the mentors and new teachers. A final limitation was that a comparison group was not used, such as those who did not receive mentoring. However, it is important to note that the main focus of this study was the pairing of mentors and new teachers and the perceived outcomes of such pairings.

Implications for Future Research

Many studies have addressed the relationship between mentoring and student achievement. Most research has concluded that the connection between mentoring and achievement is difficult to quantify. In this study, attitudes were examined due to the evidence supporting the link between job satisfaction and attrition rates for new teachers. Our findings were consistent with previous research on the benefits and challenges of mentoring programs. It is important to note this study focused on mentoring relationships and growth rather than district induction activities like new employee orientation. Another significant aspect of this particular study was that it analyzed the pairing of new teachers and mentors. The pairings had a positive effect on both mentor and new teacher experiences. Effects such as enhanced collaboration, improved instruction, poignant reflection, and an overall sense of positive interaction were noted by participants in the study.

Further research examining the impact of mentor pairings in regard to the following demographic areas: grade span, specific subject content, district building organization would be suggested. In addition, further investigation into the impact of same building and/or district pairings, possible constraints pertaining to remote geographical location, and content area would enhance research of this important retention topic.

Districts looking to implement mentoring programs should consider the effect of pairings and must be cognizant of providing appropriate training for participants and careful articulation of expectations and goals. With any type of structured mentoring program it is essential that adequate resources are allocated to support sufficient time for mentors and new teachers to collaborate and reflect on instruction for the purposes of fostering teacher retention.

References

Abell, S. K., Dillion, D. R., Hopkins, C. J., McInerney, W. D., O'Brien, D. G. (1995). Somebody to count on": mentor/intern relationships in a beginning teacher internship program. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 11(2), 173-188.

Bieler, D. (2012). What new teachers want from colleagues. *Educational Leadership, 69*(8), 46-49.

Billingsley, B., Carlson, E., & Klein, S. (2004). The working conditions and induction support of early career special educators. *Exceptional Children, 70*, 333-347.

Blumer, H. (1954). What is wrong with social theory. *American Sociological Review, 19*(1), 3-10.

Boreen, J., Johnson, M. K., Niday, D., & Potts, J. (2000). Mentoring beginning teachers: guiding, reflecting, coaching. York, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers.

Breaux, A.L., & Wong, H.K. (2003). *New Teacher Induction: How to train, support, and retain new teachers.* Mountain View, CA: Harry K. Wong Publications, Inc.

Callahan, J. (2016). Encouraging retention of new teachers through mentoring strategies. *The Delta Gamma Bulletin, 83*(1), 6-11.

Carver-Thomas, D. & Darling-Hammond, L. (2017). *Teacher turnover: Why it matters and what we can do about it.* Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute.

Creswell, J.W. (2012). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

Crutcher, P.A. and Naseem, S. (2016). Cheerleading and cynicism of effective mentoring in current empirical research. *Educational Review, 68* (1), 40-53.

Darling-Hammond, L. (2006). Securing the right to learn: policy and practice for powerful teaching and learning. *Educational Researcher, 35*(7), 13-24.

Flanagan, T. M. (2006). *The perceived effectiveness of a beginning teacher mentoring program in central Virginia* (Doctoral dissertation, Liberty University). Retrieved from https://digital-commons.liberty.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1116&context=doctoral

Ford, D. & Parsons, J. (2000). Teachers as mentors. ED 447 073.

Haack, P.A. (2006). Mentoring and professional development programs: Possibilities andpitfalls. *Music Educators Journal,* 92 (4), 60-64.

Hanson, S., & Moir, E. (2008). Beyond mentoring: Influencing the professional practice and careers of experienced teachers. *Phi Delta Kappan, 89,* 453-458.

Hellsten, L. M., Prytula, M. P., Ebanks, A., & Lai, H. (2009). Teacher induction: Exploringbeginning teacher mentorship. Canadian Journal of Education, 32(4), 703-733. Retrievedfrom http://pearl.stkate.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com.pearl.stkate.edu/docview/215 374394 ?accountid=26879

Hobson, A.J., Ashby, P., Malderez, A., and Tomlinson, P.D. (2008). Mentoring beginning teachers: What we know and what we don't, *Teaching and Teacher Education,* 25, 207-216.

Huling, L., & Resta, V. (2001, November). *Teacher mentoring as professional development* No. ED 460125). Washington, DC: ERIC Clearing House on Teaching and Teacher Education.

Ingersoll, R.M. & Smith, T.M. (2004). Do teacher induction and mentoring matter? *NASSP Bulletin, 88*(638), 28-40).

Ingersoll, R.M. and Strong, M. (2011). The impact of induction and mentoring programs for beginning teachers: A critical review of the research. *Review of Educational Research, 81* (2) 201-233.

Ingersoll, R., & Strong, M. (2011). What research tells us about the impact of induction and mentoring programs for beginning teachers. *Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, 111*(2), 466-490.

Ingersoll, R.M. Merrill, L., & Stuckey, D. (2014). *Seven trends: the transformation of the teaching force, updated April 2014.* CPRE Report (#RR-80). Philadelphia: Consortium for Policy Research in Education, University of Pennsylvania.

Israel, M., Kamman, M.L., McCray, E.D., & Sindelar, P.T. (2014). Mentoring in actions: The interplay among professional assistance, emotional support, and evaluation. *Exceptional Children, 81* (1), 45-63.

Jewell, M. (2007). What does mentoring mean to experienced teachers? A phenomenological interview study. *Teacher Educator, 42*, 289-303.

Johnson, S. M., & The Project on the Next Generation of Teachers. (2004). Finders and keepers: Helping new teachers survive and thrive in our schools. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Kardos, S. M., & Johnson, S. M. (2007). On their own and presumed expert: New teachers' experience with their colleagues. *Teachers College Record*, *109*(9), 2083–2106.

Kardos, S. M. & Johnson, S. M. (2008). New teachers' experiences of mentoring: the good, the bad, and the inequity. *Journal of Educational Change,* 23-44. doi: 10.1007/s10833-008-9096-4

Kent, A.M., Green, A.M., & Feldman, P. (2012). Fostering the success of new teachers: Developing lead teachers in a statewide teacher mentoring program. *Current Issues in Education, 15*(1), 1-17.

Lafleur, A. K., & White, B. J. (2010). Appreciating mentorship: The benefits of being aMentor. *Professional Case Management*, *15*(6), 305.

Lipton, L. & Wellman, B. (2018). *Mentoring matters: A practical guide to learning-focused relationships* (3rd ed.). Charlotte, VT: MiraVia.

Lozinak, K. (2016). Mentor matching does matter. *The Delta Gamma Bulletin, 83*(1), 6-11.

Mathur, S. R., Gehrke, R., & Kim, S. H. (2013).Impact of a teacher mentorship program on mentors' and mentees' perceptions of classroom practices and the mentoringexperience.Assessment for Effective Intervention, 38(3), 154-162.

Merriam, S. (2002). *Qualitative Research in Practice: Examples for Discussion and Analysis*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Molitor, S. (2014). *Understanding the experience of mentor teachers as teacher leaders in a secondary school context* (Doctoral dissertation, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Toronto).   Retrieved   from   https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/d20b/aa66133a634efdbe4443c1423f5d64d 72a26.pdf?_ga=2.74691154.1719803614.1571973558-1067905113.1571973558

Orland-Barak, L. & Hasin, R. (2010). Exemplary mentors' perspectives towards mentoring across mentoring contexts: Lessons from collective case studies. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 26*(3), 427-437.

Parsons, M., & Stephenson, M. Developing reflective practice in student teachers: Collaboration and critical partnerships. *Teachers and Teaching*, *11*(1), 95-116.

Perda, D. (2013). *Transitions into and out of teaching: A longitudinal analysis of early careerteacher turnover.* University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.

Pitton, D. E. (2006). *Mentoring novice teachers: fostering a dialogue process.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Polikoff, M. S., Desimone, L. M., Porter, A. & Hochberg, E.D. (2015). Mentoring policy and the quality of mentoring. *The Elementary School Journal, 116* (1), 76-102.

Porumb, I. (2015). The quality of mentorship in education—aA resource in growing theattractiveness of the teaching career. Procedia—Social and Behavioral Sciences, 180, 945-952. doi:10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.02.250

Radford, C. P. (2107). *Mentoring in action: Guiding, sharing, and reflecting with novice teachers* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Shields, S. & Murray, M. (2017). Beginning teachers' perceptions of mentors and access to communities of practice. *International Journal of Mentoring and Coaching in Education, 6*(4), 317-331.

Sparks, J., Tsemenhu, R., Green, R., Truby, W., Brockmeier, L., & Noble, K. Investigating new teacher mentoring practices. *National Teacher Education Journal, 10*(1), 59-65.

Texas Teacher Mentoring Advisory Committee. (2015, January). Report to the Texas Legislature. Retrieved from http://tea.texas.gov/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=25769819397

Weinstein, N. (2018). Teacher Mentoring. *Teacher Mentoring -- Research Starters Education*, 1. Retrieved from http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=shib&db=e0h&AN=29964478&site=eds-live

White, M., & Mason, C. (2003). *Mentoring and induction principles and guidelines.* Arlington, VA: Council For Exceptional Children.

Wong, H. (2004). Induction programs that keep new teachers teaching and improving. *NASSP Bulletin, 88*(638), 48-52.

Yan, H., Chiaramonte, T., & Lagamayo, A. (2019, October 6). Desperate to fill teachershortages, US schools are hiring teachers from overseas. *CNN*. Retrieved fromhttps://www.cnn.com/201910/06/us/international-teachers-us-shortage/index.html

Zachary, L. J. (2012). *The mentor's guide: Facilitating effective learning relationships* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Dr. Andria Moon teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in elementary education, early childhood education, and educational leadership for the Millicent Atkins School of Education at Northern State University in Aberdeen, South Dakota. She also serves as the Teacher Education Department Chair and Associate Dean. Her research topics include early childhood education, literacy, educational technology, mentoring, and school culture.

Dr. Alan L. Neville currently serves as Superintendent of the Waubay School District in Waubay, SD. He is a member of the South Dakota Department of Education's Mentor Development Team. He is a veteran of the United States Army.

Dr. Janeen Outka is a School Improvement Specialist, advising districts in comprehensive improvement and strategic planning. She is a member of both the statewide Teacher Mentoring Development Team and SD Commission on Teaching & Learning and is an adjunct instructor at Northern State University and the University of South Dakota.

Dr. Anna Schwan is an Assistant Professor of Education at Northern State University in Aberdeen, SD. In addition to teaching, she coordinates the MSED in Educational Studies and the MSED in Teaching and Learning programs. Her research focuses on principal effectiveness, teacher retention, culturally responsive teaching, and student motivation and amotivation.

Dr. Cheryl Wold is an Associate Professor at Northern State University, Aberdeen, SD. Dr. Wold primarily teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in special education. Her main research interests are special education, educator preparation programs, and PK-12 education.

The End of LIFE: Thoughts on the Marginalization of Powerful Service-Learning in Higher Education

Gina L. Solano, Salisbury University

Abstract

This article describes a university service-learning program with preservice teachers who volunteered as tutors to teach in an adult GED program. The adult participants were involved in a local drug court program, which is a branch in the criminal justice system. Project Literacy Instruction to Further Education (Project LIFE) was developed by the researcher, to teach literacy skills, provide GED tutoring and post-secondary test preparation to individuals who were nearing completion in their drug court program, or to adults referred by other social service organizations. The purpose of this mixed-method study was to evaluate an innovative program that offered a course for improving the adult literacy problem in its community while providing opportunities for preservice teachers to build skills for teaching in urban settings. Although this project was successful while in effect, questions remain as to why the higher education institution that originally funded it, was unwilling to continue funding this program. Several questions remain about how does ending Project LIFE impact and reinforce the community's opinions of an institution who fluctuates in its dedication and support of community programs? How does the closure of this program perpetuate disenfranchisement of marginalized populations who are otherwise incapable of receiving support to complete their GEDs? Finally, what message is the institution telling faculty about its true dedication to service-learning and its value in their professional practice when they encourage community programs, but are not willing to continue financial and faculty support?

Keywords: service-learning, community-engaged learning, criminal justice, adult literacy, GED programs, teacher education

The importance and impact of service-learning programs have shown significant benefits to both students and the community (Baca, 2012). Incorporating service-learning at higher education institutions has the possibility of creating not only graduates with real-world experience, but also individuals who have the potential of being civically minded throughout their lives (Bringle & Hatcher, 1996). According to a national longitudinal study that included data from over 22,000 undergraduates, service-learning showed significant positive effects in the following areas: academic performance, moral values, self-efficacy, leadership, selecting a service career, dedication to community, and a lifelong desire to participate in service (Astin, Vogelgesang, Ikeda, & Yee, 2000; Smolen, Zhang, & Setwiler, 2013; Stenberg & Whealy, 2009). By integrating the service-learning model into an urban-based adult literacy program, a symbiotic relationship forms where the university students have an opportunity to practice what they learn in the classroom while the adult learners benefit from their knowledge and skills.

Providing university students with the opportunity to expose them to individuals in the criminal justice system is not a new practice. Nearly two decades ago, Pompa (2002) began the "Inside-Out" program by taking students to prisons to "shake" them up in order to learn first-hand lessons from inmates about what life in prison was like, as well as how to build relationships with those different from you. The opportunity for on-going conversations between students and inmates taught the participants about how to build bridges to humanize those in prison, create empathy, and to reduce the critical judgment of those in the prison system. The students who participated appreciated having a platform to be able to discuss difficult conversations on race, criminality, poverty, as well as many other topics in the criminal justice area (Pompa, 2002).

> By engaging in dialog, people on both sides of prison walls can discover new ways of thinking about ourselves, our society, and the systems that keep us all imprisoned – some of us literally and for excessively long periods. If we are going to abolish this disturbing reality, we need to build relationships across class and race and other social barriers; we need to connect with each other through the walls, both literally and figuratively. (Pompa, 2011, pp. 253-4)

Additionally, other university campuses, such as Portland State, the University of Pennsylvania, Purdue University, and Stanford University, have been promoting service-learning and community-engagement programs for several years. Service-learning programs that involve education majors have typically included service in local schools and after-school programs. There is a critical need for more support in our local schools, which teacher preparation programs do not typically fill. For example, many public schools in high immigration areas struggle with not having the ability to educate their large numbers of students who need to learn English. This situation provides an opportunity that is reciprocal for preservice teachers and local schools. At institutions who integrated service-learning into their teacher licensure programs, the participants involved were specifically preservice teachers serving volunteering to help the English language learning (ELL) students through repeated school visits (Bippus, 2011; Cummings, 2009; Grassi, Hanley, & Liston, 2004; Roessingh, 2012).

Background of Project LIFE

As literacy standards rise, so are the increasing populations of adults with low literacy skills, which makes the need for adult literacy education programs more prevalent than ever (Cuban & Hayes, 2001). According to the U.S. Department of Education and the National Institute of Literacy (2013), 32 million adults in the United States cannot read. This statistic equates to 14% of our population. Furthermore, an additional 21% of adults read below a fifth-grade level, and another 19% of high school graduates do not read at grade level, while 70% of prison inmates cannot read at basic levels (U.S. Department of Education, 2013). In the urban community where Project Literacy Instruction to Further Education, (LIFE) took place in Ogden, UT, the local high school graduation rate in a recent year was only at 66% (When Just 66 Percent of Ogden Seniors Graduate, 2016). This statistic is similar to data gathered five years previously, which shows a significant need for intervention programs in high schools to ensure that graduating seniors are capable of reading and writing. The graduation rate also demonstrates a need to provide greater efforts in creating adult literacy programs in urban communities (2011 Cohort Graduation and Dropout Rate Report, 2011). Project LIFE contributed to both the community's need for adult literacy outreach programs as well as to other teacher education programs, by creating a service-

learning program that filled a need in the criminal justice system with an urban adult literacy and GED course.

Typically, individuals who are recovering from drug addictions are suffering from poverty as well (Hinders, 2020). They are most often the part of our population who are commonly cast-off by their own families and experience anger, shame, poor health, and depression (Barnard, 2007). Many urban universities recognize the poverty issues in their cities and provide a low-cost General Equivalency Diploma (GED) class as part of their community outreach programs. Even though GED programs are provided, they are not able to accept everyone who is interested in their courses due to applicants not being able to pay, or due to various regulations from grants or state funding. The inability to pay inevitably excludes individuals who possibly stand to benefit most from a GED program.

While working as an Assistant Professor at a large urban university, I was asked by my provost to design a literacy program to address this need, which he would help sponsor through grants and special project funds. Project Literacy Instruction to Further Education (Project LIFE) became the program that would invite university students to befriend and teach those referred by the local drug courts who needed help with their education goals. The university students who volunteered for the program were those interested in gaining teaching experience, as most were preservice teachers. Volunteering as a tutor was not a course requirement for any particular class, so those who participated did so by choice. Project LIFE became a free literacy course, framed by the principles of service-learning, to provide an opportunity for education majors to practice teaching in their content areas, learn about poverty, develop empathy, and create friendships with the participants who would benefit from personalized tutoring, free materials, and be challenged to achieve their educational goals. This program lasted for three consecutive years and due to lack of funding, is no longer in existence.

While Project LIFE was initially designed to provide an adult literacy program for those graduating from drug court, it quickly expanded to include referrals from local agencies who recommended individuals to the course who could not afford to pay for a class or tutor, but desperately needed their GED. Sine Project LIFE's mission was to design a class that would help its participants increase their literacy abilities to be able to improve their lives and achieve their educational goals, we were happy to serve as many in our community as possible. With their improved skills, the adults could continue to enroll in a post-secondary technical school, college, or university. When Project LIFE began, it was evident that many of those who joined the class needed individual help to complete their GED, as many of them got involved with drugs during high school and subsequently dropped out. The program quickly adjusted to focus not only on building literacy skills but also on preparing students to pass the GED exams, which would then allow them to apply for better jobs or training programs.

Word quickly spread to other local community service organizations, such as the department of workforce services (DWS) and the city's social services center. Both organizations began to send referrals for individuals who needed their GED but did not qualify for services at their center due to a variety of reasons, such as immigration status, no ability to pay, or living outside of the city limits. To avoid duplication of university-sponsored literacy programs, I collaborated with the personnel that direct the university's community education center, because they provided adult education English classes for a small fee. Within the first semester, students were being enrolled into Project LIFE based upon their level of poverty, status in a drug court program, or for not being able to qualify for a GED program offered by the city, county, or other university community education program (due to restrictions placed on the type of grant that funded them by the university or for other undisclosed reasons). Although this program has unfortunately ended due

to lack of university sponsorship, it may be able to provide ideas, hope, and inspiration to other educators who are seeking meaningful ways to incorporate service-learning into their courses.

Purpose

The primary objective that guided this study was to determine how the service-learning program of Project LIFE classroom impacted the preservice teachers' opinions and attitudes towards working with a marginalized adult population. Another objective was to ascertain which aspects of Project LIFE were most beneficial, motivational, and useful for the participants. Finally, this study wanted to ascertain if the course's central goal of assisting the students to receive their GED, or to continue on to post-secondary education, was being accomplished.

Review of Literature

Surviving high school is challenging enough without adding the additional factors of having a difficult home life, a learning disability or being an ESL student. If a student is a minority, in poverty, from a divorced family, or is living in a toxic environment, then that individual is more likely to drop out of high school (America's Promise, 2014; Babinski, Corra, & Gifford, 2016; Sterns & Glennie, 2006; Utah 2015 Graduation Rates, 2015). Even if a student does not identify with one of these marginalized groups, there still exists the typical challenge that plagues today's youth in the classroom, which is the lack of motivation (Babinski, Corra, & Gifford, 2016; Legault, Green-Demers, & Pelletier, 2006). Other challenges include lecture-only teachers, overcrowded classrooms, repetitive teaching methods, redundant worksheets, and impersonal learning environments. These ineffective methods which we have known about since the time of Dewey (1910), can also be contributing factors for students dropping out of high school. There is rarely just one reason why a student decides to stop attending, but often a compilation of factors (America's Promise Alliance, 2014). With the inability to resolve the dropout problem, local communities can provide services and programs for young and mature adults who need a second chance in obtaining their high school education.

While the ideals and practices of service-learning in higher education are rising in popularity, there are few institutions where the service-learning programs involve preservice teachers assisting adults in GED programs. In 2001, Cuban and Hayes shared their experience with Library and Information Science Majors who were required to provide 60 hours of service in a community-based literacy program for adults. Those who were being tutored by the university students came from different cultural backgrounds and experienced issues of drug addiction, poverty, and ignorance (Cuban & Hayes, 2001). The student tutors mentioned being mistreated by those they were tutoring. Tinkler and Tinkler (2013), discussed their service-learning experience involving "working with white, middle-class preservice teachers who have grown up in rural or suburban environments with very limited experiences with diversity," (p. 41). They felt that their service-learning program needed to foster a "social justice disposition" in order to open the "students' minds to ideas of diversity and social justice" (p. 41). To accomplish this objective, the preservice teachers were required to complete ten hours of tutoring adults who were studying for their GED diploma at a local Job Corps.

GED Tutoring Programs

Many GED programs struggle to show impressive completion rates due to the population of adult students that are in their classes. It is common for adult students to start and then stop coming halfway through the class, which is viewed as a negative statistic in the overall success of the course. Often, outside critics (such as policymakers, administrators, economists, and politicians) are too hasty to judge the "success" of a GED course because the program does not appear to be a good return on the investment of funds, when in fact, the opposite is often the truth. Many adults who stop attending GED programs, do so because they need to pick up an extra shift at work, for example, to feed their family and pay their bills. Ultimately, adults who attend GED programs (even if they do not complete them) and work on developing their life-long learning skills, benefit from improved health, literacy skills, and reduced crime rates (Rose, 2012).

General education degree programs take many forms in different communities. An adult learner can choose to be an independent student and study alone using websites, apps for smartphones, and even workbooks purchased online or at local bookstores. Some communities may offer free or low-cost GED classes specifically for ESL or low-income adults. Some cities offer classes that meet daily or once a week. Moreover, if an adult is serious about obtaining a GED certificate, there are usually several free or low-cost options to prepare for the test, and there may be even some programs that provide financial assistance in paying for the exams as well. Because there are more than 40 million Americans who need their high school diploma (Rose, 2012), as a community, we need to be creative about offering different types of educational programs that will appeal to different types of learning styles, social support structures, and schedules.

Many typical GED classes follow a traditional model, where the ratio is one teacher to a class of fifteen to thirty students. Very little research is published that identifies GED programs that reduced the typical ratio by utilizing tutors or volunteers to work with adult learners. One such program, known as Pathways to Persistence, is a program at Santa Fe College in Gainesville, Florida (Thompson, 2012). This program, although not a GED course, but a mentoring program that identified college students who had a GED instead of a high school diploma, and matched them with a faculty mentor who would meet with them once a week to provide guidance and assistance. Students in this program were given support with campus tutoring services and other peer volunteers to make sure they would be successful (Thompson, 2012).

Service-Learning and Literacy Programs

Across many college and university campuses in the United States, service-learning is becoming a more popular learning model to adopt in all types of courses due to its valuable educational benefits for the students in the course and for the community members who receive the service. This model of learning promotes the development of civic responsibility along with cultural competence (Jacoby, 2015). Instead of reading and discussing topics about culture and civic duty, students get out of the classroom and make a difference in their communities. Since service opportunities and activities can take place quite often in minority neighborhoods, poverty-ridden schools, or among individuals from different countries, students and instructors do not have to travel far to have meaningful experiences (Meany, Bohler, Kopf, Hernandez, & Scott, 2008). In an ideal partnership, a university faculty member collaborates with a nonprofit organization in the local community who has a need and can benefit from receiving service from college students. By establishing shared goals, both the faculty member and the community partner work together to help the students have a learning experience that would provide an opportunity for them to practice

and develop real-world expertise, learn job skills, reduce stereotypes, raise awareness, or just provide a needed service (Jacoby, 2015). Throughout the service-learning semester, the university students typically have one or more meaningful experiences and opportunities to apply and integrate what they are learning in the classroom at their community partner's site. In some courses, the students may spend several hours planning a single event or completing a project for the community partner. Other service-learning experiences may constitute donating several hours of volunteer work at a single location. The type of service provided depends upon the instructor's goals and the learning objectives of the course and varies greatly between courses.

Project LIFE followed a service-learning model through creating partnerships with local non-profit and government agencies to provide a needed service where university students could learn while serving. A critical part of the service-learning model is the reflection component. Throughout the semester, the university students who took the role of tutors, would meet with me multiple times to reflect upon what they were learning and discovering, as well as discuss the progress of the adults they were tutoring. Even though these students were not required to be there due to a particular course I was teaching, they chose to serve to either complete required service-learning requirements from another course, or because they were interested in the project to support their own learning goals. Service-learning is not just a curriculum model for a classroom but can take many shapes across a campus. Programs sponsored by a university which are managed outside of the classroom can provide valuable service-learning opportunities for students who are not involved in a course that requires it, but who still desire to gain experience through volunteering. To consider a volunteer activity a "service-learning" program, it needs to have clear goals established, provide a need to a non-profit organization, have identifiable responsibilities for all involved, and that the time required is appropriate (Jacoby, 2015). Those participating in the service should receive supervision and support to ensure the established goals are met. Students also need opportunities to critically reflect upon their experiences. Good service-learning partnerships should include an evaluation to assess if the service provided is meeting learning and service goals by all who are involved (Jacoby, 2015).

Lori Pompa (2002) is one example of a pioneer in service-learning, who for several years as part of the "Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program," would take groups of university students to prisons to conduct the class with the inmates. Her belief was to provide an immersive experience that would be mutually beneficial to both the prisoners as well as the university students. "This immersion engenders deeper interaction and involvement, often manifesting as a statement of solidarity with those who are struggling. It is the ultimate border-crossing experience. In taking a class together as equals, borders disintegrate and barriers recede" (Pompa, 2002, p. 68). This community-based service-learning model allows for two different groups of adults to learn from one another. It challenges the students' preconceived beliefs about who criminals, drug addicts, and adult students really are (Davis & Roswell, 2013). Embracing learning through experiences outside of the classroom can provide some of the richest and most meaningful lessons a student can have.

Teacher education programs have ideal classes where service-learning models are easily implemented, especially ones that are literacy-based. Programs that are set in communities, rather than on college campuses, reconnect undergraduates with the real world and help universities build partnerships with their local communities (Prosser & Levesque, 1997). In one teacher education program, professors organized an ESL program for new Karen refugees from Myanmar and Thailand. They worked closely with their community advocates to provide English classes and U.S. citizenship courses. The classes provided an opportunity for their university students to practice their ESL teaching and diversity skills by preparing and teaching lessons, interacting with the students, and allowing the refugees to share their personal experiences within a series of speaking

and writing activities. Through a collection of journals and reflections, the researcher could ana-lyze the growth of not only the refugee participants in their courses, but also of the tremendous growth of their preservice teachers in their education programs (Smolen, Zhang, & Detwiler, 2013).

In another study that utilized a "social responsibility option" approach (similar to a service-learning model) in a college mathematics course, it discussed how their students tutored inner-city at-risk teens at an alternative high school (Zang, Gutmann, & Berk, 2000). The college students volunteered to help in a math class that was specifically designed to help former high school drop-outs prepare for the GED exam. In addition to providing math tutoring, the college students would also serve as role models for the youth, thus fulfilling the "social responsibility" element of their service-learning model. By tutoring the high school students, the college students reinforced their learning of math, and both the students and the tutors did better in their courses (Zang, Gutmann, & Berk, 2000).

Theoretical Framework

Service-learning is not only an instructional model but also a viable theoretical framework. It can be traced back to the prominent works of John Dewey's (1916) belief in democracy and teachings of experiential learning. He suggested that students need concrete activities to learn and to be able to create an awareness of how they can change society and contribute in ways to improve it (Dewey, 1916; Giles, Jr., & Eyler, 1994). Dewey theorized that a student's education should be more than just acquiring content knowledge by also learning how to live and be a contributing member of society. Students need to be given experiences to learn to reduce their biased views and instead, learn to improve their community and society around them (Fishman & McCarthy, 2010). Service-learning "is a method whereby students learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized service that is conducted in and meets the needs of communities" (Lake, Winterbottom, Ethridge, & Kelly, 2015, p. 95).

More specifically, service-learning includes the following criteria:

- Student learning outcomes that align with the course objectives.
- Community partnerships that provide students with the opportunity to create authentic relationships in meaningful ways.
- Students are heavily involved in the planning and execution of the project.
- The projects fill a need that is determined by the community partner.
- Students have opportunities to reflect multiple times throughout the semester.
- The program and students are assessed to determine if the project's and students' goals have been met. (Farber, 2011; Porter-Honnet & Poulsen, 1990).
- The benefits of the service are reciprocal to both the community partner and the student volunteers.

The framework of service-learning used in the Project LIFE program follows a co-curric-ular model whereby it is not attached to a specific course but operates "outside of the formal cur-riculum" (Jacoby, 2015, p. 122). Even though it operates independently from a course, it does obligate the tutors to attend the 1½-hour class each week for twelve consecutive weeks. Addition-ally, the tutors occasionally have training or planning meetings with myself as the program direc-tor. During the sixteen-week semester, the tutors have a possibility of volunteering 18-20 hours or more and can apply the hours to courses they are currently taking if any of them are requiring

service-learning hours. Students who accrued a significant amount of service-learning hours, also qualified for a special honor at graduation. The university that sponsored Project LIFE has a robust community-engaged learning program and encouraged faculty to develop service-learning courses and programs to not only benefit the university students but also to support the needs of the community. At the end of each Project LIFE semester, both the tutors and the participants completed a survey and reflection, which provided a means to not only evaluate the program but also to help complete the requirements of the service-learning framework that aligned with the community-engaged learning program at the university.

Methods

This study followed a multiphase mixed-method design that "combined both sequential and concurrent strands over a period of time" (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, p. 72). This allowed the myself, as the researcher, to use the data to implement program improvements and changes to meet the objectives of Project LIFE. This research style was chosen due to its design that suited program evaluation research methods that "support the development, adaptation, and evaluation of specific programs" (p. 72). It is important to recognize that since the researcher also served and directed the program, a small amount of bias may exist when discussing the results. The participants in the study were the university student volunteers and the adult learners in Project LIFE." At the start of each semester, the adult learners filled out an application that provided their demographic information, asked how many years of school each completed, and what their educational goals were. At the end of each semester, the university student tutors submitted a written reflection and the adult learners were asked to voluntarily complete a program evaluation survey that provided the major source of data for this study (see Appendix A). Throughout the course, I met individually with the students to conduct personal interviews, reviewed their work, and assisted tutoring them in preparation for a GED or college placement exam.

The mixed-methods multiphase design utilized a triangulation approach "to obtain different but complementary data on the same topic" (Morse, 1991, p. 122). This style "generally involves the concurrent, but separate, collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data so that the researcher may best understand the research problem" (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007, p. 64). One of the many benefits of mixed-methods research is that "its central premise is the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches, in combination, provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone" (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007, p. 5). Since this study was a longitudinal, multiphase study, and due to the survey being the primary tool for gathering data, the amount and types of data required to make accurate assessments needed to be varied and ongoing. Finally, since the purpose of the research study was to understand how Project LIFE affected its participants; focusing solely on just the quantitative or just the qualitative data would not have provided sufficient data to attempt to understand the research questions.

Even though the multifaceted qualities and flexibility of the multiphase design have much strength, there also exist challenges to this design approach. The researcher must anticipate challenges that may occur during different phases of the study, such as maintaining a consistent number of participants in the program (which was an actual struggle that is common in adult education programs). Another challenge was being a program that was dependent upon university funding; it required financial resources to keep the program running each year. Another challenge to the study was determining the best way to interpret the results of the data each semester and then decide how to implement them into practice. Some changes resulted in developing and improving program materials, the class structure, changing texts, and the tutoring methods. Finally, one of

the greatest challenges to any adult education program was to determine the overall effectiveness of the class, despite the fluctuation in attendance, funding, and tutors.

Participants in this study were a purposeful sample that consisted of 23 adult students who were 18 years or older who were either in a drug court or family drug court program or who were in a state of poverty. To gather participants, in my role as the program director, I would often attend drug court to promote and recruit students for the program. Additionally, I would meet with representatives who were administrators at the local department of workforce services, probation officers, and social service employees, to publicize the program. These community partners were selected because they supported the program's mission by referring adults in the criminal justice system or who were in extreme poverty. These organizations were asked to send referrals to me, as the program director, when they met with someone who fit the criteria and required assistance. Additionally, I would regularly meet with the university staff and instructors who directed other GED programs for the community. Together, we established a referral system for each other to ensure that each program was unique and one program was not duplicating another at the university. Out of the 23 participants, 56% of them attended Project LIFE for three or more semesters. About 23% attended the program for at least two semesters, and 21% of them attended for at least one semester. Participants who dropped out of the program were not available to complete the evaluation. Research is inconclusive about who drops out of GED programs and why. The reasons for dropping out vary due to addiction, homelessness, employability, lack of motivation, a negative self-perception, among many others (Shannon, 2006).

There were three main types of data collected and triangulated for this study. The first type was the end of semester electronic survey that contained both qualitative and quantitative questions completed by the class participants (see Appendix A). A pilot survey was completed at the end of its first semester and the official evaluation survey was administered at the end of each subsequent semesters. The second type of data was from conducting open-ended, informal oral interviews. The third type of data included a compilation of documents that were reviewed and analyzed. These documents consisted of attendance records, reading proficiency assessments, writing samples, practice exams, class activities, oral readings, and finally the results of the GED exams or college ACCUPLACER tests. Each group of data was analyzed for similar themes and trends.

The final group of data in this study came from the students' classwork and new student assessment results. This pool of data was invaluable in helping to determine a student's readiness for taking one of the GED exams or an ACCUPLACER test, which was required by the university or technical school to determine the correct English and math class to place a new student. When a new student would begin Project LIFE (which could occur at any time during the semester), one of the tutors would administer an informal San Diego Quick Assessment to determine the student's reading level (LaPray & Ross, 1969). The next step was to complete the GED language arts pretest (if the student was there to earn a GED) and complete a writing sample. Based on each student's abilities, the tutor created a personalized study plan and began to work with the student to prepare him/her for the first test.

Program Outcomes

Project LIFE has now completed three years (six full semesters) with an average class size of 7.5 students each semester. The typical enrollment at the beginning of each semester ranged from 12-20 applications, but by the end of the semester usually only about half the students were consistent in their attendance and participation in the class. Throughout the six consecutive semesters, myself as the program director, met weekly with the tutors to discuss program issues, the

needs of the individual students, and challenges they were having with attendance, students' learning difficulties, and then together, we would problem-solve and collaborate on new lesson plans.

As an additional resource, all the tutors were loaned a Chromebook and taught how to use Google Drive and its different software programs. Folders were created and shared among the group to facilitate the distribution of lesson resources, materials, and to keep records of student achievements, tests completed, keep track of students' progress, and to organize the book groups. The Chromebooks were also an invaluable tool for researching information about test preparation questions, registering for exams, and researching college requirements. Many of the students in Project LIFE did not own computers, so by working with a tutor and having access to the Chromebook, they received an opportunity to develop their computer literacy skills, which was an additional benefit for many of them. Furthermore, by way of motivating students to attend class, each week there was a small prize drawing for those students who attended. All the weekly entries were saved until the final class of each semester when a drawing for a new Chromebook would be given away. As an additional incentive, the students could also receive a Chromebook by completing their GED.

To avoid the confusion of navigating a large university campus, the Project LIFE class met at the university's community education center, which was about a five-minute drive from the main campus and closer to the community's downtown area. This location also eliminated the issue of students having to worry about parking passes, following directions to an obscure building and classroom, and of having to feel intimidated by a large campus. Both tutors and students had easy access to the community education center, which was also within a very short walking distance of two bus stops. The center provided two classrooms and a childcare room. The Project LIFE class utilized one classroom and received permission to use the childcare room in case an adult student needed to bring a child to class. The childcare room was also utilized as an overflow study area when the main classroom became too crowded or when the book groups needed to divide up and have space to discuss their weekly readings.

Each week, Project LIFE met for 1 hour and 30 minutes. The first 30 minutes was utilized as a whole-group instruction time for teaching lessons in reading, writing, grammar, or a focus lesson in one of the other major content areas, such as social studies, math, or science (depending upon which GED test most of the group was working towards). The group lesson sometimes was used for a team-building activity, a learning competition, or another motivational, game-based learning activity that helped the students associate learning with enjoyment and success. After a short group activity, the book groups would meet for about 10-15 minutes to discuss what they read for the week, identify difficult vocabulary words, or talk about other sections they struggled with and then set a reading goal for the following week. For the remaining 45-50 minutes, students would study with their tutors. During class time, if a student felt ready, I would register the student for a GED exam, the ACCUPLACER exam, or a practice test. Before class was adjourned, we would hold the prize drawing and then remind students to complete their reading and study assignments.

Program Challenges

Trying to make any non-profit program an on-going one, poses several challenges. Foremost, securing reliable funding to provide the resources necessary for a free adult education course, was the most difficult and eventually, was the reason why the program ended. The university that initially provided the funding, withdrew it after three years. As the director, I applied for various

grants from the university, government, as well as private businesses and organizations, and was unsuccessful.

The other challenge was maintaining consistent attendance with the adult students. Although each one understood at the beginning of the course that their attendance was expected each week, in reality, the course was free and they had nothing to lose but the services and education that was being provided. Other challenges included tracking down students who stopped attending as well as the need for on-going recruitment efforts through attending drug court and visiting with parole officers and social service workers to discuss their referrals.

Results

The primary objective that guided this study was to determine how the service-learning model made a positive reciprocal impact on Project LIFE participants and student tutors. Community-based service-learning has been gaining precedence over the last couple of decades, not only in teacher education programs but also in programs across college and university campuses due to its powerful learning abilities (Lake et al., 2015; Meany et al., 2008; Prosser & Levesque, 1997; Roessingh, 2012).

Lessons Learned from the University Student Tutors

In compliance with the service-learning model (Ash, Clayton, & Moses, 2009; Farber, 2011; Jacoby, 2015), the tutors participated throughout the project from start to finish. They were expected to: engage in the service and implement the goals of the program, examine the experience via reflection, and articulate their learning through assessment or an evaluation. The university student tutors shared several positive outcomes from participating in this program. The most common reaction was from their personal reflections about what changed in their personal bias from working with individuals who were recovering drug addicts and with those who were in extreme poverty. This is evidenced in a comment made by one of the university tutors who volunteered additional hours to help recruit new students. She said:

> I am so sheltered! When we went to drug court to recruit applicants, it opened my eyes like never before. I was so impressed as the graduates (of drug court) tearfully spoke about their success and how many days they've been clean. They were so proud of themselves, and I was too! I could see that they needed something next in their lives to keep them on a path of self-improvement so that they don't repeat the same pattern. I was so glad to be able to offer them a chance to further their education! I don't look at people like that, the same way anymore. I'm much less judgmental than I was. I have a heart for them and love to see the hope in their eyes.

These student tutors learned lessons they could never have by sitting in a classroom on campus or by student teaching. They each learned how to build personal relationships with people very different from themselves. They learned to look beyond the labels, the struggles of their students, and how to get to know the real person. The university student tutors did not expect to form friendships and become personally invested in the success of those they were tutoring. One tutor commented that: "I want to volunteer again next semester (even though I'll be student teaching) because I really want to see my 'student' succeed! I want to keep helping him because he is ON A ROLL and I don't want him to stop!"

Another common theme the university student tutors shared was how beneficial it was to practice the content they would be teaching after they graduate. The Project LIFE program provided a pressure-free environment that allowed them to be able to teach, explain, as well as mentor their adult students for each GED exam. The university tutors shared how valuable it was to have Chromebooks to use with their students to access important information, find examples, and watch educational videos to help explain the different topics. One university tutor stated:

> Participating in Project LIFE has helped me prepare to be a teacher in many ways. I have learned a lot of very effective teaching strategies by observing Dr. Solano as she teaches the short lessons for the day. I also have been able to apply teaching strategies that I have learned in my own classes and have been able to further improve my teaching practice.

Another tutor shared how by participating in Project LIFE, their decision to now look for a teaching position in an inner-city school has changed. "It has made me really think about where I want to teach and why. I want to have the most impact and really make a difference, and I think Ogden City School District is where I will have the most success." This change is really impactful, since many teacher education candidates at this university came from suburban areas and tended to not feel adequately prepared to teach in inner-city schools. Additionally, another university tutor shared that: "It has made me aware that students are being graduated without the level of learning needed. Once graduated, it is hard for them to proceed onto higher education because they lack a lot of the core education skills."

Results from the Adult Project LIFE Participants

Out of the 23 adult participants, six of them completed their GED, seven students completed 1-3 of the 4 required GED tests. Five other students who already had their high school diplomas were accepted into a post-secondary program of study, one of which has successfully graduated with her Bachelor's degree in Business. At the end of Project LIFE, there were five remaining students who were left without continuing support, which were preparing to take an exam or to retest for one they did not pass. Many of the adult participants reported during private interviews, that their literacy levels improved due to increased studying and also by increasing their reading to prepare for the book groups. The students who struggled more with their reading were encouraged to read aloud so that their tutors could help if needed. They also appreciated the grammar and writing instruction that was provided at the start of each class.

In the results from the adult learner evaluation survey, 92% of the students responded between "important and very important" (the top two answers) to have a tutor to work with during class. In response to a survey question that asked: "Do you plan to continue participating in the Project LIFE class? Why or why not?" One student responded: "Yes, I love the one-on-one tutoring with a tutor who specializes in a certain area which I may need help with on any particular week." In response to another question that asked students to discuss ways in which they felt that Project LIFE may have helped them so far, another adult learner commented that: "[They are] nice people and I like getting help when needed. The tutor helps me to understand something when I don't get it." In a personal interview, another participant (who became a tutor after starting at the university) remarked about the value of the tutors and said that she:

> ...couldn't do it without them. That's why I'm so happy to be a tutor. I wanted to help others have a better life. I loved them. I had all the tutors to myself the first semester, and

it was great. I won prizes and awards, and I received help to begin at the university. They helped me with that.

This successful student attended Project LIFE since its first semester. She graduated from drug court and began at the university during the second semester of the class, which was Project LIFE's fifth semester. Once she became a university student, she eagerly volunteered to be a tutor because she experienced first-had how the program changed her life and she wanted to help others have a similar experience.

Another student who has been attending Project LIFE for three semesters reflected about the impact the tutors had on her experience by saying that:

> When you were in school, you already experienced having just one teacher and 30 [or more] students in a class. I've already failed in that environment. It's so nice to have that support when you need help. In school, you know the teacher doesn't have the time to actually help you.

This same adult learner shared in her interview about how she has enjoyed and benefitted from working with a personal tutor. She commented:

> …I loved the one-on-one attention. Some tutors click better with other [students] and I loved that you could always find someone that you could work with well. Plus, I think it was good for some of the tutors that were shy to help them learn how to teach. So, it felt like it was good for everyone, not just me.

This is an example of the tutors' influence and the bond they shared with the students.

The second objective was to ascertain which components of Project LIFE were beneficial, motivational, and useful for the participants. The survey indicated that 100% of the students marked that they would recommend Project LIFE to others who need help with their GED or college preparation. They also marked 100% for its location being convenient and accessible, and 85.7% thought the length of the class was the right amount of time. In following up with students about the length of the class, some students suggested holding class twice a week or holding it later in the evening to accommodate work schedules a bit easier. When students responded about how much their reading habits have improved, 50% marked the top category of "a great deal," with even numbers in the next two categories of "much" and "somewhat" at 21.43% each, leaving 7.14% at "little."

In evaluating the whole group literacy lesson at the beginning of the class, 85.6% of the students marked between the highest two scores of "very useful" and "useful." Further questions in the oral interview were not asked about the group lesson, but in a review of records, students' participation was 100% during the group literacy activity, and all of them were engaged, asked questions, and mentioned several times about how much they appreciated the handouts and explanations of difficult grammar topics. The group lessons were kept short, so students could work with their tutors on individual assignments, studying the GED test booklet, or in other college prep activities. In the observational notes, the group lesson was extremely popular. The students would often make special requests during this time for their favorite learning games, or for special lessons in areas they were struggling, such as in persuasive writing, lessons in math, history topics, or in science and technical terms.

Since the Project LIFE class was purely optional and most of the students were not required to attend (although some students were court-ordered to obtain a GED before granting them graduation from a drug court program), as the program director, I put in place several motivational strategies to encourage students to attend each week. One was the weekly prize drawing and the second was the possibility of winning a Chromebook at the final class of the semester (entries were earned based upon weekly attendance). In the survey, 92.8% of students responded that the weekly prize drawings were "motivating" to "very motivating," and the possibility of winning the Chromebook was equal at 92.8% in "motivating" to "very motivating." Along with the chance of winning a Chromebook, any student who had at least an 80% attendance rate for the semester could qualify for a scholarship to have Project LIFE pay for all their GED tests or could use it to apply towards college tuition (if funding was available). On the evaluation survey, the students all agreed at 100%, that this was an "extremely valuable" incentive.

The final purpose of this study was to investigate how Project LIFE helped the participants achieve their educational goals. The overall objective was for each student to reach their educational goal of completing the GED or staring a post-secondary program. At the end of Project LIFE, there were a handful of students who were close to fully completing their GED. Because the GED consists of four individual exams (language arts, social science, science, and math), it can take an individual anywhere from a few months to a few years to complete it. The electronic survey showed that 100% of the students ranked Project LIFE between the highest two scores of "effective" and "extremely effective" at helping them to accomplish their goals. In an oral interview (see Appendix B), one student remarked about how the Project LIFE program has made a difference in her life:

> I'd still be on my couch watching TV each day if it wasn't for [the professor] coming to drug court that day. She should keep going and telling all those people this is available to them. She might need to push them. They just don't have the motivation, I guess, or maybe they aren't ready to give up the drugs and change their lives, but she should keep trying.

Another student commented how Project LIFE helped her to achieve her educational goal by stating that:

> I haven't ever felt comfortable in education since 9th grade. I had a horrible experience. I couldn't do this without Project LIFE. I don't even know where I would be without Project LIFE. I wouldn't be able to pay for this. [That's] why it's called Project LIFE - because it truly changes people's lives! I moved here from Alaska and was labeled the "dumb kid." I was stupid to everyone. I'm grateful I get to come to Project LIFE. Everyone is so happy I'm here and treat me like I'm smart and I'm doing it. One test away from college!

This student has been attending the class for three semesters and was able to complete her GED in her fourth semester. She has also successfully graduated from family drug court and was reunited with her children.

Overall, adult GED classes and the tests are a huge challenge; much more than the regular struggles of k-12 education (Strauss, 2015). Many GED classes have students who struggled with the public school system when they were younger for many reasons, such as having an undiagnosed learning disabilities that could have contributed to their original lack of success in school the first time (Rose, 2012). Now as adults, they have the responsibilities of work, family, childcare, transportation issues, and with Project LIFE students, some (not all) are still recovering from drug

addictions, have expensive fines, and weekly court appearances. Those that have managed to be resilient and were successful in the program have finished or nearly finished with their GED, have enrolled or are currently attending college, or have gone on to better employment or schooling opportunities by the end of program. There is no information for those who attended sporadically and stopped attending.

Final Thoughts

Unfortunately, the Project LIFE program stopped receiving funding from the host institution after only three years, which was disheartening. The end of LIFE came to a sudden halt after various attempts to receive grants from outside the university, as well as denied petitions for continued funding from the university's college of education, the service-learning institute on campus, and the provost's office (who had originally funded the project). What happened with Project LIFE is not unique to other university initiated service-learning or community-engagement programs. "The system we are all in is all too often uninterested, unhelpful, or even antagonistic to our vision," (Sarofian-Butin, 2017, p. 170). Similarly, in my experience, I was unsupported by my department chair and dean, who never asked about the program and did not see value in Project LIFE. They were both unattached, and unconcerned with the benefits that their preservice teachers could receive in this program, nor the additional work that myself as a faculty member was investing. While the administrators in the college had major concerns about how to better prepare their graduates to teach in inner-city schools, they failed to recognize the impact and benefits of Project LIFE.

Sadly, the university student tutors were left without an inner-city service-learning program. The adult participants were left without any transitional support to another program. At the start of a new semester, students arrived at class, only to find an empty room and were told by an assistant at the community education center, that the program had been cancelled. Several of them reached out to me with pleas for assistance because this was the first program that truly helped and supported them to be successful on the GED exams. Although my former university was proud of their Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement, and provided courses to train faculty how to integrate service-learning into their courses, there was no support from the administration in education department. The service-learning institute on campus also failed in providing any information or guidance to help a faculty member when a program had to end.

Project LIFE had the potential of becoming a well-established adult GED program that served the needs of several drug court and family drug court programs in the surrounding urban communities while providing additional educational career service opportunities to teacher candidates. Despite the program's challenges of funding, recruiting tutors and students, it was a unique service-learning experience that combined university students with struggling adults in poverty or in the criminal justice program into a unique learning environment.

When I look back on the experiences I had while directing this program, it causes me to doubt the effort required to develop civic literacy in my students. I am concerned about how the ending of LIFE has perpetuated the disenfranchisement of the marginalized populations we worked with as well as how it fed into the bias about their lack of importance. How is it that institutions of higher learning that spout ideals of developing graduates who are instilled with a civic duty, treat the very members of their community with such little concern? This begs the question of what types of service-learning programs should higher education institutions be supporting, especially if a project requires long-term funding? Why was it impossible for this institution to make a sustained commitment to a program that was showing so much success? Where was

the administrative support for a faculty member who was willing to go above and beyond their contractual responsibilities and design a program to benefit both university students and marginalized community members? Ending this program only reinforced in the community about the real disconnect between themselves and the local university. Instances like this also reinforces faculty assumptions of how community engagement projects may not be highly valued towards tenure and promotion.

        Project LIFE may not have made huge headlines, and even though it had it challenges, it did make a difference in the lives of the tutors and myself included, who worked hard to improve it every semester. The program made a significant difference in the participants' abilities, who for the first time for some, were able to believe in themselves and realize that they were smart enough to read, write, solve math equations, and understand history. They discovered that there was hope and a future worth dreaming about. In the words of one student: "That's why it's called Project LIFE because it truly changed people's lives!"

References

2011 Cohort Graduation and Dropout Rate Report. (2011). Utah State Office of Education. Retrieved from http://www.schools.utah.gov/data/Superintendents-Annual-Report/ Annual-Report-2010-2011/GraduationReport.aspx

Ash, S. L., Clayton, P. H., & Moses, M. G. (2009). *Learning through critical reflection: A tutorial for service-learning students*. PHC Ventures.

Astin, A. W., Vogelgesang, L. J., Ikeda, E. K., & Yee, J. A. (2000). How service-learning affects students. *Higher Education*, (144).

America's Promise Alliance. (2014, May). Don't call them dropouts: Understanding the experiences of young people who leave high school before graduation. Center for Promise, Tufts University. http://www.gradnation.org/report/dont-call-them-dropouts

Babinski, L. M., Corra, A. J., & Gifford, E. J. (2016). Evaluation of a public awareness campaign to prevent high school dropout. *The Journal of Primary Prevention 37*(4), 361-375. doi: 10.1007/s10935-016-0438-3

Baca, I. (Ed.) (2012). *Service-learning and writing: Paving the way for literacy(ies) through community engagement*. Boston: Brill.

Barnard, M. (2007). *Drug addiction and families.* London, UK: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Bippus, S. L. (2011). Adult ESL students and service-learning: Voices, experiences, and perspectives. ProQuest Digital Dissertations. (UMI No. 3486069)

Bowen, B. (2014). What is the value of the GED? *College English, 77*(1), 32-54.

Bringle, R. G., & Hatcher, J. A. (1996). Implementing service-learning in higher education. *The Journal of Higher Education, 67*(2), 221-239.

Creswell. J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2011). *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research,* (2nd ed.) Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Creswell. J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2007). *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Cuban, S., & Hayes, E. (2001). Perspectives of five library and information studies students involved in service-learning at a community-based literacy program. *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science, 42*(2), 86-95.

Cummings, S. (2009). Purposeful language development through service-learning. *Essential Teacher, 6*(3-4), 45-47.

Dewey, J. (1916). *Democracy and education: An introduction to the philosophy of education.* New York, NY: Macmillan.

Dewey, J. (1910). *How we think.* Prometheus Books: Amherst, New York.

Farber, K. (2011). *Change the world with service learning: How to create, lead, and assess service learning projects.* Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Education.

Fishman, S. M., & McCarthy, L. (2010). Dewey's challenge to teachers. *Education and Culture, 26*(2), 3-19.

Giles, Jr., D. E., & Eyler, J. (1994). The theoretical roots of service-learning in John Dewey: Toward a theory of service-learning. *Michigan Journal of Community Service-learning, 1*(1), 77-85.

Grassi, E., Hanley, D., & Liston, D. (2004). Service-learning: An innovative approach for second language learners. *The Journal of Experiential Education, 27*(1), 87.

Hinders, D. (2020). Understanding the relationship between poverty and addiction. https://stjosephinstitute.com/understanding-the-relationship-between-poverty-and-addiction/

Jacoby, B. (2015). *Service-learning essentials: Questions, answers, and lessons learned.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Legault, L.; Green-Demers, I.; & Pelletier, L. (2006). Why do high school students lack motivation in the classroom? Toward an understanding of academic amotivation and the role of social support. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 98*(3), 567-582. doi: 10.1037/0022-0663.98.3.567

Lake, V. E., Winterbottom, C., Ethridge, E. A., & Kelly, L. (2015). Reconceptualizing teacher education programs: Applying Dewey's theories to service-learning with early childhood preservice teachers. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement 19*(2), 93-116.

LaPray, M., & Ross, R. (1969). The graded word list: Quick gauge of reading ability. *Journal of Reading, 12*, 305-307.

Meany, K. S., Bohler, H. R., Kopf, K., Hernandez, L., & Scott, L. S. (2008). Service-learning and pre-service educators' cultural competence for teaching: An exploratory study. *Journal of Experiential Education, 31,* 239-257. doi: 10.5193/=JEE33.3.239

Morse, J. M. (1991). Approaches to qualitative-quantitative methodological triangulation. *Nursing Research, 40,* 120-123.

Pompa, L. (2002). Service-learning as crucible: Reflections on immersion, context, power, and transformation. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning, Fall,* 67-76. https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/p/pod/dod-idx/service-learning-as-crucible-reflections-on-immersion.pdf?c=mjcsl;idno=3239521.0009.107;format=pdf

Pompa, L. (2011). Breaking down the walls: Inside-out learning and the pedagogy of transformation. In S. J. Hartnett (Ed.), *Challenging the prison-industrial complex.* Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press.

Porter-Honnet, E. & Poulsen, S. J. (1990). Principles of good practice in combining service and learning. In J.C. Kendall (ed.), *Combining service and learning: A resource book for community and public service.* (Vol. 1). Raleigh, North Carolina: National Society for Experiential Education.

Prosser, T. M., & Levesque, J. A. (1997). Supporting literacy through service-learning. *The Reading Teacher, 51*(1), 32-38.

Roessingh, H. (2012). Service-learning and student engagement: A dual language book project. *Canadian Journal of Education, 35*(4), pp. 284-307.

Rose, M. (2012). Second chances: The value of adult education and the GED. *Kappan Magazine 94*(6), 45-49.

Sarofian-Butin, D. (2017). Me and the devil was walkin' side-by-side: Demythologizing (and reviewing) the Cambridge handbook of service learning and community engagement. In C.W. Dolgon, T.S. Mitchell, & T.K. Eatman (Eds.), *The Cambridge handbook of service learning and community engagement* (Fall, pp. 165-177). Cambridge University Press.

Shannon, S. G. (2006). *Helping students finish school: Why students drop out and how to help them graduate.* http://www.k12.wa.us/research/default.aspx

Smolen, L. A., Zhang, W., & Detwiler, S. (2013). Engaged teaching and learning with adult Karen refugees in a service-learning site. *TESOL Journal 4*(3), 534-552.

Sterns, E., & Glennie, E. J. (2006). When and why dropouts leave high school. *Youth and Society 38*(1), 29-57.

Stenberg, S. J., & Whealy. D. A. (2009). Chaos is the poetry: From outcomes to inquiry in service-learning pedagogy. *College Composition and Communication, 60*(4), 683-706.

Strauss, V. (2015, July 9). The big problems with Pearson's new GED high school equivalency test. *The Washington Post.* https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2015/07/09/the-big-problems-with-pearsons-new-ged-high-school-equivalency-test/?utm_term=.680283e312cf.

Thompson, C. (2012). Mentoring program helps GED students achieve college success. *Community College Journal, Aug/Sep.* 18.

Tinkler, B., & Tinkler, A. (2013). Experiencingi the other: The impact of service-learning on pre-service teachers' perceptions of diversity. *Teacher Education Quarterly, 40*(4). https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1072149

U.S. Department of Education, National Institute of Literacy. (2013). http://www.statistic-brain.com/number-of-american-adults-who-cant-read/

Utah 2015 Graduation Rates. (2015). Utah State Office of Education. http://schools.utah.gov/data/Superintendents-Annual-Report/2015/GraduationReport.aspx

When Just 66 Percent of Ogden Seniors Graduate, We're Failing our Children. (2016, June 5). *Standard Examiner.* http://www.standard.net/Our-View/2016/06/05/OgdenSchoolDistrict-WeberSchoolDistrict-graduationrates-Utah-highschools-editorial?printFriendly=201606050123

Zang, R. A., Gotmann, T., & Berk, D. (2000). Service-learning in liberal arts mathematics: Students tutor GED-level mathematics to at-risk youth. *Primus, 10*(4), 319-335. Doi: 10.1080/10511970008965969

Gina L. Solano was the program director for Project LIFE and an assistant professor at Salisbury University. She teaches educational technology other education courses in the graduate school as well as in the teacher preparation program. She was a former junior high and high school English, Spanish, English Language Learning, and Gifted and Talented teacher, as well as a Library Media Specialist. Her research focuses on service-learning, social justice, educational technology, and how these topics intersect one another. She has presented research and conducted workshops nationally and internationally.

Appendix A

Electronic Survey Questions
1. What is your age?
2. What is your gender?
    a. Male
    b. Female
3. How many semesters have you participated in Project LIFE?
    a. 1
    b. 2
    c. 3
    d. 4+
4. Which of the following best represents why you are attending Project LIFE?
    a. To complete my GED.
    b. To prepare for college or technical school.
    c. Other:
5. Please select the areas below that are the biggest struggle for you. Select all that apply.
    a. Reading
    b. Writing
    c. Speaking
    d. Computer Skills
    e. Math
    f. Studying
    g. Vocabulary
    h. Other:
6. Would you recommend this program to others who need help with their GED or college preparation?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Maybe
7. How do you feel about the length of the class period (1.5 hours)?
    a. The length is too long.
    b. The length is too short.
    c. The length is just right.
8. Is the location of the class at the WSU Community Education Center convenient and accessible to you?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Suggestion for a different location:
9. The class is currently taught on Wednesdays from 4:00-5:30 PM. Is that a good time and day for your schedule? If not, please suggest a different day or time.
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Suggestion for a different time or day:
10. Do you feel comfortable and welcomed in the class?
    a. Yes
    b. No

11. How much have your reading habits and skills improved since you began Project LIFE?
    a. A great deal
    b. Much
    c. Somewhat
    d. Little
    e. None, no change
12. How important is it for you to be able to work in a small group or one-to-one with a tutor?
    a. Very important
    b. Important
    c. Somewhat important
    d. Slightly important
    e. Not important
13. How useful is the whole group literacy lesson at the beginning of each class?
    a. Very useful
    b. Useful
    c. Somewhat useful
    d. Slightly useful
    e. Not useful
14. How motivating do you find the weekly prize drawing in encouraging you to attend the Project LIFE class?
    a. Very motivating
    b. Motivating
    c. Somewhat motivating
    d. Slightly motivating
    e. Not motivating
15. How motivating do you find the Chromebook drawing at the end of the semester in encouraging you to attend the Project LIFE class?
    a. Very motivating
    b. Motivating
    c. Somewhat motivating
    d. Slightly motivating
    e. Not motivating
16. How valuable is the scholarship you can earn to help pay for the GED tests or to apply tuition?
    a. Extremely valuable
    b. Valuable
    c. Somewhat valuable
    d. Slightly valuable
    e. Not valuable
17. How effective has Project LIFE been in helping you to accomplish your educational goals?
    a. Extremely effective
    b. Effective
    c. Somewhat effective
    d. Slightly effective
    e. Not effective
18. Please explain your answer above. Include as many details as you can and examples to describe why you answered the way you did.
19. Do you plan to continue participating in the Project LIFE class? Why or why not?

20. What is the most important reason you attend Project LIFE each week?
21. What have been the challenges, if any, of participating in Project LIFE?
22. Please discuss the how you feel Project LIFE may have helped you so far.
23. Please discuss any of the ways in which Project LIFE may have made a difference in your life.
24. What suggestions do you have to improve this class?
25. Overall, please describe your satisfaction and experience with Project LIFE.

Appendix B

Open-ended Interview Questions
1. What is your opinion of the Project LIFE program?
2. What is your education goal? (GED, vocational degree, college degree)
3. How has Project LIFE helped you in your education goals?
4. How is Project LIFE different from other GED and adult education classes you have attended?
5. What additional services or content areas do you need help with?
6. What is the benefit of studying with a university student tutor?
7. Do you have any suggestions for the tutors or the program director?
8. Do you have any suggestions for improvement?
9. How did you learn about Project LIFE?
10. What is your biggest challenge in obtaining your education goal?

The Impacts of edTPA on P-20 Educational Systems

Nai-Cheng Kuo, Augusta University
Stuart Carroll, & Louise Ammentorp, The College of New Jersey
Kenneth V. Anthony, Mississippi State University

Abstract

Preparing high-quality teachers is supposed to be the responsibility of state Departments of Education and university teacher education programs, yet the mandated Teacher Performance Assessment (edTPA) is operated by Pearson, a private corporation. Standing on the frontline to implement edTPA, faculty have witnessed equity issues within the system that cause concern. Furthermore, faculty are essentially mandated to work for a private corporation. In this paper, we address the impacts of edTPA across p-20 education, including pilot studies of edTPA by university faculty across states to confront the privately copyrighted teacher performance assessments. We argue that allowing a private corporation to operate such an important assessment is against the value of U.S. public education, and has failed many capable teacher candidates. In conclusion, we provide recommendations for stakeholders to eliminate edTPA to ensure equitable access to high-quality education.

Keywords: edTPA, P-20 education, teacher performance assessments, teacher education

Preparing high-quality teachers is supposed to be the responsibility of state Departments of Education and university teacher education programs, yet Pearson, a private corporation operates the mandated Teacher Performance Assessment (edTPA). In 2019, the Thomas J. Dodd Research Center at the University of Connecticut published concerns about edTPA: 1) diminishment of candidate learning, 2) perpetuation of inequitable systems, and 3) application of developmentally inappropriate standards (Bernard, Kaufman, Kohan, & Mitoma, 2019). For states which do not have state teacher performance assessments in place, it is easier for them to simply adopt edTPA rather than to spend time and money on developing the state's own, non-profit teacher performance assessments. Many educators in the field stay silent because they view having an assessment for teacher candidates as better than having no assessment, or they see themselves as powerless or too precariously positioned to do anything about it. There are many people who feel disenfranchised, so they do not act or speak up. For example, adjunct professors who teach in education departments as well as students who feel powerless about what systems they have to move through. The lack of research evidence on their state-created teacher performance assessments also makes educators reluctant to judge the quality of edTPA.

Developed by measurement scholars at the Stanford Center for Assessment (SCALE), supported by the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education (AACTE), and operated by Pearson, the edTPA's use has been mandated in eighteen states (SCALE, 2019). The Council for

the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) also supports the adoption of the edTPA over state-created teacher performance assessments. However, many questions have arisen about the power being granted to edTPA and Pearson. Standing on the frontline of implement edTPA, university faculty have witnessed many equity concerns about edTPA across p-20 education. What faculty are mandated to do has crossed lines of doing the work for a private corporation.

In this paper, we aim to continue dialogues that confront edTPA and address the impacts of edTPA across p-20 education. We include university faculty's pilot studies of edTPA in the states of Vermont and Mississippi. Finally, we provide recommendations for state governors, university faculty members, p-12 educators, and teacher candidates to eliminate the use of edTPA to ensure equitable access to quality education in p-20 education.

Impacts at the P-12 School Level

Impact 1. Strained School-University Relationships

Many researchers point to the need for university-based teacher educators to respect the experience and knowledge of classroom teachers as crucial to the development and education of preservice teachers (Feiman-Nemser & Beasley, 2007; Zeichner, 2010). The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) calls for "turning teacher education on its head" by shifting the focus of teacher education to school-based clinical experience (NCATE, 2010). Quality clinical preparation requires reciprocal discussions between university teacher educators and school-based teacher educators on how to best prepare preservice teachers (Bullough, 2005; Young, Bullough Jr., Draper, Smith, & Erickson, 2005). As the Association of Teacher Education (ATE) *Standards for Field Experience in Teacher Education* (2000) stress, clinical experience should be planned and deliberate, and collaboratively developed and implemented by both the institutions of higher education and the schools. This recommended approach, however, is the opposite of how edTPA has been enacted. P-12 schools and teachers had no part in the decision-making process of adopting edTPA. It is yet another external mandate forced upon them.

As a result, in order to abide by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), more and more school districts reject hosting teacher candidates who need to do edTPA with children in their schools. Take New Jersey as an example: At one college, faculty were told by administrators that sixty school districts have made it clear that they will not take any teacher candidates who need complete edTPA in their schools. Districts are concerned that teacher candidates' thoroughly-written commentaries and videotapes put children's privacy at risk. Teacher candidates' edTPA portfolios are stored in Pearson's database, shared with Pearson employed edTPA national scorers, and can be used by anyone who SCALE deems appropriate for conducting "education-related" activities. All of these create risks for the children's confidential information to be revealed or used by people outside the children's schools. Teacher candidates' intellectual property is also left unprotected. People who have access to edTPA portfolios can easily take advantage of teacher candidates' thoroughly-written lesson plans and activities for profit or for "education-related" training.

Impact 2. Inequities in Level of Support

Meuwissen and Choppin's (2015) study notes that the amount of support teacher candidates received from their cooperating teachers in p-12 classrooms varies widely. Teacher candidates whose cooperating teachers have received professional development about the edTPA do better than those whose teachers have not (Kissau, Hart, & Algozzine, 2019). This privileges students whose colleges have the resources to train cooperating teachers and otherwise provide technical and conceptual assistance.

However, in some situations, teacher candidates had to teach their cooperating teachers in P-12 classrooms about edTPA and settle for whatever help cooperating teachers could offer. Moreover, cooperating teachers may not be familiar with the language used in edTPA (though edTPA claims it is the language of the field), which can undermine the cooperating teacher's role as a more knowledgeable and experienced mentor. All of these factors can damage the student teaching relationship, given that edTPA has transformed student teaching from a formative learning experience to one that is "immediately, and prematurely, high stakes and summative" (Dover & Schultz, 2016, p. 97). Inequities also arise from teaching in various settings in which cooperating teachers have different levels of knowledge of the edTPA and different ability or willingness to adapt existing curriculum to allow candidates to complete edTPA tasks as specified (Meuwissen, Choppin, Cloonan, & Shang-Butler, 2016).

Impact 3. Narrowing the Student Teaching Experience: A One-Way Roundabout

With the edTPA requirement, teacher candidates must follow one set of rubrics to plan, teach, and assess p-12 students in order to leave the so-called "Pearson roundabout" (Kuo, 2018) successfully and become certified teachers. If teacher candidates, in states which have mandatory edTPA policies in place, do not follow the set of rubrics and fail edTPA, they must choose to retake edTPA (and pay for it) and cycle back through the roundabout—or choose another career. To help teacher candidates pass edTPA, one mechanism used by most universities is to remove teacher candidates from their school placements to allow for more time to work on their edTPA submissions (e.g., a series of edTPA boot camps). Removing teacher candidates from their placement to prepare for lengthy edTPA portfolios takes away from their time in the field. It also forces schools to adjust schedules for teacher candidates to go back to their campuses for edTPA training. This aspect interferes with the whole purpose of student teaching. It takes teacher candidates' hours to find, cut, and convert the best portion of their teaching videos for edTPA. They spend countless hours evaluating every rubric, comparing responses across piles of documents, tweaking their thoughts to align with the rubrics, and compiling lengthy documents (approximately 80 pages plus video clips) that completely disconnected from the realities of being a teacher. Teacher candidates often express that there is not meaningful learning happening during these trainings precisely because the focus is on formatting and uploading.

Impact 4. Unnatural Fit for the Real-life Classroom

edTPA does not fit in naturally with school programs and curricula. Taking special education edTPA as an example, the maximum pages that each teacher candidate needs to write are 84 pages plus videos and unlimited pages for relevant data during their student teaching semester, which interfere with their other teaching responsibilities. Because edTPA is consequential and

costly, most teacher candidates exhaust themselves to do the maximum, hoping to pass the assessment and thinking that more equals better. Ironically, as Gilbert and Kuo (2019) state: "With asking teacher candidates to write and prepare so much for edTPA portfolios but only providing them with abstract numbers as feedback, there is inconsistency between what edTPA scorers expect teacher candidates to do for students and what edTPA scorers do to teacher candidates" (p. 9). Conflict between the demands of edTPA and school curriculum can make the edTPA a miseducative experience, which becomes an overwhelming one for the candidates and cooperating teachers alike (Reagan, Schram, McCurdy, Chang, & Evans, 2016). Completing the edTPA during the semesters when children are taking standardized tests is even more difficult because cooperating teachers need to hold themselves accountable (Greenblatt, 2018).

Researchers have found that cooperating teachers who have had to make great efforts to accommodate edTPA completion are less likely to accept teacher candidates in subsequent years. To continue with the special education edTPA as an example, schools must allow each teacher candidate to work only with one focus learner throughout the semester to complete their edTPA portfolio. Several principals and cooperating teachers express that in the real world, no school can afford to hire one special education teacher who only works with one student, and thus such a training requested by edTPA is not practical (Gilbert & Kuo, 2019). edTPA not only is an inauthentic representation of teacher work—an assessment that leads teaching and learning to a decontextualized set of skills, but also dismisses the view that acknowledges teaching complexity or artistry (Greenblatt & O'Hara, 2015; Price, 2016).

Impact at the Higher Education Level

Impact 5. Disempowering Teacher Candidates

In his study of pre-service candidates across programs, Coloma (2015) found that the vast majority (93%) of students do not believe that the edTPA is a fair assessment of their ability to teach. They feel that edTPA scores as "reflective of how well (teacher candidates) can meet Pearson's requirements under pressure" (Coloma, 2015, p. 25). Teacher candidates across the nation keep expressing their frustration about edTPA either through face-to-face meetings with administrators or via public discussion platforms. However, before being certified teachers, they are in a vulnerable situation and must succumb to the state's top-down policy of edTPA. Instead of helping teacher candidates convey their concerns to the state government, teacher educators ask students to accept edTPA because it is a top-down policy.

Impact 6. Threats to Teacher Educators' Academic Freedom

Many teacher educators are first exposed to edTPA through mandatory training workshops in which edTPA is a given, not subject to debate. Some faculty members have been explicitly told by university administrators that their annual evaluation on teaching will be based on teacher candidates' edTPA performance (Gilbert & Kuo, 2019). Because edTPA has become one reason to punish university faculty when teacher candidates fail, malpractices inevitably sprout to ensure teacher candidates will pass edTPA. Some universities, especially Tier 2 and Tier 3 universities, use edTPA passing rates as a means for advertising their programs. Several states send edTPA data to school districts to help them compare the quality of teacher education programs. All of these

cause edTPA rubrics to become the default curriculum for teacher education and forces university faculty to "teach to the test" to ensure that their institutions have a high pass rate for edTPA.

There are cases where university administrators are strong proponents of edTPA and that they do not allow their faculty to conduct research studies that can possibly uncover the negative aspects of edTPA. Furthermore, university faculty, p-12 educators, and teacher candidates are afraid of sharing their true voices for fear of retribution. Preventing faculty from engaging in intellectual debate about edTPA clearly violates academic freedom and is an abuse of power by administrators. More seriously, university faculty and K-12 educators, who are considered state government full-time employees, are now become part-time employees of Pearson to serve as edTPA scorers and to sell edTPA on campus, which involves ethical and legal concerns in the U.S. education system.

Impact 7. Narrowing Curriculum in Teacher Education

Since edTPA scores are used as a proxy for quality teaching, teacher educators must revise curriculum and instruction to achieve better scores that presumably demonstrate teacher quality and impact (Coloma, 2015). When universities are concerned with producing high achievers on edTPA, education becomes a transmission of a body of technical knowledge based on presumed rubrics. Professor-and-teacher candidate dialogue on a deep level of knowledge, self-actualization, creativity, and freedom of inquiry are disappearing. Greenblatt and O'Hara (2015) summarize this well:

> The lengthy and tightly structured edTPA requirements have changed the focus of the student teaching experience and seminar from preparing for the first year of teaching to preparing to pass a test and create lessons under constraints that make the test an authentic assessment. (p. 59)

Teaching should be tailored to meet students' needs, instead of being tailored to meet a set of edTPA rubrics. Unfortunately, when teacher candidates do not strictly follow the edTPA rubrics to plan their lessons, teach, and assess students, they will encounter huge challenges when they are asked to answer commentary questions. This is because all commentary questions are closely tied to the edTPA rubrics and thus teacher candidates must provide evidence to indicate that they abide by the rubrics to plan, teach, and assess, regardless of their teaching contexts.

Take the Elementary edTPA as an example, the literacy tasks are overly complex and highly specific. There are many concepts involved: central focus, essential literacy strategies, language functions, language demands, language supports, syntax and discourse. Teacher candidates spend many hours learning the language of the edTPA, which is arbitrary and unrelated to how practicing teachers and literacy specialists talk about literacy. Teacher candidates also spend an inordinate amount of time and energy creating a literacy segment that meets the expectations of the edTPA and fits into their curriculum.

The expectation of edTPA for elementary literacy lessons is strategy-based. While the National Reading Panel's influential report (National Reading Panel, 2000) includes strategy training as a component of a balanced reading program, it has several other emphases and never gives strategy training the primacy as research has highlighted that reading comprehension is heuristic, not just the use of strategies (Willingham, 2006, Guthrie, et al., 2004, Elleman & Compton, 2017). By forcing a strict "strategies first" approach on the edTPA learning segment, its designers force

teacher educators to compromise their own beliefs and comply with a top-down mandate, and compel their own students to do the same. Similar problems have arisen with the edTPA in foreign languages education (Russell & Davidson Devall, 2016), performing arts education (Parkes & Powell, 2015), special education (Othman, Robinson, & Molfenter, 2017), and TESOL education (Chiu, 2014).

edTPA is largely a writing assessment, not a teaching performance assessment. Teacher candidates spend a lot more time writing than teaching and only receive numeric feedback from edTPA scorers, which is the least effective. Furthermore, teacher candidates need to watch their teaching videos many times in order to find pieces of evidence for their commentary questions. In this way, they will be able say, for example, in Video 2 at 3:28,'' I did such and such. This approach creates a "gold-mining" attitude in candidates as they watch their teaching videos, diminishing the power of authentic self-reflection. This kind of a learning attitude leaves no room for creative and critical thinking. It is evident that edTPA negatively impacts the teacher candidates' approach to their teaching. According to Chiu (2014):

> Pearson's proven record of blurring the line between non-profit charity and for-profit business, as well as their perpetuation of casual, outsourced labor with no job protections, demonstrates their untrustworthiness. Teacher candidates are less likely to take risks in their teaching, such as using progressive, critical pedagogies, for fear of losing points for deviating from teaching ideologies and practices that have been described in the edTPA rubrics and that are already widely accepted and used by the teaching community. (p. 29)

Teacher candidates, focusing on meeting edTPA rubric requirements, lose the ability and willingness to plan creatively or to pursue their own visions of quality teaching. For example, at the College of New Jersey, elementary education teacher candidates expressed that persuasive writing tasks fit most neatly in the upper elementary grades, while "how to books" and similar sequencing activities fit best in the primary grades. The sameness of their lessons is shocking and not indicative of the pursuit of quality. This phenomenon continues growing as more and more faculty and edTPA trainers use former students' edTPA submissions as samples for new teacher candidates, who, while careful not to plagiarize, will use these as templates for meeting the complex layers of requirements that the unwieldy edTPA places upon them.

Teacher educators also lose time to discuss field experiences and student well-being issues. They lose control of curriculum as they are forced to teach what Pearson scorers will be looking for and tips for successfully passing the assessment. Some colleges have responded to the edTPA mandate by drastically reshaping their programs to increase edTPA scores. In one instance, student teaching placements are changed so that students will be in a single school for all major placements—professional development for cooperating teachers geared to edTPA requirements as well as students being required to complete a full mock edTPA prior to completing the task itself (Burns, Henry, & Lindauer, 2015). Non-traditional teacher certification programs can play this game just like traditional teacher certification programs. Taking Georgia as an example, Georgia Professional Standards Commission states:

> Beginning in Fall 2015, traditionally prepared teacher candidates will be required to earn a passing score on the edTPA before they can become eligible for an induction teaching certificate in Georgia; non-traditionally prepared candidates must earn a passing score prior to program completion. Across the state, Educator Program Providers (EPPs) are diligently

examining their curriculum and program frameworks to ensure that their candidates are prepared to complete the assessment successfully. (GaPSC, 2014)

Regardless traditional or non-traditional teacher certifications programs, teacher candidates need to pass edTPA. If feedback and measures from university faculty, school principals, and classroom teachers no longer matter and teacher candidates' performance in universities do not count, there is no need for teacher candidates to go through traditional teacher preparation. By passing edTPA, teacher candidates in non-traditional teacher certification programs can become certified teachers faster than those in traditional teacher certification programs. They can also save more tuition and fees than their counterparts in traditional teacher certification programs.[32]

Impact 8. Educational Inequities in Higher Education

edTPA and its implementation magnifies existing inequities and promotes dishonesty. Inconsistent guidelines, the lack of accountability, the focus on passing and not improvement, the heavy writing requirement, and the online submission are just some of the factors that foster inequity and dishonesty. Teacher candidates with cultural capital such as access to expert peers, teachers, or to the work of their predecessors have advantages of those with fewer connections. Those who commute to campus or have part-time jobs may have fewer resources at their disposal than those living in residence. Teacher candidates whose colleges provide more extensive and intensive training have an advantage over those in colleges that do not have the resources to invest in test preparation on top of their core functions.

Similar educational inequities in p-12 schools also occur when on-campus faculty and field supervisors have different interpretations of what help they can offer (Ratner & Kolman, 2016), leaving some students with little help and others receiving assistance that is clearly beyond what SCALE deems acceptable. Students in alternative routes or on-line programs, who have little contact with faculty, may be particularly vulnerable.

Faculty members are limited to use the SCALE/Pearson official website to prepare teacher candidates with edTPA. However, the website *PassedTPA* (http://www.passedtpa.com/), generally considered as the "most helpful" website by teacher candidates across the nation, actually prepares teacher candidates on how to prepare a successful edTPA portfolio. This phenomenon indicates that teacher educators are undermined when teacher candidates pay thousands of dollars in college tuition and fees, yet feel better prepared by a free website. Or worse, they turn to *Teachers Pay Teachers* which have edTPA submissions for sale, or even worse, approach the services that offer to write the entire edTPA on their behalf (Dover & Schultz, 2016).

The issue of accountability and the potential for cheating are problematic. When teacher candidates have to complete other mandated state content testing, they must report to a facility and have two forms of identification. If not, they are not allowed to take the exam. There is no such verification with edTPA. There is no way to know if a teacher candidate is submitting their own work. It could be argued that the video prevents submitting someone else's work. However, teacher candidates can merely mirror the edTPA portfolio they have purchased. Teacher candidates can also employ others to write their edTPA submissions. There is no oversight for this form of cheating. Even researchers who are optimistic about teaching performance assessments are concerned

---

32. As of July 1, 2020, Georgia no longer requires the edTPA.

that the use of these tests as an accountability measure in a political context can reduce their authenticity and ability to improve instruction (Meuwissen & Chopin, 2015; Wei & Pecheone, 2010). There is a strong potential for candidates to focus on gaming the test situation in order to pass the test, rather than improve their practice through full engagement.

Further, there is no oversight in other forms of assistance. Family members, close friends, or trustful colleagues who are experienced teachers or have already passed edTPA are particularly helpful to these teacher candidates. Those who are the first generation to go to college or do not know people who have passed edTPA do not have access to free assistance in editing the portfolios. In addition, the edTPA costs teacher candidates $300 to take the first time, which is in addition to the costs of additional certification tests and of the certification process itself. The time demands of edTPA mean that some students have to forego income in order to complete it (Greenblatt, 2018). Students who fail the edTPA the first time around have to pay one hundred dollars per section that they re-submit, and given that students do not receive individualized feedback on rubric items, this choice amounts to a gamble on their parts. Pearson stands to profit from test retake fees, reducing its incentive to make the edTPA more transparent and manageable (Singer & Thompson, 2017). In her study of the edTPA experiences of candidates of color, Souto-Manning (2019) identified three candidates who declined to take the test, either because they were intimidated by it or concerned about videotaping children who were undocumented immigrants. This indicates that the "failure rate" of students of color may be higher than SCALE's numbers indicate. Although the reasons for the edTPA achievement gap remain unclear, Gilbert and Kuo (2019) express concern about the risk of stereotyping in the videotaped edTPA submissions, where the teacher candidate is visible to the scorer.

Universities Examine edTPA

Several states have called for university faculty to reexamine edTPA before adopting it. Much of the work can also be found in refereed journals such as: *Critical Education, Educational Policy, Equity and Excellence Education, Social Justice, Teachers College Record, Teacher Education and Special Education, Teacher Performance Assessment and Accountability Reform, and The Education Forum*. There are states, such as Connecticut, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Vermont, in which many university faculty and administrators question the use of edTPA. In the following section, we use Vermont and Mississippi as examples.

Vermont

Several universities in Vermont collaboratively examined edTPA and have deemed edTPA as inadequate teacher performance assessments. For example, McGough, Tinkler, and Bedell's (2019) study compared and contrasted edTPA and Vermont's Licensure Portfolio (VLP). They point out that edTPA is expertise-based, designed and managed by measurement scholars. It requires all procedures to be coalesced precisely based on the manual and hands off control of teacher performance assessments to SCALE and Pearson. The implementation of edTPA is generic regardless of context. In contrast, VLP is judgement-based, designed and managed by practicing professionals. VLP focuses its assessment on interdependent post hoc reviews through collaborative dialogues across stakeholders. The implementation of VLP is customized, attentive to individual, institutional, community, and cultural contexts.

In addition, the validity and reliability of edTPA aims for objectivity, using psychometrics. To run statistical results, edTPA only provides numerical feedback to teacher candidates based on snapshots of one-time constructed and scripted performances to comply with indicators. Because the audience of teacher candidates in edTPA are critics of teacher education, teacher candidates' performances in edTPA become artificial, striving for what is necessary to pass. Ultimately, edTPA cultivates utilitarian and indifferent teachers. In contrast, VLP acknowledges subjectivity, contextualization, and judgement. VLP involves methods of self-assessment for continuous improvement of practices. Because the audience of teacher candidates in VLP are learners, university faculty, classroom teachers, administrators, and policy makers, their performance is authentic, seeking opportunities to grow and advocate the quality of teacher education. Ultimately, VLP cultivates virtue teachers who are willing to advance in collaboration with their mentors and peers.

Additionally, teacher candidates need to pay extra money over the top of tuition and fees to Pearson (on average $300 to $500 per person). edTPA's scorers are recruited and paid by Pearson, involving university faculty and p-12 educators using their regular work hours to earn extra money from Pearson ($75 per portfolio). In contrast, teacher candidates do not need to pay any extra fees to take VLP and grading VLP is embedded in faculty workloads as part of teacher educators' responsibilities (McGough, Tinkler, and Bedell, 2019).

Mississippi

Similar efforts are also found in Mississippi. One teacher education program in Mississippi considered using edTPA, but ultimately decided against it. Like many universities, pressure from external accreditation agencies to use independent, valid, and reliable evaluation instruments, was the main reason the university considered adopting edTPA. They had seen other universities and state departments of education adopt edTPA to address accreditation requirements. The university contacted edTPA, held a series of workshops and meetings, and conducted a pilot with elementary preservice teachers in 2017. Ultimately the teacher education program decided against edTPA because of concerns over additional costs to the teacher candidates, the lack of a role for the classroom mentor teacher and university faculty in the evaluation process, and the fact that the Mississippi Department of Education indicated that it would not adopt edTPA as a licensure requirement.

Faculty in the teacher education program participated in edTPA training and in the pilot as university supervisors for seven teacher interns. In addition to the concerns above, these faculty members had concerns about academic freedom. They asked, "Who is teaching? Our faculty or edTPA?" They were concerned that adopting edTPA would result in significant changes to the nature of their education program. Creating a program that would support candidates passing edTPA would require a loss of academic freedom for both faculty and program. The program would cease to be independent and would teach students to pass edTPA, failing to consider the needs of the candidates and the schools in which they will eventually teach.

Finally, faculty members identified significant theoretical and practical differences in the way edTPA requires students to teach and the way their program prepares preservice teachers—most notably in literacy and mathematics. The faculty members felt that their current instruction was better informed by best practices and research than the requirements of edTPA. The teacher education program still had to address the external accreditation requirement for an instrument to evaluate preservice teachers and teacher interns. To address this issue, the university found another way. The state had previously adopted a statewide evaluation instrument, the Teacher Intern Assessment Instrument (TIAI) and it was determined that the best response was for all public and

private teacher education programs to work together to establish validity and inter-rater reliability for the instrument. The teacher education program participated in these efforts.

In 2018, the Mississippi Department of Education and the teacher education programs in the state (public and private) created a statewide common assessment module for the TIAI that all interns, university supervisors, and classroom mentor teachers must pass with a score of 80%. The purpose of the assessment module is to create a common understanding of the TIAI and support rater reliability. Everyone included in the assessment process using the instrument (including interns) knows the assessment process. In short, this teacher education program chose to help modify an existing statewide assessment that all teacher education programs used rather than adopt edTPA. This satisfies the requirements of the external accrediting agency as well as allows the teacher education programs in the state to maintain independence and create programs that produce teachers that meet the needs of the schools in the state.

Conclusion

EdTPA undermines the professionalism of university faculty members, p-12 educators, and teacher candidates. Privately copyrighted materials should not be used as consequential exams for teacher licensure. Policy makers cannot allow private firms to control U.S. teacher licensure examination on a business model aimed at profit over quality (e.g., only assigning one scorer instead of multiple scorers for grading one teacher's portfolio). It is evident that edTPA treats educators as technicians, not professionals. Teacher candidates who do not follow one set of rubrics to plan, teach, and assess students cannot become teachers. The arbitrary rubrics and numerical feedback of edTPA are far insufficient to cultivate well-rounded teacher candidates to respond to today's diverse classrooms.

The edTPA promotes coercion, corruption, and cheating behaviors. With the value of education being distorted in p-20 education, it will inevitably impact society at large. We argue education must neither become a tool to secure grants like *Race to the Top* nor become an economic agenda for state governments to shift their financial burden of developing states' own, high-quality assessments for teacher candidates. The ultimate goals of teacher education are to cultivate teacher candidates who genuinely care about their students' learning and growth. Future educators should not be focusing on what to do in order to pass edTPA.

In conclusion, state governments should be involved in examining edTPA, instead of accepting the data provided by SCALE, Pearson, or national edTPA scorers. These people are either developers or seller of the instrument and have a bias of promotion. Moreover, even the most rigorous research methods cannot mediate design flaws. The "helpers" of teacher candidates' edTPA portfolios (e.g., families, friends, and online materials) have made it difficult to examine the effectiveness of the assessment tool. Therefore, the design of edTPA must be investigated and practitioners' voices from university faculty, cooperating teachers, and teacher candidates must be considered. Allowing such an important assessment to be operated by a private corporation is against the value of public education in the United States and fails many capable teacher candidates.

References

Behizadeh, N. & Neely, A. (2018). *Testing injustice: Examine the consequential validity of edTPA. Equity & Excellence in Education, 51* (3-4), 242-264. https://doi.org/ 10. 1080 /10665684.2019.1568927

Bernard, C., Kaufman, D., Kohan, M., & Mitoma, G. (2019). *Confronting the edTPA in Connecticut: Recommendations for teacher candidate quality, sustainability, and empowerment.* Retrieved from https://thedoddcenter.uconn.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/319/2019/03/ Confronting-the-edTPA-in-Connecticut.pdf

Bullough, Jr. R. V. (2005). Being and becoming a mentor: School-based teacher educators and teacher educator identify. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 21,* 143-155.

Burns, B. A., Henry, J. J., & Lindauer, J. R. (2015). Working together to foster candidate success on the edTPA. *Journal of Inquiry and Action in Education, 6,* (2), pp. 18-37.

Chiu, S. (2014). edTPA: An assessment that reduces the quality of teacher education. *Teachers College, Columbia University Working Papers in TESOL & Applied Linguistics, 14*(1), 28-30. Retrieved from https://tesolal.columbia.edu/

Coloma, R. S. (2015). Students are once again number instead of actual human beings: Teacher performance assessment and the governing of curriculum and teacher education. *Journal of the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies, 13*(1), 5-35.

Dover, A. G., & Schultz, B. D. (2016). Troubling the edTPA: Illusions of objectivity and rigor. *The Educational Forum, 80*(1), 95-106. Retrieved from http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/utef20

Elementary Education edTPA Assessment Handbook (2018). Submission guidelines. Retrieved from http://www.edtpa.com/

Feiman-Nemser, S., & Beasley, K. (2007). Discovering and sharing knowledge: Inventing a new role for cooperating teachers. In D. Carroll, H. Featherstone, J. Featherstone, S. Feiman-Nemser, & D. Roosevelt (Eds.), *Transforming teacher education: Reflections from the field* (pp. 139-160). Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education press.

Georgia Professional Standards Commission, GaPSC (2014). *edTPA fall technical assistance event supporting candidates, faculty, and P-12.* Retrieved from https://www.gapsc.com/Commission/Media/Downloads/2014_edTPA/ConferenceAgenda.pdf

Gilbert, K. A., & Kuo, N-C. (2019). Ethical, legal, and pedagogical issues in edTPA. Critical Education, 10(8), 1-17. Retrieved from http://ojs.library.ubc.ca/index.php/criticaled/article/view/186418

Greenblatt, D. & O'Hara, K. E. (2015). Buyer beware: Lessons learned from edTPA implementation in New York State. Thought & Action, Summer, 57-67. Retrieved from http://www.nea.org/home/1821.htm

Greenblatt, D. (2018). Neoliberalism and teacher certification. *Policy Futures in Education, 16,* (6), pp. 804-827.

Kissau, S., Hart, L., & Algozzine, B. (2019). Investigating the impact of edTPA professional development on classroom practice and student teaching experience. *Journal of Teacher Education, 70*(2), pp. 102-114.

Kuo, N. C. (2018). Revamping edTPA or considering other alternatives. *Teachers College Records.* Retrieved from https://www.tcrecord.org/

McGough, D., Tinkler, B., & Bedell, C. (2019). The mismeasure of education preparation: A critique of policy narratives about teacher performance assessment. *2019 American Education*

Research Association (AERA) Conference, Session 35.078-4, High Stakes, Suspect Scores: Teacher Quality and Performance Exams*. Retrieved from http://www.aera.net.

Meuwissen, K. W. & Choppin, J. (2015). Preservice teachers' adaptations to tensions associated with the edTPA during its early implementation in New York and Washington States. *Education Policy Analysis Archives, 23*, (103), http://dx.doi.org/10.14507/epaa.v23.2078.

Meuwissen, K., Choppin, J., Cloonan, K., & Shang-Butler, H. (2016). *Teaching candidates' experiences with the edTPA as an initial certification test in New York and Washington states: Survey results from the second year of a two-year study*. [Published by the Warner School of Education, University of Rochester]

Othman, B. L., Robinson, R., & Molfenter, N. F. (2017). Emerging issues with consequential use of the edTPA: Overall and through a special education lens. *Teacher Education and Special Education, 40*(4), 269-277. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1177/0888406417718251

Parkes, K. A. & Powell, S. R. (2015). Is the edTPA the right choice for evaluating teacher readiness? Arts Education Policy Review, 116, 103-113. Retrieved from http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/vaep20

Price, T. A. (2016). Curricular reflections in the USA: Teaching teachers the edTPA. *Euro-JCS, 3*(1), 377-386.

Ratner, A. R. & Kolman, J. S. (2016). Breakers, benders, and obeyers: Inquiring into teacher educators' mediation of edTPA. *Education Policy Analysis Archives, 24*(35), 1-26.

Reagan, E. M., Schram, T., McCurdy, K., Chang, T., & Evans, C. (2016). Politics of policy: Assessing the implementation, impact, and evolution of the Performance Assessment for California Teachers (PACT) and edTPA. *Educational Policy Analysis Archives, 24*(9). http://dx.doi.org/10.14507/epaa.v24.2176

Russell, V., & Davidson Devall, K. F. (2016). An examination of the edTPA portfolio assessment and other measures of teacher preparation and readiness. *Foreign Language Annals, 49*(3), 479-501. doi:10.1111/flan.12209

SCALE (2019). Participation map. Retrieved from http://edtpa.aacte.org/state-policy

Singer, A. & Thompson, E. (2017). *Pearson and the neo-liberal global assault on public education.* Retrieved from https://www.huffpost.com/

Souto-Manning, M. (2019). "Good teaching" and "good teachers" for whom?: Critically troubling standardized and corporatized notions of quality in teacher education. *Teachers College Record, 121* (10). Retrieved from https://www.tcrecord.org/Content.asp?ContentId=22762

Wei, R. C., & Pecheone, R. (2010). Assessment for learning in preservice teacher education: Performance-based assessments. In M. Kennedy (Ed.), *Teacher Assessment and the Quest for Teacher Quality*, pp. 69-132. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Young, J. R., Bullough Jr., R. V., Draper, R. J., Smith, L. K., & Erickson, L. B. (2005). Novice teacher growth and personal models of mentoring: Choosing compassion over inquiry. *Mentoring and Tutoring, 13*(2), 169-188.

Zeichner, K. (2010). Rethinking the connections between campus courses and field experiences in college and university-based teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education, 61*(1-2), 89-99.

Louise Ammentorp, is an Associate Professor of Elementary and Early Childhood Education at The College of New Jersey. Her teaching and research focus on school-university partnerships and best practice in the clinical experiences of preservice teachers. She is also interested in innovation

in teacher preparation and p-6 classrooms, with a focus on the integration of nature and the arts in the curriculum, and outdoor education.

Kenneth V. Anthony, is an Associate Professor of Social Studies at Mississippi State University. His research is on rural education, preservice teachers' knowledge and ability to teach social studies disciplines, using primary sources in the classroom, and homeschooling.

Stuart Carroll, is an Associate Professor of Elementary and Early Childhood Education at The College of New Jersey. His research is on the meaning that preservice teachers make of their field experiences and associated assignments, including the edTPA.

Nai-Cheng Kuo, is an Associate Professor of Teacher Education and Special Education at Augusta University. Her research interest includes teacher quality, quality of teaching, and educational policies.

Fourth Industrial Revolution: Standing at the Precipice
By A. Doucet, et. al

New York, NY: Routledge (2018). 190 pp., $25.28

Reviewed by Susan L. Wienand, Old Dominion University

Abstract

Jobs are being eliminated due to technological advances. Reformation of the current educational system is needed to better prepare students for their future careers. Teachers are in the best position to know the needs of their students and how best to educate them. Strategies and recommendations are offered to close the equity gap. Networking and a collective voice of teachers are promoted to lead the must needed change.

Key Words: *Educational reform, Equity gap, Industrial revolution*

As educators, we are responsible for preparing our students to be successful members of society. Globalization and technological advances are changing the societal landscape. Is our educational system keeping pace or setting up our students for failure?

The book, *Teaching in the Fourth Industrial Revolution: Standing at the Precipice*, is a must read for educators who are frustrated with the current educational system and are concerned for the futures of their students. The intent of the book is to initiate discussions about the revitalization of educational systems worldwide. The authors wrote the book with their students in mind and to let their teacher voices be heard. Readers will gain knowledge about instructional strategies employed by the authors and can use these recommendations as a guide to initiate change.

All six of the authors were finalists for the Global Teacher Prize. Their diverse backgrounds heighten the impact their recommendations could have on international educational systems. Hailing from different countries, they are teachers, principals, lecturers, writers, entrepreneurs, innovators, and researchers who possess a wealth of information and experience. While in the classroom, they each introduced innovative strategies to teach their students, hence their nomination for the Global Teacher Prize. Each brings their own perspective on the current educational systems and the changes that are needed to prepare students for future success regardless of the industrial revolution.

An industrial revolution is a period of change in the economy that is dominated by one or more industries. Each industrial revolution builds upon the preceding one. The third revolution brought about digitalization. The fourth industrial revolution expands on the third by fusing physical, digital, and biological worlds (p. 3). Technological advances are expected in the areas of artificial intelligence, automation, robotics, 3-D printing, and genetic engineering to name a few

(p.3). Educational systems need to be revamped to prepare students to be successful in these fields and their offshoots.

The authors make some very compelling recommendations in the book. These recommendations include establishing holistic measures of education outcomes (p. 143), aligning institutional vision with what is happening in the classroom (p. 144), personalizing each student's path (p. 145), and flipping the system by allowing teachers to lead policy development (p. 145). Although written two years ago, the effect of these recommendations has been minimal. The lack of networking and the collective silence of teacher voices could be the primary factors. The movement could gain momentum if more educators and administrators read this book. Artificial intelligence and automation are threatening current jobs. The current educational system is not preparing students for future occupations. Reinvented educational systems must adapt to innovation to prepare the next generation with life-sustaining skills.

The equity gap is more pronounced due to the coronavirus pandemic. During remote learning, school districts face students' lack of access to technology. Computers and internet accessibility drastically changed the way we communicate with each other. Teachers need to embrace technology in the classroom rather than shun it. In addition to technology being a supplemental learning tool, it can be used to prepare students for skills required in future careers (p. 109). Technology opens windows to the world for students (p. 32 & 111). They can connect with others from around the world to learn about different cultures and to solve global problems. Curricular materials are easy to access and can be self-selected by students based on their interests. Students learn how to be good global citizens using technology; a skill that is vital for their future. Artificial intelligence and automation are threatening current jobs (p. 10). The reinvented educational systems must adapt to innovation to prepare the next generation with life-sustaining skills.

What is occurring in the classroom needs to be the basis for decision making in institutions and the overall educational system. The authors stress the need to align the institutional vision with what is happening in the classroom. The reverse typically occurs. Administrators derive at a vision and expect the teachers to modify or alter classroom activities to meet this vision. The authors stress the importance of a strong teacher voice and the need for teachers to advocate for their students.

The call for teachers to be activists and change agents resounds throughout the text. Teachers are encouraged to network on a continuum from school level to globally. Social media provides an outlet for global networking. Teachers are empowered to initiate change that embraces a broad and holistic curriculum at all levels of the system. Policy and procedural development is needed to establish structure and standards that better serve the students.

The current system forces teachers to do what is best for the institution rather than their students (p. 130). Poor outcomes on standardized tests lead to the use of curriculum intricately linked to the exam (p. 27). International educational systems expect actions and judgments from teachers that are not beneficial to students. Teachers need the freedom to design lessons based on student interests (p. 58).

The health of society is dependent upon maintaining a continuously educated population. Education must be at the forefront of the creation of a sustainable system. One cannot exist without the other. Educators and educational leadership who realize that the current system needs reform would greatly appreciate reading this book. The ideas offered by the authors provide the motivation to become a change agent. This book is the spark to get the fire going. The more educators that read this book will flame the fire and lead to an educational system that benefits the students.

Susan L. Wienand is a second year PhD student in Education with a focus in Occupational and Technical Studies at Old Dominion University. She holds a MEd in Industrial Education from Temple University, a MS in Health Administration from Saint Joseph's University, and a BS in Dental Hygiene from Thomas Jefferson University. In recent years, she taught secondary Career and Technical Education. She is interested in examining the expansion of youth apprenticeship programs as a workforce planning strategy.