

**NARROWING THE GAP BETWEEN  
THEORY AND PRACTICE IN  
TEACHER EDUCATION**

**By**

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

A great deal has been written on teacher education in recent years, much of it in direct conflict with other writings. Obviously, the issues being discussed in education are being addressed by writers with different value systems and agendas. Dewey reminded us,

Profound differences in theory are never gratuitous or invented. They grow out of conflicting elements in a genuine problem -- a problem which is genuine just because the elements, taken as they stand, are conflicting. Any significant problem involves conditions that for the moment contradict each other (1969, pp. 3-4).

The problems facing teacher education programs are genuine, as will be reflected later in this study. The differences in the theoretical arguments being presented have grown out of conflicting ideas about the role of teachers in the schools, and even about the role of schools in the educational process. Before the decision can be made as to the content and quality of a teacher education program, those roles must first be determined and then decisions can be made as to the best way to prepare teachers to fulfill them.

My interest in teacher education stems from many sources, including a strong concern for the education and well-being of all the children in our nation, and a desire to spend the major portion of my life as a teacher educator. I remember quite well my first years of teaching, and the inadequacy I often felt. Young teachers going into classrooms today are faced with even more



challenges than I encountered. Working with college students preparing to be teachers has caused me to realize that many of them feel very ill-prepared to teach in their own classrooms. Supervising entry-year teachers confirmed the feelings of insecurity that teachers often experience. In addition to these, I also have a strong concern about the conditions in our schools and the quality of education our students are receiving, which in turn often determine the quality of life these children will have in the future. I believe that if our schools are to truly educate children, teacher education programs must accept the reality of today's schools and prepare teachers who are willing and able to adapt to the changing needs of our society.

Demands on teachers have changed drastically over the past few decades, but teacher education programs have often failed to acknowledge these changes or to prepare pre-service teachers for the reality of the classroom (McClaren, 1986). Rubin (1985) warned that our present system of teacher education is not likely to produce excellent practitioners, because it is too far removed from contemporary classroom life; ... [student teachers] learn too much, perhaps, about ancient educational philosophies and too little about the changing world (p. 165). This is not to say that ancient educational philosophies are not important, but that students preparing to be teachers must be made aware of how understanding these philosophies is relevant to teaching in today's schools. College students in teacher education face an ever-increasing number of requirements for graduation and certification. With new mandates being handed down from regents' boards across the country, most students find it impossible to finish their degree within the traditional four years and, when faced with rising tuition and living costs, often become critical of courses which they see as having no purpose in their preparation for the classroom. Again, the need to combine theory and practice must be addressed.

Education in America is facing a crisis. Public schools are being attacked from every angle, and teachers have all but lost the respect of the American public. Wagner (1989) blamed this development on a changing view of the purpose of schooling, saying, "A situation is created in which schooling and those who carry it on come to have something less than an exalted status because they too are viewed as a means, as part of a process the whole value and purpose of which have been made to rest on extrinsic rewards which may or may not be realized" (p. 136). A combination of poor working conditions, problems with students and administration, and lack of respect (Metropolitan Life Survey, 1986) has led many teachers to leave the field, and has resulted in fewer bright, promising young people entering teacher education programs. Of those who do enter the teaching profession, half quit before completing five years in the classroom (Goodlad, 1990). The other consequence of this problem can be seen in public schools across the nation, and is reflected in the quality of education available for our students.

If teachers are to serve the needs of their increasingly diverse student population, their pre-service education programs must be changed drastically, to include issues that are relevant to the life that awaits them. Before this can be done, the purpose of schooling must be clarified. If schooling is, as Wagner (1989) suggests, only an obstacle to be endured in order to reach extrinsic rewards, a training ground for maintaining the status quo in our society, perhaps teacher education programs are doing what they should already. But there are those who see education in a different light. Giroux (1988) describes schools that are organized around a vision that celebrates not what is, but what could be. If education in our public schools is to be transformative and hopeful, then certainly our teacher education programs must exchange the disconnected curriculum of their training agendas which now produce clerks of the empire

(Freire, 1983) for a truly educational process that allows student teachers to grow into the transformative intellectuals so desperately needed in our classrooms today.

### Purpose of the Study

In order to choose the best in any situation, all options must be considered. As a teacher educator, I feel a responsibility to read as much of the current literature on teacher education programs as possible, gathering new ideas and taking the best of these into my classroom. As I read, the ideas expressed must be sifted through the screen of all my past experiences, both as a student and as a teacher, ultimately being either rejected by my value system or internalized into that system. After the literature has been studied and the ideas from students and teachers considered, I will be able to have a firm grounding in who I am, what I believe about students and teaching, and what I believe a teacher education program should include. While the purpose of the dissertation is largely a personal one, I believe that my own pedagogical journey will be similar enough to others in teacher education that my analysis of various theories of teacher education practices will help them substantiate their own positions with regard to teacher education and their students, and that my perspectives on alternative approaches for teacher education programs could prompt questions and discussion, ultimately leading to more thoughtful reflection on what it means to be a teacher educator.

Before developing teacher education programs to best serve the needs of pre-service teachers, it is important to know as much as possible about current teacher education practices and what change is needed to most appropriately

prepare those aspiring entrance into the teaching profession and those teachers currently in the field who are continuing their professional development.

The purpose of this work is to examine the problems facing teachers today, especially beginning teachers; to become well-versed on the various teacher education philosophies and conflicts inherent in these; to explore current teacher education programs and their effectiveness in preparing student teachers to meet the challenges of teaching; and to think reflectively about what this means to teacher education.

In the chapters that follow, this work will look at current trends in teacher education programs, compare conflicting views on what should be stressed in pre-service and professional development programs, and offer alternative approaches for teacher education which I feel best meet the needs of students planning to become teachers. The alternatives suggested will not in any way be meant to serve as a rigid model whose purpose is to be implemented in all teacher education programs, but rather as a reflective guideline which takes into consideration the needs of students preparing to be teachers and meets those needs as closely as possible. There can be no one teacher education program that will be effective for all time, because schools are constantly changing and teachers must change with them. The process of learning to teach must be continued long after graduation and certification; the teacher education program should serve to lay the groundwork for teachers to be lifelong scholars. A program that focuses on training rather than education fails to produce teachers who are intellectuals as well as practitioners, resulting in teachers who are not prepared to make the changes needed to take education forward and provide the education needed by tomorrow's students.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### History of Teacher Education in America

The role of schools in early America was to teach children to read and write in order that they might have a knowledge of the scriptures, as manifested by the Old Deluder Satan Act of 1647. Early schoolmasters were often Anglican ministers or indentured servants (Pulliam and van Patten, 1995). There was no formal professional training for those who wished to teach, and it was long considered adequate for secondary teachers to have only a sound knowledge of their subject matter without any training in psychology or methods of teaching (Pulliam and van Patten, 1994, p. 99). The first normal school was established in 1839, but universities dismissed teacher education as unworthy of a place on their campuses. Many universities today seem to share this contempt for teacher education programs, although ideas such as those from the Renaissance Group emphasize the importance of the entire campus being involved in educating future teachers.

Teacher education, rudimentary though it was, became more common during the late 1800s. The ideas of people like Rousseau and Pestalozzi were instrumental in adopting instructional methods that were based on charts, pictures, manuals, and objects (Pulliam and van Patten, 1995). During the early 1900s, American educational theorists began to emerge and the philosophies of William T. Harris, Colonel Francis Parker, and John Dewey influenced the role

of education and thus the preparation of teachers (Kliebard, 1987). Many of the theorists of this time had been affected by the work of Johann F. Herbart, but their interpretations of his methods led to a lock-step approach to education which undermined his desire for an emphasis on relationships within the curriculum (Pulliam and van Patten, 1995).

There was a trend toward growth and expansion during the 1900s. Normal schools had expanded to become state teachers' colleges, and these in turn grew into state colleges and operated as multi-purpose institutions. Some universities began to add teacher education programs to their curriculum after 1900 (Johnson, et.al., 1994).

### The Chasm Between Theory and Practice

Much of the current debate over teacher education programs involves the question of whether theory or practice is more important for students preparing to teach. I find it quite disturbing that so many leading educational theorists expend their time and energy on a question that would seem to be irrelevant. Neither is more important than the other; they are both very necessary components of the learning experience. Rather than emphasize one or the other, teacher educators should look at how theory and practice complement each other, and plan their degree programs so that students have adequate exposure to both components, and that both reflect the realities of today's classrooms.

Educational theory is often dismissed by students as being too far removed from everyday classroom life to warrant serious time or effort. This attitude is enforced by veteran teachers who see their classrooms as "the real world" and consider on-the-job training to be the best way to learn how to teach.

Critics of teacher education programs, most of whom have never had any experience in teaching, argue that a knowledge of subject matter and a liberal education can replace a knowledge of child psychology in the training of teachers (Pulliam and van Patten, 1995, p. 147).

This brings up an important question: should teachers be trained or educated in preparation for teaching? Although some might consider this a trivial issue, there is a major difference in the two, as the late James Macdonald illustrated clearly. He described training as the process of preparing a person to perform defined functions in predictable situations, while education is the process of equipping an individual to perform undefined functions in unpredictable situations (1968, p. 38). Anyone who has taught, or been a parent, or observed children knows that student behavior is certainly not predictable, and today's classrooms are filled with unforeseen happenings. Teachers are required to perform hundreds of undefined functions, while dealing with unpredictable situations, every day. It seems so obvious that teachers need to be truly educated, and yet many programs still see themselves as teaching *training* institutions -- and the content of their education and methods classes reflect this philosophy.

Training programs focus on practical aspects of the job at hand, while education programs try to combine both theory and practice in order to teach students not only *how* to perform their role, but to understand *why* they are doing it in the first place. Aronowitz and Giroux (1993) argued that teacher education programs which focus on the immediacy of school problems, substituting a discourse of management and efficiency for critical analysis, lose sight of the need to educate students to be teacher-scholars (p. 37). Unfortunately, this is the most prevalent approach to teacher education found today. Ironically, many

students are not receiving adequate theory or practice during their teacher education programs, but instead are given facts to memorize and steps to follow.

Our children's future is much too important to be reduced to a battleground for the conflict between educational theorists and practitioners. The disunity between these two groups has resulted in a loss of quality in education over the years as mandates change with the prevailing winds of politics. The very fact that such a sharp distinction is made between those who practice the art of education and those who theorize about it signals a problem. Webster defines theory as rules or knowledge of an art, and practice as doing or performing frequently or habitually. Those who practice the art of education certainly need to understand the rules and knowledge associated with teaching, and those who theorize about education obviously need to perform the art of teaching in order to better understand the subtle nuances involved in working with students.

There is much discussion among those of us involved in education about theory and practice. The subject weaves its way into conversations in offices, classrooms, over lunch, and on long walks. There are some who adamantly insist that more practice is what our teacher education students need; who argue that it is a waste of time to sit in classrooms theorizing. They bring up the "ivory tower" cliché, insisting that theory has no relation to the real world of teaching. At the other extreme are those who maintain that theory is the only thing that is important; that there can be no progress without theory. At a recent conference I even heard one teacher educator say that he would prefer that his students not go through the student teaching experience, because he didn't want them subjected to a teacher who focused on practical issues instead of theoretical ones.



This brings us to another important question: What is the place of theory and practice in education? How can we achieve the proper balance that will allow our teachers to handle the day-to-day realities of the classroom and still seek to constantly reflect on what could be done to make education better for their students? We cannot throw out one in favor of the other. Foucault rejects the idea of theory as a separate entity when he says "theory does not express, translate, or serve to apply practice: it *is* practice" (Megill, 1985, p. 195). While Foucault is rather extreme in his dismissal of theory altogether, he does make a point. Theory and practice cannot be separated totally; their relationship is one of mutual dependence. Practice without theoretical understanding is little more than mechanistic repetition, but theory without practical understanding is of no value in helping students and teachers strive toward their full potential.

How can we narrow the chasm between the two? It has been argued that those in the field -- teachers -- should be the ones developing theory. This sounds like a great idea, until it is considered in depth. Those who have taught are familiar with the hectic pace of life in schools. A teacher's life is filled with demands from the first bell of the morning until the final grades are tabulated at night. After a day of teaching, counseling students, supervising activities, performing routine duties, filling out paperwork, grading assignments, and planning for the next day, teachers are left with little time or energy for putting their reflections down on paper. This is not to say they don't have valuable insights into education, or that they don't care; it simply means that they cannot be expected to fill any more roles until some of their present burden is lifted. Teachers must be given a respite from the immediacy of their own classroom in order to see the big picture of education from beginning to end, and understand their role in that monumental undertaking. They must have the opportunity to reflect on teaching and discuss their ideas with others who are willing to grow.

Our present system of education does not support this; instead teachers are discouraged from being critical of their schools (Shor and Freire, 1987) and encouraged for maintaining the status quo.

On the other hand, those who consider themselves to be educational theorists find their days filled as well. There are so many books, journals, and papers dealing with educational issues. Once these have been read, there is the overwhelming need to discuss them with colleagues and students. From the discussions stem papers to be written and conferences to attend, and the cycle never ends. However, the classroom cannot be forsaken altogether. There must be contact with students in order to understand the needs of schools. This contact cannot be wholly at the college or university level, however; the students one finds on these campuses are only a small sample of American students and cannot be considered representative of children in classrooms across the nation. Often, the courses taught by these theorists consist only of graduate students, which is certainly not a comparison of teaching third graders in an inner city school. Theorists must understand the conditions teachers face before they can develop ways to improve them. It is one thing to understand how children learn and explain the ideal environment for learning to take place; it is quite another to apply that to a school that is overcrowded and short on funds, teachers, equipment, and paint. As Pat Conroy observed, the water indeed is wide. It is not that difficult for any student who has completed a graduate program in curriculum studies to sit down in front of their word processor and develop a school where everyone is happy, where learning is fun, where teachers are free to teach and abandon the mundane chores that currently rob them of so much precious time. The knowledge of the ideal is there; but along with this knowledge must come an understanding of the politics of school life, of the societal problems affecting our children, the conditions of schools. Unlike a

scientific experiment in which all the variables are controlled, schools change from day to day; even from minute to minute as students and teachers interact not only with each other but with the outside stimuli that each of us carries with us constantly. Because of this, one cannot spend one day in a classroom and go back to the office and develop theory on how classrooms in general should be conducted. Albert Einstein (1956) acknowledged that scientific matters might be reported on in that matter, but ... "with the affairs of active human beings it is different. Here knowledge of truth alone does not suffice; on the contrary this knowledge must be continually renewed by ceaseless effort, if it is not to be lost" (p. 29).

As can be seen, theorists need practice and practitioners need theory. To paraphrase Foucault, separated from practice, educational research necessarily allows itself to be led by the myth of exteriority, of the indifferent gaze, of the nonparticipating spectator (Megill, 1985, p. 200). Theory developed through these means is likely to be dismissed by teachers as being irrelevant to their lives, and there may be some validity in their disdain. For too many years, teachers have been silenced outside their classrooms, their voices negated in favor of administrative mandates. This is possibly because historically teachers have been predominantly female while administrations and school boards were made up of males. Men made the decisions and women were expected to accept and implement them without question. Today, there is still the attitude among many teachers, both male and female, that they have no choices in their classrooms, that they must teach what they are told to teach and disregard their own experiences, intuition, and concerns. If this is true, and I realize that in many schools it is, it is because teachers have not taken the initiative to change that, to bring their voices to the forefront. That is not, however, the whole fault of teachers. Theorists have long neglected their

responsibility to work *with* teachers in improving education. The political powers who now control education are hearing two different voices in educational reform rather than one united front, and when those of us who care the most about the education of children can't come together and work for progress, there is much room for others to take control away from those who know most about what should be done.

What can be done to make theory more practical and practice more theoretical? There is no one solution. The change cannot be made overnight, as one cannot simply decree on a memo that

*"Effective immediately, teachers will be required to be reflective, caring intellectuals who break down the barriers to learning and solve all the problems of society. Also, don't forget to check the new rosters to see if your lunch duty and hall patrol assignments have been changed, and turn in your lesson plans (using the new format!) for the coming week by four o'clock sharp."*

It isn't that I don't believe an administrator would issue the above memo (I *have* taught); it isn't that someone wouldn't smell money and develop *Eleven Easy Steps for Intellectual, Compassionate Reflectiveness* and sell them nationwide; it's simply that passion cannot be mandated. And passion is what it will take to transform education -- a passionate love for teaching, for our students, for knowledge. For those lucky enough to attend Jerry Levine's seminar at the 1993 Bergamo conference, it was easy to see that teaching, without passion, is a hollow shell of what could be a transformational experience for both teacher and student. Yet teacher evaluation forms rarely mention passion as an appropriate behavior, and even if they did it would be difficult to measure by an outsider. Instead, teachers are expected to be poised and controlling, almost emotionally detached from their students. List the objectives, follow the steps, evaluate

performance, and be sure to have closure. There is no room for passion, no room for discovery on the students' part. There is little wonder why students, and teachers as well, become disinterested in learning -- there is so little of it happening in what Shor (1987) would call a model of mechanical study and memorization.

### Dancing on the Surface of Reality

The success of a teacher education program can best be measured not through test scores or numbers or graduation rates, but through the success of its graduates. Teacher success in the classroom is measured in different ways by people having different priorities; an administrator whose main concern is efficient use of resources or control and order views a teacher's activities much differently than one whose primary interest lies in the transformational development of each child. Despite the variables in measuring success, however, it can be determined by looking at the statistics involving teachers that our current teacher education programs are facing serious problems. So many teachers were leaving the profession and becoming insurance salesmen that Metropolitan Life Insurance was prompted to conduct a study on why teachers leave the field, where they go, and what must be done to retain good teachers (Metropolitan Life, 1986). When half the teachers entering the field complete less than five years of teaching before seeking other forms of employment, it is a clear sign that we are not adequately preparing teachers for the challenges of school life. One problem, which will be explored in detail in the study, could be that pre-service teachers do not spend enough time in real classrooms during their educational experience, resulting in a false impression of what teaching is really like.

What is it that teachers need? Surely it is not more courses in writing behavioral objectives, designing bulletin boards, or developing tests which yield grades in the shape of a perfect bell curve. Aronowitz and Giroux (1993) discussed the tendency to develop education courses that focus on the immediacy of school problems and substitute the discourse of management and efficiency for a critical analysis of the underlying conditions that structure school life (p. 37). So much time now is spent on formulae, methodologies, and management that there is precious little time left for students to spend thinking about issues that don't easily lend themselves to quick evaluation. Giroux (1988) gave an example of this when he said,

For instance, traditional concerns of educators center around the formal curriculum and, as a result, the issues that emerge are familiar ones: What subjects are going to be taught? what forms of instruction will be used? what kinds of objectives will be developed? and how can we match the objectives with corresponding forms of reality? As important as these concerns are, they dance on the surface of reality (p. 4).

Are our teacher education programs dancing on the surface of reality? Are we glossing over the realities of everyday life in schools to paint a picture of schools and students that, like Plato's shadow puppets, are only an approximation of what is really there? Students have so many questions, so many concerns, so many hopes and fears and ideas. These need to be recognized and addressed. As teachers, it is important that we really make an effort to get to know our students; to be aware of their backgrounds and home lives; to welcome their offerings of hopes and dreams for their futures. Rather than looking at students as human beings, however, we talk about children in schools as if though they came to us empty, without personalities and knowledge

and lived experiences of their own. Kamii (1979) described what has resulted from this assumption:

...by considering the learner to be like an empty glass, educators have arranged classes into neat rows, like rows of empty glasses, to be filled and passed on from one grade level to the next in an assembly-line fashion. In each grade, the teacher tries to fill all the glasses up to a certain level before giving them to the next teacher (pp. 26-27).

When neophyte teachers enter classrooms full of students who are not empty at all, but full of hopes and dreams and fears and questions, they aren't prepared for the challenge. When faced with live human beings who don't respond to lesson plans as expected, who are seeking answers to questions that deal with life rather than designated learner outcomes, these young teachers are often overwhelmed. They have been taught to see these types of students as troublemakers or discipline problems, and label them as such and go on with their formulae, methods, and models, ignoring the human potential of students who don't compromise to fit the mold of others' expectations. Their teacher education programs provided them with an artificial experience of teaching; it wasn't "really real", and therefore they could not truly understand the theory behind what they were being told. Whitehead (1938) said that "neither physical nature nor life can be understood unless we fuse them together as essential factors in composition of really real things whose interconnections and individual characteristics constitute the unity" (p. 205). We must focus on making our curriculum more relevant to our students, whether they be in kindergarten or graduate school. Alschuler (1980) expounded on this problem using examples from classes he had observed:

There are two basic agenda in schools. Educators want students to master the subject matter. Students focus on other matters, anything and everything except the official

curriculum. In class, students usually paid attention when asked, but only as long as necessary and only to the minimal degree. Then they would get back to their conversation with friends about other friends, movies, records, what was happening after school. The dead matters discussed officially in class were perfect opposites of the lively topics that mattered to students: basic biology versus basic sex in general and Mary Lee's pregnancy in particular; inequitable distribution of the world's resources versus "dress" in general and Fred's shoes which were outrageous... This stuff of students' social lives was precisely the subject matter banned from formal discussions in school. There was learning and then there was living (pp. 25-26).

How can we bring learning and living together for all of our students? Florence Krall (1994) pointed out that the topics of life often fit poorly the subject matter of mandated teacher education. How can we fuse together the reality of today's public school classrooms and the experiences provided in teacher education programs? How can we make the courses taken by teacher education students more relevant to the career they have chosen? How can we expect students to ask questions about classrooms before they have had a chance to observe what happens in those classrooms from the perspective of a teacher? Rollo May once said that there is no such thing as truth or reality for a living human being except as he participates in it, is conscious of it, and has some relationship to it. If our students cannot relate to what we are discussing in our classes, they will not be able to comprehend or use the material. They may memorize certain facts and score well on an exam, but they will not understand the concepts or ideas we are trying to teach.

Kamii was describing elementary students in her assessment of schooling. In too many instances, however, the same can be said for college students who have spent so many years learning to play the game that they have come to believe the rules are real (Apple, 1982). They come to classes



looking for answers and solutions, expecting their professors to be founts of knowledge who can simply dispense the ability to teach as one would dispense a vaccination. Years of conditioning have taught them to look outside of themselves for answers, a problem Rubin (1985) addresses:

At present, in a false calculus of expediency, we give student teachers rules to follow and models to copy. It doesn't work. Then, when failure is encountered, they look outward rather than inward, and search for different rules and models. What they have not learned is self-direction in finding the heart of a teaching problem, and in setting their aims correctly. They are unable to grasp the central issues, or critical skills which lead to successful learning (p. 168).

The teacher education program cannot limit itself to training students to follow simple methods or formulae when dealing with complex individuals. We must educate our future teachers if they are to educate our children. James Macdonald's reminder of the difference between training and education doesn't seem to be heeded when we have teacher training programs that focus on writing behavioral objectives, following specific steps in presenting a lesson, or memorizing strategic plans for classroom management; in sum, doing little more than indoctrinating student teachers into the current methods and preparing them to function in predictable situations, which in reality don't exist. St. Thomas Aquinas pondered the question of whether one man can actually teach another. He suggested that while it is true in one sense that people teach things to each other, genuine learning is something people must do for themselves. No external agency can cause a person to learn if he or she is not able, ready, and willing to know particular things. Charlesworth (1975) explained Aquinas' exemplar of the learner as the principal agency in the process of learning:

From this point of view, learning and indoctrination are contradictories; for if one succeeds in brain-washing or indoctrinating another person with respect to some item of

knowledge, then precisely he cannot properly be said to know or to have learned that item. Knowing and learning always involve a vital and spontaneous act of appropriation on the part of the knower or learner; one learns for oneself, one cannot be learned (p. 5).

A student cannot truly know unless he or she has questioned, searched for answers, and found a satisfying truth. Unfortunately, our students have often been conditioned not to question, even in their education classes, but to accept everything their professors tell them at face value. Students who do question are considered by many to be rude, rebellious, or even -- ironically -- stupid. Giroux (1988) pointed out that teachers are trained to use forty-seven different models of teaching, administration, and evaluation, but are never taught to be critical of these models. While all of these models and methods may possess some points of merit, none can be said to offer the perfect solution in any given situation. Anyone who has been in a classroom knows that whenever students are involved, unpredictable situations which call for undefined functions will arise. Teachers who have been trained in methodology but not educated in the philosophies behind those methods will not be prepared to meet the needs of their students when these situations occur. When models fail, the teacher often blames one of two innocent parties -- themselves or their students -- rather than blaming the methodology or the teacher education program which taught it so well.

### Business as Usual?

Considering the fact that America's schools are supposed to be preparing students for a rapidly changing world, the schools themselves are remarkably hesitant to exchange century-old practices for those more appropriate for our postmodern times. It's business as usual in schools across the country, with too

many teachers standing before neat rows of desks lecturing to students whose minds are miles away. The students are quiet, the teacher is talking; administrators walk by the doors and congratulate themselves on the quality of education in their building. Sawanda and Caley (1985) presented a description of American education that clearly illustrates business as the basis for schools today:

The dominant metaphor for today's education is the Newtonian machine. The school is more or less a well-oiled machine that processes (*educates*) children. In this sense, the education system (*school*) comes complete with production goals (*desired end states, objectives, precise intermediate end states*); raw material (*children*); a physical plant (*school buildings*); a thirteen-stage assembly line (*grades K-12*); directives for each stage (*curriculum guides*); processes for each stage (*instruction*); managers for each stage (*teachers*); plant supervisors (*principals*); troubleshooters (*consultants, diagnosticians*); quality-control mechanisms (*discipline, rules, lock-step progress through stages, conformity*); inter-changability of parts (*teacher-proof curriculum, 25 students per processing unit, equality of treatment*); uniform criteria for all (*standardized testing interpreted on the normal curve*); and basic product available in several lines of trim (*academic, vocational, business, general*). Is this reminiscent of Fords, Apples, and Big Macs? (p. 14)

Schools are not businesses, and students are not raw material to be processed into a pre-determined product. We cannot continue to strip our students of their personalities in order to try and form them into a standardized commodity, exchanging their true identity for a "substitute self" that will reap maximum rewards and approval from those in command (Reich, 1970). Because students are not identical, school cannot be conducted as an assembly plant, and neither can teachers act as assembly line operators, as Joseph Schwab pointed out so well in his final paper before his death:

Teachers will not and cannot be merely told what to do. Subject specialists have tried it. Their attempts and failures I know at first hand. Administrators have tried it. Legislators have tried it. Teachers are not, however, assembly line operators, and will not so behave. Further, they have no need, except in rare instances, to fall back on ways in which commands on what and how to teach can, will, and must be modified or circumvented in the actual moments of teaching. Teachers practice an art. Moments of choice of what to do, how to do it, with whom and at what pace, arise hundreds of times a school day, and arise differently every day and with every group of students. No command or instruction can be so formulated as to control that kind of artistic judgment and behavior, with its demand for frequent, instant choices of ways to meet an ever varying situation (1983, p. 245).

If Schwab is correct in his description of teaching as an art, and I believe that he is, teacher education programs that focus on training students to follow steps, that leave out individuality and personal intuitiveness are doomed to fail. It is true that artists need knowledge, but to be a truly great artist there must also be an inert desire to create. Great art is not produced in an assembly-line fashion, and neither is great teaching. Schools that operate as described in a business model, where students sit quietly daydreaming while the teacher lectures, are not what children need. This passivity, manifested in the students' boredom and the teacher's acceptance of it, is a sign not of good education but of serious problems. Maril (1989) explained how this guard was used by Mexican-American students in the poverty-stricken Rio Grande Valley, saying that "what some students learn in school is to present an image of passivity as a protective shield against the intrusions of an institution. Some become masters at pretending they do not care what goes on around them, a good defense when one can do little to control one's life" (p. 127). Not only students, but many teachers often feel they can do little to control their lives. Too many outside agendas are competing for a voice in what happens in schools, and teachers' voices get lost in the din. Wagner (1989) quoted a conclusion of the Holmes

Group Report (1986) which said that there are few other professions in which the professional is as subject to non-professional opinions and constraints concerning what may or may not be done in his work as the public school teacher (p. 135). Despite the fact that teachers spend years preparing for their roles as professionals and that they, above all others, know what does and doesn't work with students, they still have little influence in what is done in education nor are they given a choice in deciding what they will do. Ryan and Cooper (1984) revealed,

Although there is a good deal of talk about teachers' autonomy and decision-making power, both exist at a very low level. Teachers are the second rung from the bottom (superior only to students) of the hierarchy commanded by the board of education. They teach whom they are told, what they are told, and when they are told. If their supervisors do not like the results, teachers are only rarely protected by their professional group from being fired (or, more gently, "not re-hired") by the board of education (pp. 349-50).

There is a great deal of pressure for teachers, especially beginning teachers, to follow traditional methods and established practices. Teachers who rock the boat, who don't conform to the existing culture of the school, are often ostracized. Shor and Freire (1987) explained that "there is a lot of pressure to teach this traditional way, first because it is familiar and already 'worked out', even if it doesn't 'work' in class. Second, by deviating from the standard syllabus you can get known as a rebel or radical or 'flake' and be subjected to anything from petty harassment to firing" (p. 7).

Krishnamurti (1953) warned that when teachers simply follow methods worked out by others, the method becomes very important and the children are important only as they fit into the method. We measure and classify students with standardized tests, and then try to educate them according to a chart rather

than according to their own personalities, talents, and needs. Rubin (1985) concurs that too much faith is placed in traditional methods and "right-way" doctrines by teachers, administrators and teacher educators. He describes what takes place as "triple cloning":

It is one thing to equate merit in teaching with outstanding results, and another to define it as "correct instruction". Much harm can occur if we fall prey to the belief that using specified methods produces masterful performance. Fixation on prescribed instructional procedures, or on rote processes, will lead to a kind of triple cloning: the teaching student must first defer to the expectations of the methods professor; then abandon these in order to placate the supervisor of student teaching; and -- after professional service begins -- change once again to comply with the demands of the principal. The pernicious by-product of such "right-way" doctrines is that they lead us to assume, with gullible innocence, that a master teacher can show others how to achieve excellence in a few short lessons (p. 168).

Again, the teachers are not in any way encouraged to develop their own individual style or to think about what they bring to teaching from their own personal lived experience. Instead, if teachers are reluctant to question established practices, Wagner (1989) points out that it may be that doing so is discouraged by a system of accountability which is too restrictive and tends to reward teachers for *not* asking "why" (p. 137). Yet personal lived experience is a vital ingredient in the way any teacher conducts him or herself in the classroom, and teacher education programs must encourage students to think about their own lives and how their experiences will effect their teaching. Teachers who have been encouraged to do this in their pre-service programs will be more likely to reflect on what they do and to ask the "why" questions that are so important in teaching.

Rubin shows great concern for teacher individuality and creativity in his book *Artistry in Teaching* (1985), and warns against giving direction at the risk of destroying personal involvement in schools:

The growing penchant for pre-programmed instruction, with teaching by formula, strips away the creative impulse. It gives direction but destroys personal involvement. The result is an alienation of the professional self, disenchantment, and perfunctory performance. Teachers, like other workers who must be responsive to challenge, have a profound need to do things their own way (p. 169).

Doing things their own way is an option that is available to fewer and fewer teachers every year, as State Departments of Education issue more and more lists of expected learner outcomes, curriculum guides, and approved reading lists, and as the threatened move toward a national curriculum grows. The influence of teachers is rarely seen in any of the mandates for educational reform. Consider the makeup of the most prominent committees appointed in recent years to study the problems of education: National Commission on Excellence in Education (*A Nation At Risk*) - 18 members, 1 teacher; Twentieth Century Fund (*Making the Grade*) - 11 members, no teachers; National Science Foundation (*Educating Americans for the 21st Century*) - 20 members, 1 teacher; Education Commission of the States (*Action for Excellence*) - 41 members, 1 teacher; The Paideia Group (*The Paideia Proposal*) - 22 members, no teachers (Wood, 1988). The reports from these groups (shown in italics) made tremendous impacts on education in the United States. Some of them resulted in mandated changes in the way teachers conduct their classrooms. Yet of the 112 people designated as experts and appointed to these commissions, only three of them were teachers. Two of the committees did not include even a single teacher. It was assumed that business and political leaders knew more about education than did those who spend their lives in

classrooms. Wagner (1989) questioned whether teachers really have any influence in the school, when he said,

...under the present structure of American education one may seriously question how much professional influence teachers really have in the school. To what degree do they govern its practices, establish budgetary priorities, influence what will or will not be included within curricula, participate in significant decisions -- in a word, have control over the very means through which they must work to influence student performance? (p. 129).

### Role of Teachers in the Schools

The role of teachers in the school is being debated today, with proponents to be found for every degree of autonomy to be had, from workers trained to implement teacher-proof curricula to independent guides for the pedagogical journeys of students. Aronowitz and Giroux (1993) refer to these polarized roles as clerks of the empire and transformative intellectuals. Are teachers simply hired to transmit knowledge from one generation to another, or should they be allowed to truly transform the lives of their students? Is it possible for the public to even view teachers as intellectuals? Kohl (1983) defined an intellectual as one who knows about his or her field, has a wide breadth of knowledge about other aspects of the world, uses experience to develop theory and questions theory on the basis of further experience (p. 29). This definition of an intellectual describes a great many teachers with whom I have worked. Yet others do not see teachers from this perspective at all. Silberman (1970) reported,

By and large, teachers ... are decent, intelligent, and caring people who try to do their best by their lights. If they make a botch of it, and an uncomfortably large number do, it is



because it simply never occurs to more than a handful to ask why they are doing what they are doing -- to think seriously or deeply about the purposes or consequences of education. This mindlessness -- the failure or refusal to think seriously about educational purpose, to question established practice -- is not the monopoly of the public school; it is diffused remarkably evenly throughout the entire educational system, and indeed the entire society (p. 135).

The preceding description of teachers is a chilling one; not because it is a realistic portrayal of all teachers, but because there are many others, like Silberman, who have this same impression of teachers. Why? One is reminded of Wagner's perception that teachers don't question established practices because the system tends to reward for not asking "why". Rather than teaching students to ask the "why" questions, teacher education programs often perpetuate this problem:

Instead of helping students to think about who they are and what they should do in classrooms, what their responsibility might be in interrogating the means and ends of specific school policy, students are often trained to share techniques on how to control student discipline, teach a given subject effectively, and organize a day's activities as efficiently as possible. The emphasis of teacher-education curricula is on finding out what works (Aronowitz and Giroux, 1993, pp. 36-7).

Student teachers are rarely asked to question their texts, their professors, or even their own reasons for wanting to teach. Their own lived experiences are dismissed as meaningless, rather than examined for meaning that influences the way they know everything they have come to accept about teaching and students. Erickson and Jackson (1992) agreed that student experience is not seen as a phenomenon of interest in debates of educational policy, but rather is seen as a nuisance or distraction (p. 467). Realizing this, Giroux (1988) offered an alternative for traditional methodology courses:

Instead of mastering and refining the use of methodologies, teachers and administrators should approach education by examining their own perspectives about society, schools, and emancipation. Rather than attempt to escape from their own ideologies and values, educators should confront them critically so as to understand how society has shaped them as individuals, what it is they believe, and how to structure more positively the effects they have upon students and others (p. 9).

In a teacher education program with this outlook, potential teachers would be forced to examine their own lives in relation to teaching, to question the methods and models used rather than succumb to the inclination Rubin (1985) describes as being urged to place blind faith in the prevailing "best way" and to disregard their own insight and ingenuity (p. 165). Wagner (1989) agrees that teachers need to question the status quo, asking "if it is a primary purpose of education to develop a questioning attitude in children, the dispositions of reasonableness, critical thinking and moral sensitivity, how effectively can these goals be promoted if these same qualities are not respected or encouraged in those who teach them?" (p. 138).

In addition to the previous characteristics of an intellectual, Kohl (1983) added that an intellectual is also someone who has the courage to question authority and who refuses to act counter to his or her own experience and judgment (p. 29). Independently acting and thinking individuals were also cited by Einstein (1956) as a goal of education. He explained:

... school ... serves the living. It should develop in the young individuals those qualities and capabilities which are of value for the welfare of the commonwealth. But that does not mean that individuality should be destroyed and the individual become a mere tool of the community, like a bee or an ant. For a community of standardized individuals without personal originality and personal aims would be a poor community without possibilities for development. On the contrary, the aim must be the training (*sic*) of independently acting and thinking individuals, who,

however, see in the service of the community their highest life problem (p. 30).

How many teacher education programs encourage their students to explore their own lived experience, to consider their feelings, to question authority, to become independently acting and thinking individuals? How many even allow it? How many could squeeze in time for it amongst the deluge of mandates from their board of regents? Hill (1961) insisted that the scope of the concept of experience must be widened to include neglected ranges of feeling, and that this widening process actually renders knowledge more empirical rather than less so (p. 271). Yet more and more students and teachers alike are being formed into communities of standardized products whose feelings are ignored. Curriculum materials that are designed to be "teacher-proof" often turn out to be "learner-proof" as well (Erickson and Shultz, 1992).

Is this the goal of education? Teacher education programs must decide whether they want their graduates to be complacent, heteronomous, conforming products or if they want self-aware, critically active, compassionate individuals capable of autonomy. Only then can programs be redesigned to prepare teachers for the classroom.

## CHAPTER III

### PERSONAL PERSPECTIVES

Toward the end of every doctoral student's program, the opportunity is presented to write a dissertation. Yes, a *real* book, as I told my niece Heidi when she inquired. And yes, I agreed (with fingers crossed), a *big* book with lots of pages. We hope. The only problem lay in selecting a topic and getting started.

Finally, I stepped back and thought about the whole purpose of writing a dissertation. What is the driving force behind the requirement for this voluminous work? Is it, as so many graduate students lament, just another hoop through which we must jump in order to earn those three letters after our name? Or is it more? For me, the dissertation seemed a culmination of all my graduate work, the glue that would link together the fragments of classes, books, articles, discussions, and questions that have assailed me over the past three years. I saw it as a way to relate the ideas from all of these, to synthesize the best of all the information I've garnered and process it into my own personal knowledge.

As I reflect on my doctoral program, I remember three years when the only consistent thing in my life was that I was constantly changing. My knowledge base, my values, my way of looking at and being in the world are very different at this point in my life than they were before that experience. The metamorphosis was often a painful one, never easy, and even now not complete. The dissertation, perhaps, could be a way to bring closure to this stage of my life and at the same time serve as a springboard for what lies ahead.

Am I ready for what lies ahead? What do I know? As my program evolved and I took more classes, read more books, attended conferences, and had wonderful discussions with fellow graduate students and professors, I realized that I know very little. I have an overabundance, perhaps, of opinions, but know very little that I can say is absolute Truth. When I become a teacher educator, will my new department expect me to be the proverbial fount of knowledge who will fill empty vessels with methods and formulas for teaching? Or will they allow me to work with my students, to guide them through a journey that will allow them -- and me with them -- to become truly transformative intellectuals? What do I need to tell them, these future students of mine, future teachers of our children? What do they need to know when they leave my classroom? How can I know what they need until I know them?

What do I know about Teacher Education? What do I know about teaching? How did I come to know it? What do I believe is important with regard to Teacher Education programs? What do I believe is important with regard to teaching? Why do I believe these things? Where am I in my own pedagogical journey? The questions dominated the horizon, while the answers seemed shrouded in a haze. Occasionally a problem would appear to be resolved, but then new information would present itself and again I was unsure. As Euthyphro lamented to Socrates, "For somehow or other our arguments, on whatever ground we rest them, seem to turn round and walk away" (Randall, Buchler, and Shirk, 1946, p. 12). My arguments didn't only walk away; they crawled, ran, and even flew! Perhaps, I thought, the process of writing the dissertation could help make the answers more clear.

Parker Palmer (1989) said that the way we know has powerful implications for the way we live. I would add that the way we know has powerful implications for the way we teach, as well. How have I come to know what I do

about Teacher Education? Throughout my graduate program, I have been in classes with fellow students, some of whom have now become friends. Sitting in the same classes and reading the same books, however, did not provide us with commensurable educations. We all construct our own knowledge. The lectures we hear, the books we read are all filtered through a lifetime of personal experiences. Our own personal value systems act as screens for acceptance or rejection of the ideas with which we are presented. The degree to which I am able to internalize the lessons taught is wholly dependent on my past encounters with the world, and the degree to which I processed those experiences as positive or negative. According to Dewey (1938), we are constantly reconstructing and rethinking our prior experiences as new information is made available through our day-to-day contacts with others. New information must be processed and fitted into our existing schema, and will undeniably be modified by our biases and prejudices, subconscious though they may be. We are all both limited and liberated by our pasts.

Madeleine Grumet, in the preface to Florence Krall's *Ecotone* (1994), said

Academics talk theory more often than we live it. Theory functions to challenge our categories. When we stay within a set of assumptions, our findings are domesticated, but when we undermine the divisions that separate public from private, individual from collective, and nature from culture, our work grows wild (p. vii).

It is important that we in the academic world truly live our theory if it is to be of use to ourselves or others, even though it may grow wild in the process. In order to authentically live our theory in the present, we must study the past to more fully understand how what we believe came to be a part of our selves.

## The Way I Know

Because I agree with Palmer's observation on the importance of how we know affecting how we live, I must reflect on how I came to know what I do about teaching. The sharing of my stories at this point may not seem necessary, but in truth it is very important. As teachers, it is imperative that we examine our own backgrounds and the prejudices we bring into the classroom. Arthur Combs reflected that whatever we do in teaching depends upon what we think people are like... The goals we seek, the things we do, the judgments we make, even the experiments we are willing to try, are determined by our beliefs about the nature of man and his capacities. Everything I write in this dissertation will be biased by my own personal web of belief. Those beliefs, though modified through the years, were first ingrained in me as a small child. My experiences are very different than those of most people who read this work, and understanding those differences and the culture that sustained them allows the reader a better comprehension of the work. I have very strong views on issues such as school funding, multicultural education, values education, corporal punishment, and how teachers should conduct themselves, all influenced by my developmental years and the experiences I was afforded. In truth, no one can ever identify completely with another person, for it is impossible for two people to have shared exactly the same experiences. However, we can learn to understand each other better and be more accepting of differences when we try to consider life from another's point of view. My point of view will be different from many of those reading this work, because of differences in the early stages of life that helped to shape our different values and beliefs. Therefore, it is only fair that my biases be explained early, at least in small part.

## Childhood

My childhood must be considered first, for our beliefs and value system are formed early in life, and the influences of those closest to us make the most tremendous and most lasting impacts. Much of what I believe now, and many of the causes toward which I feel drawn, I know are a result of my being reared (in the true Southern sense of the word) in a small town in the foothills of the Appalachians. My parents were my first teachers, and excellent ones they were, even without the benefit of high school diplomas. They were adamant about the need for an education, and my siblings and I were all "good" students. We knew if we ever got into trouble at school we were in more trouble when we got home, and being that most of the teachers in our school were either relatives or members of our church, word traveled fast. Being one of six children taught me early to share and to always consider the other person's point of view.

Because we were a farm family, there was never any doubt about us being accountable for our actions and responsible in our work; we simply lived up to the expectations of our parents and never even considered anything else. We worked hard and played hard and studied hard. In that sense, it was a hard life. But it was also a rich and rewarding life, and I wouldn't go back and trade it for any other. I do remember my fourth grade year having a teacher from somewhere "up North" who had come down to "save" us from a number of ills we didn't know we possessed. She referred to us as her "cause," and told us how terrible our lives were and that she was going to try to do what little she could to make a difference in our lives, because we were so pitiful, in our poverty-stricken ignorance. She didn't seem to consider the fact that several of us had scored in the top one percent in the nation on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills; she saw only a stereotype and her teaching reflected that. Even as fourth graders, we resented



her pity and her patronizing attitude; we all hated her. She was only there one year, but certainly made a difference in my life; I hated 'Yankees' with a passion until I came to graduate school and met a few who were actually nice, open-minded people. She was correct in her assessment of us to a degree; there were many things in the outside world of which we were ignorant. But we were not stupid, as she often insinuated, and there were many things that even as fourth graders we knew more about than she ever would.

In some ways, growing up as I did sheltered me from the realities of the larger world. Blairsville (as I remember it) was basically composed of a single culture: everyone in the county was white, mostly of Scots-Irish descent; either farmed or had family members who were farmers; were conservative Democrats; and faithfully attended the Baptist church of their choice, usually the same one their parents and grandparents had attended. There were a few radicals who attended the single Methodist church and a sprinkling of other denominations, but when a Catholic family moved into town during my high school years it was a major topic of gossip. Everyone knew everyone else, and no one I knew locked their doors at night or when they were away from home. It was a caring community, a good one to grow up in but at the same time not a good example of the reality of a global society, even though certain individuals were different from the core group. It is important, however, to understand and accept the culture one was brought up in, for only with our feet planted in our own culture can we legitimately venture into another (Krall, 1994).

The county had a reputation for being racist, mainly because there were no black people who lived there. There were comments and racist jokes, and I remember a new teacher in eighth grade who constantly talked about how glad he was to be there and not have to teach "niggers" any more. Children learn what the adults around them teach, and I suppose we all had a stereotypical

view of black people as lazy and ignorant. At that time we could neither verify nor disprove that view, because most of my schoolmates, like myself, had never actually met a black person, and we accepted our elders' descriptions as truth. My father, like most men his age in the county, had completed a tour of duty in the service and in that setting had come to know a few black people on an individual basis. It was interesting to me then, and still is, that these individuals were separated out and often held in high esteem, even considered friends, while their race as a whole was criticized. Years later, reading Anne Rivers Siddons' *Heartbreak Hotel* (1991), I was reminded again of that double standard. The novel describes a young Southern girl's coming of age during the fifties. She is far removed from the reality of her South, having been pampered and sheltered and convinced that the Negroes who worked for white families were happy and content with their lives. Then, after witnessing the beating of a black man for no apparent reason other than the amusement of the white men who did it, she writes an editorial for her college newspaper about the event and the need for change. In doing so she has stepped over invisible boundaries; her friends and fiancé are outraged and consider her a traitor to their way of life; she is forced to resign from the paper and breaks her engagement to the son of a wealthy plantation owner. She meets a young newspaper reporter who is following the civil rights movement and devoted to the cause of "The Negro." Their friendship is strained when he dismisses her efforts as being insignificant to "the movement, the cause, the revolution." Her rebuttal sums up my feeling about the attitude I saw growing up:

"The Negro. The Negro!" Maggie was outraged, furious, betrayed. "The capital N Negro! You know what's wrong with you? Nobody is *real* to you! There's a chunk missing out of you! People don't mean a damned *thing* to you. They're Liberals, or Conservatives, or Good Guys, or Bad

Guys, or the Oppressors, or the Oppressed, but they are not *real* to you! ... You may be the big expert on the Negro with the capital *N*, but I met a *man*! I met a *man* in Mississippi! And it's tearing up my life, and it's ... it's pulling me apart, and that's what's going to happen to you, Hoyt, when you meet a *man*! A *man*! You come back and you talk to me about the Negro when you've met a *man*!" (pp. 260-1).

When I finally had a chance to meet and actually get to know a real person who wasn't white, I was sixteen and attending a State FFA contest. Tony was certainly black, but none of the stories I'd heard fit him at all. He was intelligent, had a great personality, and we quickly became friends. He went on to serve as Georgia's State FFA president and win the National FFA Extemporaneous Public Speaking contest. My mother even admitted that he was a nice person, but commented at Christmas that it was the first time we had ever gotten a card from a "colored" person, still not sure about the whole matter or what family and friends would think. She seemed even less sure of my wisdom a couple of years later when she discovered that my roommate was black, a fact I had somehow neglected to mention when I told her that Jeannette and I were going to room together my second year at college. Ironically, it was my Baptist pastor who seemed most upset about the arrangement, even though it was when I was telling them that Jeannette had been elected president of the Black Bible Study Group that he found out! Looking back, however, I don't believe the racism that existed there was nearly as bad as that of towns I have lived in since, where whites were less open about their prejudices but manifested them in so many subtle -- and ultimately more harmful -- ways.

My childhood wasn't perfect nor was it always happy; one cannot appreciate happiness, however, without sometimes experiencing sadness. Life is full of both, and mine was no exception. I believe the person I am today is the result of all the experiences of my past. Had anything been altered, I would now

be a very different person. One can only look back in wonderment at the seemingly trivial occurrences that brought about momentous change. The roads taken make us who we are; I often took the footpaths, and the journey has given me a unique perspective on life.

### Life in School

My knowledge base of life in classrooms has a long history, back to my first year of elementary school when I missed almost as many days as I attended because, although I dearly loved my morning teacher, I was terrified of my afternoon teacher and felt I could never please her. The ulcers I developed as a result gave me an acceptable excuse for being absent often, and the days I did attend school I usually became very ill during lunch and had to go home, thus avoiding the wrath of the demanding Mrs. S- and the humility I felt any time I did not provide her with the answers she wanted. My educational career, perhaps my life, has been one of trying to please my teachers. I accepted their ideas, followed their rules without question, respected their position. Some people have difficulty remembering their teachers' names; I recall each vividly, and attached to the memories of most are strong emotions, some very positive and some quite negative. I remember my high school art teacher, who loved teaching and loved us, and brought with him to our small school a sense of sophistication and worldliness, and made us believe we could survive out in that other world. I was bribed into being a good student by the second grade teacher who told us if we were bad in school that when we died and went to heaven we would have to wash dishes while the angels who had been good got to fly around and play harps! I remember the Home Economics teacher who tried to instill in us a bit of kindness and thoughtfulness along with the skills involved in

cooking perfect eggs. I recall elementary teachers throughout the years who had everyone stand up on the first day back after Christmas and tell what presents they had gotten. Not only was that an embarrassing experience for the kids who hadn't gotten much (many lied, inventing a long list that their parents could not have possibly afforded), but some of the teachers openly ridiculed and embarrassed my best friend Kim because her family didn't celebrate the holiday with presents and the traditional customs. I cannot forget the high school librarian who respected us and our opinions and let us have so much fun that we didn't realize how much she was teaching us until we got to college and knew how to find anything we needed in the library.

Every teacher with whom I came in contact left an impression on me, affected the way I look at school and teaching. They are a part of the filter through which all incoming knowledge is sifted, and every class I teach is influenced by the actions of former teachers.

### Undergraduate Experiences

College was a wonderful experience for me, after I finally stopped crying long enough to look around at the lovely junior college campus where I was to spend two of the best years of my life. At the time, though, I was six hours away from home for the first time and didn't have a car, and my immediate reaction was that this might not be such a good idea after all. Luckily, I was blessed with a wonderful advisor who soon had me so busy with classes and clubs and work and friends that there was no time to be homesick, and I settled in. College was the first opportunity I had had to really get to know people from other cultures. It was also the first time I was in a place where no one really knew me, and certainly no one knew about my older, very brilliant sister whose reputation I had

never quite lived up to in high school, and no one knew how strict my parents were or that I had always been exactly what everyone else thought I should be. For whatever reason, I didn't take advantage of the distance and remained a rather straight laced person. The worst things I did were fail chemistry (the first of several times) and stay up all night at The Kettle having a wonderful time tutoring my friends in history. There were some value calls, not terribly far from those of my parents but still enough to make me think seriously, for the first time, about developing my own set of values that might be different from my parents'.

College also introduced me to a new way of thinking about learning. My first literature class was taught by a rather eccentric older man with an English accent who refused to call me by the name everyone else used; he insisted on both first *and* middle for me, and I certainly wasn't going to argue with him. Dr. Edwards tried to teach me that it really is all right to disagree with an author or question the meaning of a story; one day we were discussing the day's reading and other students were coming up with what I considered brilliant explanations of a story that had left me totally confused even after three readings, which bothered me because I usually loved the assignments. As fate would have it, he called on me for my opinion, and I replied honestly that I just didn't get it. His response was, "Thank God -- it didn't make bat's sense to me and I was beginning to think I was the only one!" I truly appreciated that lesson, and the fact that he let us read other stories that did make sense, even though the authors weren't as famous.

There were other professors I remember from those years, but none who stand out as much as the history professor who encouraged me to learn for the sake of learning, to love the questions and the search for answers. He told us a story comparing facts to bricks. He said that in his class we would learn a lot of facts -- the people and places and time frames that shaped our country into what

we have today. But facts were not all that useful in and of themselves, just as a pile of bricks was not that useful without some kind of mortar to hold them together in a pattern. Dr. Roberts gave us the mortar to connect all the facts of history; he taught us how to link them all and understand how they related to each other; how each fact, like each brick in a wall, had a purpose and place and that without all the facts our understanding would have holes and be weakened. He also taught us to write essays. A lot of professors would have said that that was someone else's responsibility; that the students should have learned it before coming to their class. But he knew that some of his students wouldn't have the composition skills needed to write the essays he required in his history classes, and so he simply took the time to teach it. He made it seem so easy, and took away the fear of essay tests even from students who had previously detested them. He was a wonderful teacher because not only was he passionate about his subject matter, but he cared about his students as well.

Both of these professors influenced my ideas about learning and teaching, and the things I remember most about them are the things I try to do in my own classroom. My love of knowledge was sparked and the flame fed by the encouragement of these and other professors who taught by example that learning is a lifelong joy.

I moved to a new campus to begin my junior year, and although the grounds of the major university were impressive, the sense of community and even the quality of teaching seemed to be lacking from what I had experienced the two years before. I did have a few good professors during those years, and my teacher education program surely influenced my attitudes about teaching. As I write this, however, I am trying to remember a course I took as part of that program, any course. I can't recall course names, but do remember the professors and particular things about some classes. I recall my Adolescent

Psychology class, where we were told the first night by the instructor that he didn't want to be there and only was because he didn't yet have tenure and got all the jobs no one else wanted. He told us we didn't have to come to class if we didn't want to because you could just read the book and learn enough to make a B on the tests, and that there would only be one A in the class anyway because he had plotted a bell-shaped curve for the number of students enrolled, and proceeded to tell us how many Bs, Cs, Ds and Fs there would be at the conclusion of the quarter. It was my first experience with a testing measure I have learned to despise; the B I was given in the course should have been an A and I have never forgotten the apathy I developed when it was obvious I would not be getting an A in the course. It was, all in all, very educational, even though all I remember about the class is that he told me I would never last a year as a teacher because I was too idealistic. Proving him wrong was much more educational than his class. My department was a good one, and we were taught a great deal about practical matters that we would face when we started teaching. The program of study was lacking, however, in the theories behind the practical issues. In my methods class, I remember spending weeks learning to create a perfect lesson plan using something called the "Texas T" format, which was basically a "T" on a sheet of eight and a half by eleven paper on which we correctly placed objectives, teacher functions, and student outcomes. Unfortunately, the school where I student taught had their own lesson plan sheets, and the school where I eventually was hired used lesson plan books with little four inch squares into which you were to place certain required information, no more and no less. I haven't constructed a "Texas T" lesson plan since leaving that methods class years ago, but I learned the lesson well and could do a perfect one even now. How I wish, for the sake of those extraordinarily patient students I taught my first year, we had spent part of those weeks talking --



about students, about ourselves, about drugs, about hidden agendas, about the history of curriculum, about teen pregnancies, about motivation, about theories of reproduction and resistance, about our personal goals for teaching, about parents, about textbooks, about attitudes, about racism, about self-concepts. Why was it so wrong to talk in class?

### Teaching

After securing my first teaching position, I remember being frustrated by veteran teachers' comments during pre-planning that it was time to forget everything they taught me at the university; I was in the real world now. If what they taught me at the university wasn't what the "real world" of school needed, why had I just spent four years and a massive amount of money on their campus? What did these teachers know that I didn't? I had had all the right courses, been through student teaching, run the gamut. Where could they have failed to prepare me for the world I was about to enter? Looking back, I can see that my teacher education program did not fail me. It taught me how to fit in to the system, how to xerox worksheets, how to design lesson plans and exams, how to maintain control and exert punishment, how to keep score, how to play the game. The program did not fail me, but it did fail the students I taught that first year.

The memories of those high school students are the foundation of my knowledge base in teaching. Perhaps my insistence that we need more real multicultural education woven throughout teacher education programs resulted from my first teaching job, where my class enrollment was eighty-four percent black, a big change for someone who grew up in an all-white community and student taught in an all-white school. The students and I learned to love each

other, but not without our trials and tribulations. They dubbed me "the meanest white woman they'd ever met", because I did expect them to work hard and learn, but they also started spending their breaks and free time in my room talking about their lives and hopes and dreams. Several of them already had children of their own, young as they were, and many had no further ambitions than to get a job at the food processing plant in town upon graduation, and some just assumed they would continue the family tradition of living on welfare. They hadn't been encouraged to attend college, or shown what the world had to offer. There were some very bright and motivated kids in the school, but I also witnessed a despair and sense of apathy among many of the children who passed through the halls each day, and I soon learned that it was a reflection of the hopelessness felt by many of their parents. Those going through teacher education programs must be taught *why* kids behave the way they do, or all the discipline methods in the world will never be effective in truly changing attitudes. I didn't understand that when I began teaching, and my students suffered because of it.

The hundreds of hours spent in classrooms as The Teacher certainly can't be discounted in the formation of my knowledge base. Schubert (1986) has emphasized the importance of teacher lore in understanding education. From the naive confidence given me by my perfectly behaved and adoring classes during student teaching, to the frustration -- and joy -- of my first year of "real" teaching in a public high school, to the satisfaction I found in working with college students in their foundations classes, my attitudes have been shaped and driven primarily by actions and reactions of students. Are they learning? Are they bored? What are they thinking? Where are they at this point in their life? What do they need from me? What do I need from them? I have learned

that where my students are concerned, it's usually better to go with my heart than my head, even when rationality tells me otherwise.

In learning what works in the classroom, my students have been my best teachers. That is the reason I feel it so necessary to include student ideas and comments in this study of teacher education programs. Too many times students are treated as empty vessels waiting to be filled or robots to be programmed. We must expand teacher education programs to recognize the knowledge and experience that students bring with them into the program.

### Graduate School

Graduate school has made a tremendous impact on what I know about teacher education, for it was during this period that I first had the opportunity to teach college students who were preparing to be teachers and to observe neophyte teachers in a supervisory capacity. At the same time this was occurring, I was fortunate to take classes with professors who introduced me to a side of curriculum that I had never really considered. Terms like *hidden agenda*, *resistance theory*, *popular culture*, and *phenomenology* became a part of my vocabulary, and words such as *compassion*, *dialogue*, *equity*, and *critical* took on new meanings. My shelves began to be filled with the writings of Giroux, Reynolds, Pinar, Martusewicz, Kozol, Dobson, Einstein, Schubert, Shor, Kliebard, Sizer, Prigogine, Kuhn, Doll, van Manen, Rubin, Foucault, Krishnamurti, Zukav, Wagner, and a host of others of whom I had never heard prior to my doctoral program. I felt as if there had been a kind of conspiracy to keep this information, so vital to success in the classroom, away from me in my pre-service program. Why did no one tell me? I wanted to go back and live my

first year over, to somehow erase the mistakes of the past and use my new knowledge to give my students a truly transformational education.

It was also during this time that I learned a great deal about myself, some of which I was not happy about. But understanding ourselves opens us up to understanding our students, and accepting our own limitations teaches us not to be so critical of others. I became very critical of my Baptist upbringing for a while, when it seemed that all around me were people professing to be Christians while at the same time practicing a religion of hate and intolerance for anyone not exactly like themselves. I didn't understand how someone could be a bigot and a racist and feel they were a righteous person, and condemn to hell someone else who drank a glass of wine. I became disgusted with politicians who used Jesus Christ's name and a "family values" platform to get themselves elected, and then proceeded to pass laws benefiting only the rich while cutting programs for children and the poor -- certainly not following Jesus' teachings of compassion, love, acceptance, and caring for thy neighbor. I began to realize that although I had always felt we should teach values in the schools, one had to ask the question of *whose* values were being taught. I certainly didn't want my children taught the values that were coming out of Washington. Seeking answers, I became a much more serious student of the Bible, and the teachings I found there caused me to re-evaluate my own Christianity and what I believed. The questions resulted not in a weakened faith but in a much stronger one, although what I believe now is based on my own interpretations of the Bible rather than what years of Sunday School and sermons tried to ingrain. I hope my teaching can reflect the compassion, understanding and acceptance practiced by Christ rather than the intolerance and hate proclaimed by so many who use His name.

## The Books

My parents' house was always full of books; I'm not sure how they accumulated them all, as it seems there were hundreds if not thousands. I don't remember learning to read, but do have memories of being read to by my older sisters. During the school year we supplemented our personal stash with those borrowed from the library. In the summer there was the Bookmobile, and we won prizes for reading the most books. We read all the time as children, at least when we weren't working. During most of the years I lived at home we didn't have a television; a condition that resulted not primarily from a lack of money but from my father's firm belief that there was nothing on TV worth watching and that it was detrimental to our grades at school. So throughout the winters we read, and played games, and actually talked, and read some more. We got used to it; it didn't seem strange to us, although friends were amazed that anyone could live without television.

What did seem very strange to me was when a professor by the name of Russell Dobson told me, the first semester of my Master's program, that you not only could but should *write* in books. He said you should question what the writer said, and make comments in the margins and underline parts you wanted to find again later. It all sounded so unconventional to me. Dr. Edwards had said you could disagree with a writer, so maybe that was okay, but you just didn't *write* in books. Everyone knew that. Who was this man, anyway? He also told me that I should read all the time; that he got to his office at seven every morning so he could read. If you didn't read, you couldn't learn. There were a lot of ideas out there, and I needed to read about them so I could make up my own mind. He gave me copies of journal articles and lists of books, and said I would never learn anything if I didn't read. So I did as he said, not sure why but

even then understanding that somehow this man knew far more than most people realized, and that if he cared enough to be annoyed at me for not reading as much as he thought necessary, the least I could do was try to read all the books he suggested. And as I read, it became apparent that for every book finished there were at least ten more mentioned in the bibliography that called out for attention. In my doctoral program the books and the colored pens used for underlining became my constant companions, providing so many new ideas, so many questions, so many possibilities. The books were enhanced when I discovered other graduate students and faculty members who were also seeking answers, asking questions, reading the same books. Our discussions often turned to debates, with opposing viewpoints causing me to question my own position, sometimes strengthening my resolve and other times revealing a need for change. It became apparent that personal backgrounds and value systems had a definite influence on how two people interpreted the same statement. I learned to love the questions (Greene, 1986), the unending search for Truth, and I learned to consciously think about *how* I came to know the things I did. I read more and more books, papers, journal articles. Some authors supported my own beliefs while others challenged them. But all of them caused me to think seriously about the questions facing me. Clement reminds us that no mind ever gives birth to itself. We are all indebted to others for helping to stretch our minds out of their rigid molds. There were many authors who influenced me during my graduate program, many more than I could possibly include in this work. Jonathan Kozol's passionate writing brought back to the forefront of my priorities a desire to help those children who are labeled as failures at birth based solely on their socioeconomic status. The works of William Pinar and Florence Krall introduced me to autobiography as a means of understanding ourselves and others. Russell and Judy Dobson's writings made me look at

children from a different perspective, and Ted Sizer's chronicles of American high schools prompted reflection on the seriousness of problems faced by education. These and others who have influenced me I chose to include the references at the close in order that their contributions to this work and my journey might be acknowledged.

## CHAPTER IV

### LISTENING TO THOSE INVOLVED

As I talked with students in my educational foundations class and listened to their concerns about teaching, I realized that a wonderful source of information regarding what should be provided in a good teacher education program is the students themselves. Unless, of course, one doesn't care what students think. I found this to be the case when I called to inquire about using quotes from student papers in this work. The person in charge of Institutional Research, who had to grant approval for the project, couldn't understand why I would want to do that -- *"But that's just their own personal opinion -- students' ideas are not valid sources of information -- no one cares about what some student in a class thought -- you need to use real research from refereed journals -- if you used the information, it wouldn't make your other research stronger, and could even weaken the dissertation"* -- and the clincher -- *"I'm sure if you talk with your advisor he can explain to you that student opinions are not important information."* Ah, yes. My advisor. The man who taught and practiced unconditional positive regard for his students. The man who validated my own belief in students' worth and the value of their opinions, who provided me with research -- in refereed journals, no less -- that backed up what I had always known in my heart. Yes, perhaps I did need to talk with him again.

As a result of that talk, we agreed to include, in addition to responses from teachers who had just completed their first year of teaching, comments from students in my foundations classes. I believe their insight and thoughtful



reflection deserve to be considered in planning a teacher education program. They, after all, are closest to the hopes and fears and insecurities of preparing to teach, and I believe their ideas deserve to be heard. Also, I thought it would be interesting to compare the comments of the two groups for similarities.

In gathering this information, I realized that there were potential problems. Because they were undergraduate students, it was important that complete confidentiality be maintained. It was also of utmost consideration that the students give me *their* ideas, rather than parroting back my own. I cheerfully realized that the latter was not really a problem when I considered the heated debates we had in class. I had worked hard to convince the students that their own opinions were valid and they didn't have to agree with mine, as long as they understood *why* they believed the way they did. We had discussed Parker Palmer's idea that "The way we know has powerful implications for the way we live" and spent some time with phenomenology to help them understand how years spent in classrooms had shaped the way they looked at schools and students. In class discussions and on exams, they knew that any idea was acceptable as long as it was supported with thoughtful reflection.

In order to alleviate any chance of these problems occurring, however, I decided it was best to gather the information as an out of class activity in which students were to reflect on their own teacher education programs and what they considered to be positives and negatives, discuss their ideas with other students, and then write an informal essay on the subject. By giving them an alternative topic to write on if they chose (very few did), not requiring names on the papers and not being able to identify handwriting if they chose to use a word processor or typewriter, the students' confidentiality was insured and they were free to be honest about how they felt, which was a concern as several were very apprehensive about any of their professors seeing the papers.

The results were much what I expected, having listened to these students for many weeks in class. However, I felt that it was important to gather these ideas from those involved in teacher education and actually put them down on paper, to try and glean just what was at the core of discontent among the students. Students varied in their responses, some short and to the point while others covered the topic in great detail. For a better understanding of what the students were trying to get across, their complete responses are related as they were written, with names of people and schools deleted, in Appendix B.

Another source of information concerning what teachers really need in their pre-service programs and how useful current programs are was found in the reflections of graduates of the College of Education who had just completed their first year of teaching. I felt that these teachers could add a good deal of insight into what is needed, having the advantage over the students who responded previously of a full year of experience in a classroom of their own. I was interested in seeing how closely those with no experience and those who had been in the classroom for a full year agreed on what is needed in teacher education programs.

The responses used in the study came from a survey of education graduates participating in the Entry-Year Program for teachers. The survey included several forced-response items, and concluded with one open-ended question which asked teachers to contribute information, based on their experiences as a first-year teacher, which could be helpful in improving the overall Teacher Education program. The survey and the quantitative responses can be found in Appendix C, and the complete responses given in the qualitative section can be found in Appendix D. Because of the nature of this study, only the qualitative responses were used here. Some of the comments include

references to specific quantitative questions from the survey, and these can be found in the appendix.

Those with a full year's experience in the classroom shared many concerns, as did students with no experience. A major topic addressed more frequently by this group included the need for a specific class in classroom management and discipline, an area in which many entry-year teachers did not feel they had been sufficiently prepared. Several lamented that their teacher education programs had prepared them for idealistic situations that did not match what they found when they were hired to teach. They stressed the need for preparing students for the reality of schools as they exist today. The need for better understanding in multiculturalism, not only with regard to race but to socio-economic level, was also addressed more frequently. Dealing with parents and administrators was another new topic of discussion, possibly because it was an area to which the pre-service students hadn't been exposed but that had proven to be a challenge for many first-year teachers.

Many of the concerns voiced, however, were remarkably similar to those of future teachers still in the preparatory phase of their career. Experienced teachers indicated that some of the required classes could be improved or condensed, or done away with completely. And again, the overwhelming majority of teachers felt that the students needed more hands-on experience, and more and earlier student teaching. The need to get students into the classroom as early as possible, and to provide involvement with schools throughout the teacher education program, was strongly recognized by those with teaching experience.

In the pages that follow, thoughts from the students and beginning teachers are given so that others will be able to do what we so desperately need to do but rarely seem to make time for -- listen to our students; to those

involved. For use here, specific items have been taken from responses and grouped together as they dealt with a common issue. Following the quotes from students in each section are my personal thoughts and reflections on what could possibly be done to improve that area. I am not presenting a "diagnosis and prescription" to cure the problems, for I don't believe that we can look at teacher education in that manner. Every program is different, and only those involved on a day to day basis can evaluate their work and determine how to improve. There can be, however, some guidelines to consider when working with students preparing to be teachers. I offer these only as suggestions, based on my own personal experience and perspective, and not as a finished plan to be implemented as a teacher education program. Flexibility is needed when working with students, whether they be in kindergarten or graduate school.

### A Closer Tie Between the Practical and Theoretical Aspects of Teacher Education

Several comments were made by both teacher education students and entry-year teachers that indicated a desire for the preparatory phase of their careers be more closely tied to the "real world" of teaching. It was clear that many did not see the relationship between the theory they were learning in class and their performance as teachers.

(Comments from Teacher Education Students)

*The teachers teach you too much theory. They only tell you hell stories from the field when it slightly applies to the theory at hand. Theory is great, but they need to back it up with more than horror stories.*

*All education majors take the required courses then are thrown out into the "real world".*

*One cannot learn everything from a textbook or a lecture. There are situations that happen in the classroom that are not discussed on paper or verbally... On the other hand, the knowledge that we are gaining from being in class is also very important. Many methods and ideas for presenting material students are found in our textbooks and from lecture.*

*If books could be more interesting to the recipient while reading them, this would help retention of the material and the eventual practice of the ideas.*

*Another issue that I have noticed is that the education classes often discuss being a teacher but not how to be a teacher.*

*I don't want to go out into the teaching world not feeling comfortable with the knowledge and experiences that I have.*

*My teacher education program focuses too much on written facts. In this program we are taught the history, philosophies, and also the do's and don'ts of teaching without any real hands on teaching... a great background for making intellectually stable teachers but not teachers that are experienced in handling a class full of eager children.*

*The first year is rumored so bad because of how little we are prepared for what lays ahead.*

*I don't think that the teacher education is preparing me for a career as a teacher. Sometimes I sit in class and wonder when or if I will ever use the material being presented. ... We spend too much time learning the basics. We need to have more field experience. I don't think that there is any one class that I have to take that will help me any more than being in an actual classroom.*

*Students are not required to teach until they have otherwise totally prepared to have finished their degree. My opinion is that if there were more hands-on experiences throughout the program, and more of observing different teachers it would help the college student get a real estimate for their attraction to teaching, their own preferences in dealing with discipline problems and the classroom environment, and give them more confidence before being pushed out into the teaching world and expected to perform on their own.*

*Observation helps one to evaluate a teacher, but from your unexperienced ideas.*

*One of the areas that I feel might be improved upon is the interaction among college education students and ... the real classroom environment in which they will be teaching.*

**(Comments from Entry-Year Teachers)**

*After working in the real world for one year and still having the ideas and new ways to teach fresh in my mind from college, I have realized that what they're teaching in college is a new and different way of teaching and maybe even better but it's not the way they're actually teaching or allowing us to teach. ... I do believe that in order to change the way our school systems teach they*

*must teach the new college teacher/student but it doesn't benefit when we're not allowed to use our new approach.*

*I would have liked a more realistic curriculum...*

*There is not enough outside interaction with the schools. I feel it is very important for education majors to get a taste of what life is really like.*

*The pre-student teaching experience is an essential time for the prospective teacher to gain insight in many areas of the learning process... Basically, the preparation periods in college should offer more responsibilities to the prospective teacher.*

*I think Ed students need to get into the actual classroom setting for at least a limited time as early as freshman year. Let them get a taste of exactly what they'll experience when they graduate.*

*I observed all 42 hours in the same classroom during one semester. I think it would be better to make the observations be done over at least 2 semesters with several teachers. I really didn't see a variety of teaching until student teaching.*

*My only suggestion would be to allow for more observations in a variety of classes as well as grade levels.*

*Students need more classroom experience beginning the sophomore year and continuing every semester, perhaps in every grade possible.*

*As a student it would have been in my best interest to have had more classroom exposure. It would have been very helpful to see many different teaching strategies and techniques.*

*I wish there had been more hands on experience early in the program. Going to a classroom and observing is really not adequate experience. Especially late in the program.*

*I would like to have had more experiences in the classroom earlier (Freshman/Sophomore).*

I remember sitting in a Supervision class early in my graduate program wondering why no one in my undergraduate program had ever told us about the things we were learning in graduate classes. I made the comment that teachers need this information *before* they begin teaching, and the professor replied that the class we were in would be wasted on undergraduates. She then added that, for that matter, *undergraduate* education was wasted on undergraduates. At the time I didn't understand what she meant, but as I came to know her realized it wasn't that she didn't like undergraduates, she just knew they didn't have the experience necessary to truly benefit from the theory we were learning because they couldn't look back and relate it to their own experiences in the classroom, as all of us in the class could. Students do need experience in order to understand theory. I think that the best way to accomplish this is to provide meaningful observation experiences for teacher education students in their freshman year, and incorporate these into each semester of their program. By meaningful experiences, I do not mean sitting quietly at the back of the room and leaving as soon as the class is over. Observations should include a variety of



the activities that make up a teacher's day, from supervising extracurricular activities to faculty meetings to cafeteria duty to recording grades. All observations should include a discussion between the student and cooperating teacher about what went on and the circumstances involved. By observing several teachers, students would be exposed to different teaching techniques and also be able to find teachers they feel comfortable having as mentors for their student teaching experiences.

### More and Earlier Student Teaching Experiences

The comments made requesting more time in actual classrooms signaled a feeling of inadequacy on the part of many students as to whether they would be able to meet the responsibilities facing them when they began teaching. Quality time spent in classrooms early in the program could do much to give students a true picture of life in schools, and also give them a practical base from which to study the theoretical aspects of teaching.

(Comments from Teacher Education Students)

*If I could make a change in the program, I would offer more actual hands-on teaching time. ... I am well aware of the student-teaching that I will be required to do. But what about experience for this?*

*I don't want to wait until my student teaching when I get my first class to realize that even though I know all the techniques and case scenarios, I just can't handle being a teacher.*

*I think it would be useful to have more and earlier student teaching opportunities for the students. It seems like this is the one area that lets a student truly know if he or she has what it takes to be a teacher, and to save it until the student's last semester – after all other requirements are filled – seems unfair.*

*I feel my field observation class is pretty useless to prepare me for being a teacher. As an observer I am required to sit quietly in the back of the room and watch what is going on. I feel like I am not fulfilling any different a role than I did for thirteen years, as a student.*

*When student teaching many students realize that this is not the profession that they would like to pursue. By this time students feel that it is too late to go back to school for a couple more years so they end up in a profession they hate.*

*I want to be the best teacher that I can possibly be. In order to do that I think it would be helpful to have more opportunities to student teach throughout the educational program instead of at the end.*

*As far as the student teaching experience goes, I think it is placed too far into the program to be any sort of a significant preparatory experience.*

*I like the idea of having two student teaching experiences. We would spend time in a classroom and develop questions or ideas to share with other students. We could learn more and then have another chance to go back into a*

*classroom and put our previous experiences to use with the help of a cooperating teacher before we are out on our own.*

*We should not have to wait until the last semester of college to finally get some real classroom experiences. I am taking an observation class, and I think that is definitely helping me to decide what age of children I want to teach, but I'm not really getting much experience because I just sit in a chair and watch.*

*Earlier student teaching would be more beneficial to education majors. Student teaching is offered senior year, not to mention second semester. This is a little late to be experiencing the real classroom experience.*

**(Comments from Entry-Year Teachers)**

*In my opinion, student teaching should be a two semester requirement. This is when you learn more about teaching and discipline styles. ... The entry year system is not as much help as the student teaching experience. The classroom work should be condensed and the actual student teaching and observation time should be increased.*

*I got a lot out of my coursework, but student teaching is where you find out if teaching is for you.*

*I feel that the most beneficial part of my major courses were the pre-clinical observations and student teaching.*

*Student teaching should be encouraged in the fall so you get ideas on how to prepare and begin a school year. In the Spring, you walk into an already routine classroom.*

*Need more practicum experiences! Student teaching should be longer with more observations in first two years of study.*

*I feel that the only part of my education that truly prepared me to run a classroom is my student teaching experience. ... books and papers can't prepare you for the reality of today's classrooms.*

*Need 2 non-consecutive semesters of student teaching to re-evaluate strategies.*

*I think education majors should be given a very early chance to experience what teaching is really like. Without knowing the perspective teachers have of their job until you "student teach" is entirely too late.*

I agree that students need a student teaching experience long before their senior year. While observations are helpful, they do not give students a true picture of what school is really like. Seeing the same group of kids day in and day out, watching their behavior change as morning turns to afternoon, seeing lessons build on each other from one day to the next until an entire concept is discovered, observing experienced teachers deal with students over a period of time -- this is where teacher education students begin to experience what being a teacher involves. It also gives them an experience base, and raises new questions for discussion. I would like to see a class developed for

sophomore education students that would involve three to four weeks of orientation, eight to ten weeks spent in a classroom in the role of a teacher's assistant, and four to five weeks back at the university discussing their experiences with peers. The experience gained during this time could be a springboard for the theoretically based courses they would encounter the following year, giving them something to show the relevancy of the coursework being completed. It would also give students who decided teaching was not for them a chance to take other classes in a different major.

### Quality Classes Offered Throughout the Teacher Education Program

No matter how good our courses are, how much time a professor spends preparing and delivering lectures, or how closely research has determined a need for what we are teaching, a course cannot be effective if the students do not believe it is of value to them. Responses from both groups indicated that there are several courses required in the teacher education program that need to be evaluated and revised in order to best serve the needs of students.

(Comments from Teacher Education Students)

*I feel that the tests in these classes should be in more of an essay format... I do not think that in a class like this you should have to sit through lectures and take multiple choice tests. I think that in a class like this it should not be all facts and figures, but should give some room for expression on a certain topic.*

*There should be a class taught for us to have at least some exposure to the different types of [special ed] students we may have.*

*I have to take many science classes and understand it pretty well. The problem lies in that I am learning to teach it from them also. Though I enjoy the material being taught, does not mean I enjoy the way it was taught... What I am trying to learn is how to teach science material (which can be very difficult and confusing) to a high schooler.*

*I feel that students would be better served to be offered meaningful, quality classes taught by educated instructors, as opposed to classes meant to "weed you out" or discourage you from your goal to be a teacher.*

*Some of the classes with questionable necessity, such as the two-hour Instructional Media class, could be replaced with more hours required in the student's major subject. Classes with definite quality ... should remain a part of the curriculum. It seems like the course requirements for teacher education are due for some major overhauling.*

*Upper division classwork should involve a combination of all we have learned up to this point. It should not be about memorizing a plethora of non-facts for a multiple choice test.*

*I think most classes required for an education degree should involve as many "hands-on" activities as possible, whether it be watching a film of a real teacher and class, or going to a school, or playing with manipulatives.*

*I feel that some of our teachers are just giving us busy work to keep us occupied. I would rather have experience working with children in a classroom or getting in front of the class so I can get a feel of what teaching will be like.*

*Most importantly concerning my career there are no classes that teach you how to coach or what to teach. Well, there are "Block Classes" that try to teach you, but honestly I found them not to be very beneficial. In reality an easy "A".*

*My classes seem to focus more on the downside of teaching. For example, I hear complaints about salaries, parents complaining, lawsuits, and for the most part about how teaching is so stressful. By hearing these complaints, I feel now that teaching is not for me.*

*Overall, I think the regents had good intentions when they decided on the curriculum for secondary education. But, they have failed to follow up on those choices over the years, and that has brought about the downfall of the meaningfulness of many of the classes.*

*I have not had very many education classes. However, the ones I have had are very superficial. They breeze over the top of all the information. This gives you a general understanding, but not enough to truly understand. The expectations are so great when you are a teacher in a classroom, yet so little as a student.*

*There is only one change that I feel should be made, Monday morning lecture class. I feel that not a lot is learned, and it is difficult to pay attention. I don't feel that the Monday morning lecture has been beneficial to me, the class, or the program itself.*

*Looking at the degree sheet, I feel that there are very many unnecessary requirements. As a secondary English major I was required to take Trigonometry. ... There is about an entire semester worth of classes that I am required to take that I feel are not necessary in preparing me to become a teacher.*

*I think there needs to be more time spent in the classroom before you actually become a teacher and you need to look at whole lesson plans for a year instead of for an hour.*

*I just wish that more classes that are mandatory to take dealt explicitly with teaching. ... It would be helpful to have less general education courses and more beneficial explicit teacher education courses.*

*Too many of the classes that education students are required to take are a waste of time. No offense, but I think that this class is a waste of time. Almost everything in our book is common sense and what is not common sense is covered in every other education class. ... It is almost as if the education department can not think of enough different classes for their students to take that they must make up 50 different classes that are required that all cover the same material.*

*I feel that in the teacher education program that there are many classes that could be arranged differently. For example, Instructional Media, which I feel is a course that could be taught in probably two or three days, instead it is taught in eight weeks.*



*Many of the classes that are required in this program seem trite and useless. There are classes in which you spend weeks going over useless information in great detail. ... Then there are classes that are very interesting and useful that are skimmed over like they mean nothing.*

*I am a junior... The few education classes I have had, have not prepared me to be in a classroom. For example, Microcomputers was an easy course, but how will it help me if the school where I work does not have Apple computers. Instructional Media teaches us how to cut, paste, and laminate. It's not that hard, why should we take an entire class about it?*

**(Comments From Entry Year Teachers)**

*The 2 methods classes were wonderful but classes such as tests and measurements, reading for secondary teachers and international problems and the role of the schools have been no help. There need to be more classes offered that deal with practical things.*

*Much of the methods coursework I took was redundant and ineffective. There has to be a better way to prepare pre-service teachers.*

*My only complaint about the education classes is that most of them are geared to elementary level classrooms.*

*I have some strong concerns about the applicability of some of the general education coursework requirements to my specific field of study...*

*I felt after I graduated that many of the undergraduate courses were monotonous and I felt the material could have been covered in class instead of 2 or 3.*

*A lot of the education courses seem to focus more on primary education and not on secondary ed. The lesson plans we are required to write in college are much more elaborate and time-consuming than in the "real" school.*

*I would like to see the requirements for endorsement areas changed so that more "methods" courses are offered in place of some of the upper-level courses in the specific area of endorsement.*

*In college you do too much "busy work". There is not enough outside interaction with the schools.*

A major complaint about classes, especially from elementary education majors, was that their general education courses were not relevant to what they would be teaching. They learned a lot about biology, it was true; but no one told them how to take that knowledge and make it approachable and fun for second graders. The Renaissance Group advocates a teacher education program in which the whole campus is involved and works together to provide classes that are truly what education majors need. A high school English teacher does not need the same math classes as would a fourth grade teacher. Colleges of Education must work with other schools on campus to develop courses that are beneficial to the needs of students, and keep in mind that teachers teach students, not subject matter. The subject matter is what we teach *about*; the kids must always be the focus.

The need for quality classes was also addressed by another, smaller group of teachers I had the pleasure of spending three weeks with last summer in a class on paleontology for teachers. I took the class as a way of giving myself a break and exploring a new area, but it turned out to be very enlightening on an array of subjects. There were about fifteen of us in the class, all teachers, whose experience ranged from elementary to high school and from beginners to some with twenty years of experience in the classroom. The class was co-taught by a professor from the Philosophy Department and another from Geology. It was a perfect blend of time spent in the classroom learning theory and time spent in the field collecting fossils that could be taken back to our own classrooms to use with students. The long van rides gave us a chance to talk and, being teachers, the topic was frequently the challenges of teaching today's students and how to better prepare those entering the teaching field for the reality of what they were going to face. It was a remarkable group because everyone there loved teaching; that was obvious in their conversations about students. They were spending three weeks of their summer in class so that they could make learning more exciting for those students. After the course was over, I asked one of the professors if I could get a copy of the course evaluations, as a way to get the opinions of yet another group of teachers, more experienced than either of the other two I had used, on what made up a good class. The course got rave reviews, as I expected, and again the teachers indicated that the strongest points were a good blend of theory and hands-on experience, practical ways to use the information in teaching their own students, suggestions for answering the philosophical issues that came up, a chance to ask questions and discuss ideas with others in the class, and excellent professors who enjoyed the subject matter and enjoyed teaching. It seems students and teachers at all

levels agree on what makes up a great course; perhaps we at the university level should begin heeding their advice.

Another concern is the redundancy in classes, especially those in education. Each department should seriously evaluate what is being offered and be sure that courses build on, rather than repeat, information. Classes which frequently receive poor evaluations from students should be scrutinized to find out whether the problem lies with the instructor or the course itself, or perhaps both. Necessary changes should be made to make every class taken a worthwhile experience for students. It may be that several courses could be combined into one, or perhaps that one course contains too much information to be covered in a single semester and should be divided into two. Upgrading courses should be a constant activity of every department in order to insure the preparation program is best meeting the needs of future teachers.

#### More Time Spent in Small Group Discussion/Seminar Classes

Becoming a teacher is a process that is filled with excitement, frustration, learning and questioning. Many students and teachers felt they were not given enough time in small groups to think reflectively and voice their opinions on topics vital to teaching. More time in small groups was requested from many of those responding.

(Comments from Teacher Education Students)

*Classes that only bore students semester after semester should be replaced with thought-provoking, informative seminars on what teaching really entails.*

*The discussions that we have in class make me question my view of education. I believe that this is a plus because I had never been questioned about it and now I have actually sat down and thought about my philosophy of education.*

*Another thing that might be helpful would be to require a very short – maybe an eight week – discussion course where students and an instructor who had taught in the public school system discuss issues related to their specific area of specialization.*

*From what I know from the experience of being a students for 15 1/2 years is that the teachers I learn the easiest from are those who bring us up to their level while teaching us what we need to learn. (Notice I didn't say "Come down to our level")*

*I enjoy the small groups such as peer discussion class. On the other hand, I feel that a lecture class with 250 people in it is pointless. We are not able to discuss and debate over the things we feel are worth discussing. I have a problem with that. It's boring and senseless.*

*I appreciate discussion class, because we are able to discuss the pros and cons of what happens in schools today.*

*Classes should be informal enough that students are able to feel they can speak their mind. It is all right to go around the book and lecture when what is being said is useful. Many times this is the more important information you learn and remember.*

(Comments from Entry-Year Teachers)

*Teach students how to understand and use current research.*

*There need to be more classes offered that deal with practical things. Examples of practical things would be report cards, progress reports, letters to parents, and discipline notices. These are the things that can scare a first-year teacher.*

*Need earlier observation experiences followed by extensive discussion.*

Students need to talk about what they are experiencing and to share their ideas with their peers and professors. This cannot be accomplished in a lecture class with 250 students. I believe the quality, rather than quantity, of information covered in class is important. Students can sit in a lecture and take notes about the statistics involving poverty in our country, memorize the teen pregnancy rates for each ethnic group, and study charts and tables with income levels for various groups of Americans. These students may memorize this material, and do well on a multiple-choice test, but how much will it help them as teachers? A far more effective teaching tool was found when I divided students into small groups, one of which played the role of wealthy parents and the other of parents living in poverty. Another group played the school board, who had to decide whether separate schools were equal. I gave out information and statistics, but they were for the class role-play only, not to memorize. There was no test at the end, only cookies. Still, it was a passionate, incredible lesson that far exceeded my expectations and one I know the students will never forget. They came a little closer to understanding the effects poverty has on the students they will teach, and I hope that they will be more understanding teachers as a result.

Experiences like those can't be replicated in an auditorium full of students, nor can they happen in a small classroom where students don't feel free to express themselves. Teacher educators must work hard to prove that student ideas are not only acceptable but worthwhile, and respect the opinions of all those in their classes. Heated discussions should be welcomed, not thwarted. When discussing issues such as corporal punishment, rights of gay students, mainstreaming, and religion in the schools, intense debate should be expected. It is up to the teacher educator, despite his or her own personal values, to allow each student in the class to voice their opinions. No matter what opinions students take with them from your class, the important thing is that they have been exposed to the other viewpoint, and hopefully have an understanding of those who feel differently, even though they don't agree. Education is not about creating clones, but enlightened individuals who stop and think about what they believe and why. Small group discussion encourages them to do this.

### Provide Multicultural Education and Classroom Management in Every Course

#### Taught

Over and over there were comments dealing with classroom management and the lack of preparation for it, as well as frustrations with dealing with nonfamiliar cultures. Neither students or teachers felt prepared in these areas.

(Comments from Teacher Education Students)

*Some people may have absolutely no idea what to expect of a rural, suburban, or metropolitan school. I think it's important to know what to expect from each especially when you're looking for a job. To automatically think that*

*the rural school you came from is going to be the same as the metropolitan school you're applying to teach at could be a fatal career move.*

*Perhaps some sort of a methods class, taught by experienced teachers, could be implemented, with emphasis being placed on curriculum implementation, discipline, expectations, and dealing with minority and handicapped students.*

*I would like to see class/seminars of discipline, presentation of materials, reinforcement, and enthusiasm available with discussion from the other students.*

*More in-depth programs about classroom management and discipline should be offered because that is one of the primary concerns for incoming teachers.*

*A strong belief of mine is that people learn by example. It has been proven that someone who is listening to another, or is put in a position to learn from that person, will put more stock in what that person does, and the example that is set by them, than what that person says. Example is proven to be more effective than theory. Therefore, I believe that the professors and assistants who are in charge of preparing students to become teachers should do their best to set an example in all they do for an outstanding teacher.*

*I have witnessed individuals who do not go out of their way to put themselves into the students' shoes, or who do not keep in mind helping as many to learn as much as possible, but rather how many can be eliminated from the program by a particular class. ... I have also come into contact with people*



*who have served as great examples for me when I become a teacher myself. Because I have witnessed them making a special effort to enhance what each student learns and are willing to stop and listen to what the students have to say, I am much more willing to listen to their opinions and ideas and I would be likely to consider anything they might have to say than something presented to me by someone who I thought cared little about their students.*

**(Comments from Entry-Year Teachers)**

*I am a white female from a small town who is now teaching in an inner-city 95% black school. I felt totally unprepared to deal with the unpredictable race relations! More multicultural courses or involvement would be beneficial, I believe.*

*I really do not feel I learned enough about classroom discipline during my professional education. ... You do not learn classroom discipline from a textbook. You must actually be involved in the process.*

*I feel there should be more classes in the education graduate courses concerning everyday occurrences in the classroom...*

*It has been a very trying year – an at times I felt at a real loss. I feel that (university) prepared me for an ideal teaching situation. I teach in a school that is 100% African American (I am white), surrounded by gang activity and drug dealings. 99% of the parents seem apathetic to anything that goes on at school...*

*Please work on the area of classroom management! This is the hardest part – for almost all entry-year teachers. ... The block class in no way prepared me for what I encountered. We should also learn effective ways to build student self-esteem. Isn't that what management is all about?*

*I think there need to be more classes offered in the area of classroom management ... My subject knowledge and teaching methodology were solid, but I felt I had not been taught enough about how to discipline effectively.*

*Although I don't encourage frightening the students preparing to be teachers, I would encourage much more awareness of real multiculturalism. Most of my students are minority and poor. They have no motivation to learn ... to attend school. More discussion on motivation techniques would have helped me.*

*Students also need a basic understanding of sociology, family structures, and other issues pertinent to those in the helping professions.*

To offer a single course on multiculturalism trivializes the whole issue. It will be a wonderful day when there is no need for this topic to be addressed, but that day is far into the future. There are many students who, like me, grew up in a monocultural setting and are not prepared to understand the children they will be teaching. They need to be given much more than ideas for celebrating Black History Month and Cinco de Mayo. Students should be taught to respect every culture for the contributions they made to America, and to pass this respect on to their own students. They should be aware of stereotypes, but understand how these came about and why they are not always valid. Perhaps most importantly

of all, future teachers must realize that students do not necessarily have to be of different races to be of different cultures. Those who grew up in New England are in many ways different from those raised in Southern California, whatever their skin color, race, or religion. One of the most striking cultural boundaries new teachers will face will be that of money. Many teachers are shocked to discover the poverty levels among their students, especially teachers from rural areas who go to inner city schools. Somehow poverty in rural areas, though it certainly exists, doesn't seem so drastic because most families are able to supplement their budgets with gardens and possibly livestock. Inner city residents don't have this option, and therefore new teachers see students who come to school having had nothing to eat since lunch the previous day. Another result of poverty, and the frustration that accompanies it, is child abuse. Beginning teachers need to be prepared for these realities and taught what to do when they encounter situations involving them. Above all, they need to understand that poverty is not the fault of the child, nor are the symptoms that accompany it.

These children may not be as easy to work with as the more "ideal" students in class, but they need and deserve the teacher's love and attention and efforts to teach them as much as possible. Their home lives also must be considered as a part of classroom management and discipline. Research has shown that students from homes below the poverty level receive a far greater proportion of corporal punishment than students from middle- and upper-class homes. One has to stop and consider whether paddling a child who is beaten at home for no reason at all is going to be very effective. What these students often learn is that when big people don't like what little people do, they hit them. Then, when they get older, they assume that if they're mad about something, it's okay to hit someone smaller. We label them as bullies without ever

understanding the motivation behind their behavior. Often, they don't understand it themselves. My parents certainly believed in corporal punishment when I was growing up, but the paddlings were not frequent and were always accompanied by a long lecture on *why* whatever we had done was wrong and what we should do instead. Many children receive only the punishment without the lesson, which is far more detrimental than helpful. As teacher educators, we can't teach discipline without teaching a great deal of sociology, human development and psychology, history, and compassion. These threads should run through every course taught in our department.

### Support Groups for Teacher Education Students and Teachers at All Levels

College is a very frustrating time for many students, whether they are traditional students or adults returning to campus. It was clear from listening to students that they need some type of support group while going through the program. The first year of teaching is perhaps even more challenging, and entry-year teachers also requested some form of support and communication channels to help them through the rough spots.

(Comments from Teacher Education Students)

*I want to be aware and informed of current and up-to-the-minute issues regarding education and schools and students, so I can be the best I can be ... I would like to see an organization for Secondary Educators of Tomorrow, like the Elementary Educators of Tomorrow.*

*Everyone always gripes about how terrible the first year is ... Problems lie with the first year teacher's lack of confidence.*

*It would be helpful for students to have some sort of a mentor throughout the program to touch base with, gather input from, and discuss concerns and problems with. ... We are, in a way, thrown out into the program and left on our own to sink or swim. I feel that some changes need to be implemented whereby students do not feel so isolated.*

*I want to be in an occupation where I feel appreciated and needed instead of feeling belittled.*

*If we had time to talk and have discussions with teachers from the field/area of study that we are interested in, it would give us a better insight of what to look for and be prepared for.*

*I personally agree with the Holmes Group because I agree that a future teacher should go through a post bachelor's rather than only the bachelor's degree because to me this better prepares the students in this program.*

(Comments from Entry-Year Teachers)

*Involve Teachers of the Year with pre-service teachers. Develop Mentor Programs, etc.*

*In retrospect, my first year as a public school teacher has been overwhelming. There are many areas in which I feel inadequate, even dissatisfied. ... I know now that I accepted too many responsibilities with this job. The pressures of too many students, lack of discipline, the lack of support from virtually all sides ... have led to doubts about my career choice. I am just now*

*asking myself ... are all the experiences and treatment of public school teachers worth all the effort and preparation?*

*It has been, to say the least, a difficult year.*

*If possible, I feel it would also value a first year teacher to take 1 or 2 days of professional leave to observe other teachers in the same grade level. There are so many little things you just don't realize you have to deal with until you are actually teaching. ... A great idea would also be to organize a meeting (fun – like dinner or something) where first year teachers could share experiences. It helps to hear others' similar experiences. I'd even volunteer to organize such a program!*

*During all teachers' entry-year program, it would have been beneficial to have some sort of support group that could meet throughout the year. This would give all entry-year teachers a chance to help each other. It would also be nice to know that you're all experiencing the same problems and concerns.*

With so many demands on teachers, and so much to think about and talk about, some type of support group and mentoring program is needed at all levels, from pre-service until after retirement. With younger undergraduate students, this could be an education club that met once a month or so and had guest speakers. It would be more of a social group than support group, but offer a place to belong to freshman students newly arrived on campus. For those doing their student teaching, a true support group would be more helpful, where they could talk about the joys and frustrations they were all experiencing. Beginning teachers could use a support group not only to help each other

through the trials and tribulations of the first year, but also to support each other in teaching the way they believe. New teachers full of the latest ideas who go into a traditional school often quickly feel the need to conform to the existing culture of the school, even when they don't feel that maintaining the status quo is what the students really need. If young teachers can find others who share their values, it is much easier to hold firm to what they believe. A group of teachers who want to exchange their basals for whole language will be much more successful with the administration than a single teacher who's been on the job less than three weeks. While beginning teachers have special needs, I really feel support groups would benefit teachers at all stages of their careers. Having others who are reading the same journals, attending the same workshops, and really trying to improve their teaching each year makes it easier than trying to develop professionally on one's own.

Another type of support teacher education students and new teachers need is a mentor. I have a real problem with freshman students being assigned to an advisor who has five hundred other students to take care of, even though I realize that financially it makes sense to universities. Even from the beginning, however, students need a person they can go to and talk about their program. As students move into student teaching, they need a person with whom they are comfortable and who they trust. Upon being hired to teach, it is often helpful to find someone who's there to listen and offer suggestions. These mentors do not always have to be college faculty members; it could be a teacher from a local school who is an excellent educator. The relationship is beneficial; both student and mentor learn from each other, and the educational process is involved for all concerned.

## CHAPTER V

### LOOKING TOWARD THE FUTURE

As time passed, the questions kept haunting me. The books I read prompted reflection, the students who visited with me increased my concern about what we really should be doing in teacher education. And my arguments, even those I thought so very well grounded, continued to turn round and walk away, leaving me wondering if there really was an answer, if my search would ever have an end.

After reading the literature, talking with colleagues, visiting with students in classes and teachers in the field, and pondering the information I had gathered, I concluded that there is no answer, that the search goes on forever. Nothing is static. We can't design a perfect teacher education program because we can never design a perfect school. The only thing constant is change. We can design a perfect school for today, for a specific group of students, but by the time the plans are drawn up and the details worked out and the teachers prepared, it will be tomorrow, and the needs of students will have changed. Schools, in order to be effective, must be constantly changing and evolving to meet the needs of a diverse and erratic population. Schools are only as good as the teachers they hire. Teachers, therefore, must be educated to think critically about students and what they need. Our teacher education programs, accordingly, must allow students to have real experiences in classrooms and a chance to reflect on and discuss those experiences with their peers and



professors. They need a chance to think seriously about school, about what they believe their role is in the education of students.

### Findings of the Study

Many of the findings discussed in Chapter IV are in direct agreement with the findings of other research in teacher education programs, such as that of Goodlad and the Holmes Group. Appeals for more time spent in actual classrooms are certainly not new, nor is the entreaty to make teacher education more like the "real world". Students have long demanded that the classes they are required to take be shown to have relevance to their lives outside of the school room. Classroom management has always been a difficult area for new teachers, and more and more recent studies have shown the need for those entering the teaching profession to be well-educated in multiculturalism. All of these findings supported the research of others.

In addition, this research provided some fresh ideas and suggestions, especially from students. I was very pleased that so many of the teacher education students recognized the fallacy of memorizing data for multiple choice tests rather than digging in and really coming to understand what all the facts and figures meant to them as future teachers. I found that students want to be brought up to the level of professors, not patronized and spoon-fed. Those preparing to be teachers wanted to be the best possible educators for their students, and were willing to take a more difficult path when necessary to prepare themselves for the classrooms of their futures. Students and teachers alike realized the need for networking with others to develop both personally and professionally, and that they are stronger and can have more impact on their

students and administrations when they work together and have the support of their peers.

### Implications of the Study

As the findings were presented, the questions seemed to multiply. There were several implications arising from the study, but few easy answers.

Obviously, there is a need for more time spent in classrooms in public schools during the preparatory phase, especially early in students' programs. But what is the best kind of field experience? There are many opinions on this matter, and a combination of them all might be the best solution. However, teacher educators must be careful to evaluate those they select as mentors for their students in order to insure a quality experience. They must also find ways to expose their students to a variety of classrooms and cultures, which can be difficult in some areas of the country. It is unfair to the students, however, to give them on a single snapshot of what teaching is really like.

Another implication lies in the area of teacher certification. What makes or breaks a teacher during that first year is very rarely their level of knowledge with regard to content area. Yet teacher certification tests are largely content-based examinations that give no consideration to the students' capabilities as a teacher. This is another difficult area, for those talents cannot be measured on a standardized test, which seems to still be the favored measuring tool in most areas of education. Programs such as the Entry-Year Assistance Committee are very helpful and provide a chance for the teacher to demonstrate his/her abilities in the classroom, but these need to be expanded and improved to provide more chances for growth of young teachers.

Another irony that emerged from the findings was that although teacher education programs tend to be strong in methodology and weak in philosophy, students still feel they need more methods classes, more lessons on how to manage classrooms, more information on the "proper" way to teach. How to make them see the need for more philosophical courses when they believe they would be better served to spend that time out in the field gaining experience is a challenge that must be met. This can only be accomplished when students actually see the relationship between philosophy and practicality. It is a formidable task already to squeeze all the requirements of teacher education into a four-year program. Perhaps the students are right; it could be that some courses could be combined or done away with completely. It is imperative, however, that the quality of education is not diminished but enhanced by these changes.

The most troublesome question of all is one with which I still wrestle daily. There were times in class when I simply had to stop and ask myself whether encouraging my students to be autonomous -- to think for themselves, to challenge the status quo, to look at alternative ways of teaching and discipline and evaluation, to really think about the purpose of education and their role in it - - was helping them or sending them down a road of professional suicide. Schools are not the most progressive institutions in our society, and these students will be entering buildings where the culture and climate are already established, where there is a very definite "right way" of doing things and those who don't conform usually don't last. Beginning teachers, straight out of college and desperate to find jobs to pay off years of student loans, are usually not afforded the luxury of being able to choose a school that corresponds directly to their own philosophy. Oftentimes, this cannot even be determined until the teacher has spent time in the school and gotten to know other teachers. The

first year is trying enough already, constantly hectic and rarely supplying for the new teacher the time needed to think about what they are doing and reflect on how that fits into their own philosophy and how they could improve. Instead, they often find that in order to survive it's easier to just go with what everyone else in the school is doing, to follow tradition and be satisfied on Sunday night just to have the necessary grades recorded, even if they did come from multiple choice exams rather than the essays the teacher knows would be a better evaluation tool.

This all brings us to the ultimate question in teacher education -- Do we prepare teachers for the schools that currently exist or for the schools that should exist? And if the latter is what we choose, how do we educate our future teachers to survive the battles they will encounter as they attempt to live in one paradigm and teach in another? How do we prepare them to function in schools based on control, standardized evaluation, and conformity long enough to become established and have a positive impact on others in the school, without losing sight of their own principles? We must prepare students for the reality that exists while showing them how that reality can be changed.

### Recommendations for Further Research

As with all research, the findings led to a need for more research in the area of teacher education. There are many questions stemming from the information presented here, questions that should be asked in an effort to improve teacher education and therefore education for all students.

It would be interesting to replicate this study with responses from veteran teachers and even retired teachers. Because of constraints involved in this study, only pre-service and entry-year teachers were involved. Perhaps another

study could be implemented gathering ideas from teachers who had been in the field ten, fifteen, or twenty years, as well as those who had retired from teaching. It would be a good way to see how much (or how little) teacher education has changed over the years and how much teachers feel their roles in the schools have changed.

Research into better ways to bring teacher education students into "real" classrooms and to involve current teachers in the pre-service program would be beneficial. While everyone agrees that this needs to be a priority, the question of how to bring it about remains unanswered.

Finally, the true purpose of schools and the role of teachers within them requires serious study. Only when these questions are answered can teacher education programs go forth with the preparation of teachers who are ready to face the challenges of tomorrow's classrooms.

### Closing

There is much work to be done in teacher education, work that will never be finished. As we look toward the future of our university teacher education programs, we must always keep in mind the children in our public schools and what kind of teacher will best serve them in preparing them to live a life as full and rewarding as possible. What we have done in the past cannot simply be continued in a future that is very different. No teacher education program is ever perfect. All have varying strengths and weaknesses, and even those characteristics that are strengths today must be constantly re-examined in order that they do not become weaknesses as society changes and the needs of public schools change with it. It is important that teacher educators spend quality time in public schools at all socioeconomic levels, that they read

educational journals and keep up with the politics involved in school life, that they attend conferences and share ideas with educators from other colleges and universities. Ideas shared are never lost; only a deeper understanding is gained by all.

Our young teachers must be able and willing to think beyond what they have experienced and what they currently see in schools and look toward what could be. They must leave our programs with more than heads full of facts and figures; their hearts must be filled with love, compassion, and a strong desire to truly help children. Albert Einstein (1956) expressed this well when he said,

...knowledge of what is does not open the door directly to what should be. One can have the clearest and most complete knowledge of what is, and yet not be able to deduct from that what should be the goal of our human aspirations. Objective knowledge provides us with powerful instruments for the achievements of certain ends, but the ultimate goal itself and the longing to reach it must come from another source (p. 20).

The source of which Einstein spoke must be recognized as the students themselves. When they come to us for help in preparing to be teachers, we must help them to look inside themselves for answers rather than seeking Truths in other places. We must bring out what is already deep inside those who truly desire to teach, and help them become the best teachers they can be. Our children deserve that. There have been many in the field of curriculum who have devoted their lives to improving life for those around them. New curriculum workers must take up the challenge and continue to provide a voice for the coming generations of children, insuring that they do not fall through the cracks of an educational bureaucracy. All students deserve good teachers, no matter what their place in society, and teachers deserve the best education and support possible, both in college and throughout their teaching careers. We cannot

allow our teacher education programs to become mediocre, turning out graduates who are content with the status quo. Instead, we must guide our students into teachers who are life-long scholars who are constantly seeking better ways to teach the children who come to them in their educational journeys. I would like to close with a quote from James Macdonald, whose work had a major impact on the curriculum field. Dr. Macdonald is no longer with us, but left a challenge that all of us in education should strive to live up to as we work to create a better life for those around us:

*Our alternatives seem fairly clear. We have the option of giving up the whole enterprise (negating it, if you wish); simply living through whatever resolution occurs; or continuing to try to provide better conceptualization and practice that can lead to the improvement of curriculum environments for human beings. I, personally, have not yet lost my passion for continuing the quest for improvement.*

*James Macdonald, 1925-1983*

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## APPENDICES

**APPENDIX A**  
**INTERNAL REVIEW BOARD STATEMENT**

**APPENDIX B**  
**RESPONSES FROM TEACHER**  
**EDUCATION STUDENTS**

The following responses are printed as they were given to the research, with names and schools deleted. Students were asked to informally discuss their teacher education programs and tell what they liked about the program and how it could be improved. A series of dashes indicates a new voice.

*If I could make a change in the program, I would offer more actual hands-on teaching time. I say this with a great deal of apprehension because this is probably what I am frightened of the most. But because of my fear, I feel I need as much experience as possible concerning this. I am well aware of the student-teaching that I will be required to do. But what about experience for this? I don't want to be thrust into this situation with virtually no prior experience, and as of now, I have basically none.*

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*CIED 3223 is the only education class I've taken so far so I can't really talk about the whole program although it has been proven to be successful, as far as producing good teachers. I do wish, however, to talk about the material that we've covered in this class and discuss it's importance or unimportance as I see myself becoming a teacher.*

*Although some of my fellow students complain that this material will be worthless down the road I think that most of this information will be useful when I start looking for a place to teach and especially when I start actually teaching.*

*I think this class gives students an excellent background on what the teaching profession is like and also what it will*

*become in the future. This material gives us information that starts to build our educational philosophy which I believe is the very important in teaching. I think if a teacher knows where they are and where they want to go, a good, sound philosophy provides a road between point A and point B.*

*I think that this particular class does a good job in explaining the differences between different types of school and different races of people. Some people may have absolutely no idea what to expect of a rural, suburban, or metropolitan school. I think it's important to know what to expect from each especially when your looking for a job. To automatically think that the rural school you came from is going to be the same the metropolitan school your applying to teach at could be a fatal career move. Also this class lets you know what to expect out of different races of people and different views on how to deal with race. I think that this is of particular importance in this day and age, because racial issues seem to be at the top of every ones priority list.*

*The only change that I would like to see would be to be able to teach first hand, Maybe in the discussion group or a lab each individual student prepare a lesson on something of personal interest. Then each student must lecture for twenty to thirty minutes. I think this would be extremely helpful in getting a feel for teaching. Also I don't want to wait until my student teaching when I first get my class to realize that even though I know all the techniques and case sanarios, I just can't handle being a teacher. I think this assignment*



*would save students a lot of time on worrying if their going to like being a teacher or not.*

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*I think one big change that I would make is the testing that is involved in a teacher education class. I feel that the tests in these classes should be in more of an essay format. This type of test gives the student more of a chance to express himself and also helps to show the student the correct way to express himself. I do not think that in a class like this you should have to sit through lectures and take multiple choice tests. I think that in a class like this it should not be all facts and figures, but should give some room for expression on a certain topic.*

---

*I am in an observation class which I know is helping me because it is showing me whether or not middle school is the age I want to teach. I definitely feel as if the observation classes help students to get a feel for teaching before they spend over three years of school and wind up in their last semester only to find out during their first student teaching experience that their heart is not there. I do feel that maybe we should be allowed to attend more "in class" things than we are. Teachers can never know whether or not they will like their jobs until they have spent an adequate amount of time in the classroom hands on.*

---

*This is my first semester here at (university) and into education as my major, however I have already learned a lot about teaching, schools, and students. I have also become more positive and sure about my decision to commit myself to teaching, because of the attitudes I have been approached with so far this semester.*

*I look forward to my entire program with anticipation. I believe that there should be many opportunities for me to get "hands on" experience by going out into the schools a lot. I think being "in the field" is very, very important and should be mandatory for completion of the degree. I believe the College of Education has a strong desire to help us become aware of issues that today's teachers are faced with and having to deal with and this is important to me. I want to be aware and informed of current and up-to-the-minute issues regarding education and schools and students, so I can be the best I can be. ... I think, so far, that one change I would like to see is an organization for Secondary Educators of Tomorrow, like the Elementary Educators of Tomorrow.*

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*I am in Special Education and when I reviewed the course catalog against my degree sheet I found most of the courses adequate to cover the subject matter, but it was missing things like classes on the rights of teachers, students, parents and teacher certification. There should be a class on types of Special Education students at present*

*these types of classes are only taught if you are working on a Major degree program.*

*As I look at special education there are supporting classes if you continue your education towards a major, however with a BA there are no introduction classes to prepare you for the different type of exceptional children that are in the school system today. There is a wide range from visually and hearing impaired, mentally and physically impaired to emotionally disturbed all with a wide range of learning capabilities. For this reason there should be a class taught for us to have at least some exposure to the different types of students we may have, but also to allow us this exposure will help us choose a major and continue our education. The twenty-four hour observation class is not detailed enough to satisfy these requirements.*

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*The teacher education program is set up to teach us about the issues and strategies of the education field. I feel that the August Experience and observation course is a very helpful course. I feel that hands on experience is the best way to learn.*

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*The subject I love is science, preferably biology. I have to take many science classes and understand it pretty well. The problem lies in that I am learning to teach it from them also. Though I enjoy the material being taught, does not mean I enjoy the way it was taught. I thought that the*

*classes offered by the college of education would give me some insight of some helpful tips and suggestions. What I am trying to learn is how can I teach science material (which can be very difficult and confusing) to a high schooler. Another problem I have is mainstreaming. I have taken the class on the exceptional child it is a class that teaches you those rights of the exceptional child. It gives very little insight on techniques and modifications on lesson plans for those children that need it. The teachers teach you too much theory. They only tell you hell stories from the field when it slightly applies to the theory at hand. Theory is great, but they need to back it up with more than horror stories.*

*The experience that we do receive comes from student teaching and observation. I myself am not sure if this is an exact replication of the classroom that you will be teaching. Students are very cruel. They are creatures of habit, and if you get a good teacher to work under that could mean trouble. I know in high school student teachers got total hell. Observation helps one to evaluate a teacher, but from your unexperienced ideas.*

*Everyone always gripes about how terrible the first year is. The first year is rumored so bad because how little we are prepared for what lays ahead. Problems lie with the first year teachers lack of confidence, and students can tell and use it against you. Maybe someday someone can figure out how to fit a successful teaching program into four years.*

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*I feel that students would be better served to be offered meaningful, quality classes taught by educated instructors, as opposed to classes meant to "weed you out" or discourage you from your goal to be a teacher. Classes that only bore students semester after semester should be replaced with thought-provoking, informative seminars on what teaching really entails. Perhaps some sort of a methods class, taught by experienced teachers, could be implemented, with emphasis being placed on curriculum implementation, discipline, expectations, and dealing with minority and handicapped students. Some of the classes with questionable necessity, such as the two-hour Instructional Media class, could be replaced with more hours required in the student's major subject. Classes with definite quality (Adolescent Psychology, Field Experiences, etc.) should remain a part of the curriculum. It seems like the course requirements for teacher education are due for some major overhauling.*

*I think it would be useful to have more and earlier student teaching opportunities for the students. It seems like this is the one area that lets a student truly know if he or she has what it takes to be a teacher, and to save it until the student's last semester — after all other requirements are fulfilled — seems unfair, due to the possibility of it having a negative impact on the prospective teacher. Also, it would seem helpful for students to have some sort of a mentor*

*throughout the program to touch base with, gather input from, and discuss concerns and problems with.*

*We are, in a way, thrown out into the program and left on our own to sink or swim. I feel that some changes need to be implemented whereby students do not feel so isolated.*

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*Upper division classwork should involve a combination of all we have learned up to this point. It should not be about memorizing a plethora of non-facts for a multiple choice test.*

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*This is one of the first education classes that I have taken and I believe that it will help me in the future. The discussions that we have in class pertain to teaching and we are allowed to hear everyone's opinion. The discussions that we have in class make me question my view of education. I believe that this is a plus because I had never been questioned about it and now I have actually sat down and thought about my philosophy of education.*

*All education majors take the required courses then are thrown out into the "real world". When student teaching many students realize that this is not the profession that they would like to pursue. By this time students feel that it is too late to go back to school for a couple more years so they end up in a profession that they hate. Therefore, I believe that students should student teach earlier in their college career. A program could even be set up to do a few weeks*

*of student teaching early on in college and then do final student teaching at the end of a student's senior year. I believe that this would make students realize early if teaching was the career that they wanted to pursue.*

---

*I want to be the best teacher that I can possibly be. In order to do that I think it would be helpful to have more opportunities to student teach throughout the educational program instead of only at the end. A couple of friends of mine completed their student teaching and they both said that it was really rushed. They felt that it went too fast and was not enough to prepare them for their own classroom.*

*Another thing that would be helpful would be to require a very short – maybe an eight week – discussion course where students and an instructor who had taught in the public school system discuss issues related to their specific area of specialization (elementary, junior high, or high school).*

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*I think most classes required for an education degree should involve as many "hands on" activities as possible, whether it be watching a film of a real teacher and class, or going to a school, or playing with manipulatives.*

*Program development is an easy, unnecessary 16 week course. I think it could be a shorter course, it might make it more interesting.*

---

*From what I know from the experience of being a student for 15 1/2 years is that the teachers I learn the easiest from are those who bring us up to their level while teaching us what we need to learn. (Notice I didn't say "Come down to our level")*

*I enjoy the small groups such as peer discussion class. On the other hand, I feel that a lecture class with 250 people in it is pointless. We are not able to discuss and debate over the things we feel are worth discussing. I have a problem with that. It's boring and senseless.*

*I feel that some of our teachers are just giving us busy work to keep us occupied. I would rather have experience working with children in a classroom or getting in front of the class so I can get a feel of what teaching will be like.*

---

*In my opinion, even though I'm probably going to be changing my major, I believe that the teacher education program should give more hands-on experience. My interest was at a real high when I was doing my August Experience, but once that was over and I wasn't working within the classroom, my interest dropped.*

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*The teacher education program here is a good one. But nothing is perfect. The only major change that I can see improving the program dramatically would be more opportunity for the students to gain experience in the*



*classroom by even more observation and student teaching courses. I feel this is the best way to let the students start developing their own ideas and concepts of how they intend to manage their own classroom. This change alone would increase the effectiveness of the program tenfold, in my opinion. Even with every teaching class available, without an adequate amount of field experience, nobody is prepared to go out and take control of an entire classroom.*

---

*I feel my field observation class is pretty useless to prepare me for being a teacher. As an observer, I am required to sit quietly in the back of the room and watch what is going on. I feel like I am not fulfilling any different a role that I did for thirteen years, as a student.*

*As far as the student teaching experience goes, I think it is placed too far into the program to be any sort of a significant preparatory experience.*

---

*I do not think this program is adequately preparing me for my coaching profession. My general education courses have not taught me anything, except to refresh my memory on information that seems invalid to me. I may have benefited from Speech and my mind may have broadened in Art Appreciation, but the other hours of my general education were classes that wasted my time. I am not putting down my Physical Education program, but the majority of my classes dealt with fitness, how the body*

*functions and behavior of children. These courses helped me to understand how to stay fit, the way my body works and children's attitudes, which is useful, but I did not learn much about how to set up a full Physical Education program to teach children. Most importantly concerning my career there are no classes that teach you how to coach or what to teach. Well, there are "Block Classes" that try to teach you, but honestly I found them not to be very beneficial. In reality an easy "A".*

*I would like to see more classes that teach drills and plays that will help coaching. Ideas on how to build successful teams, and the teaching of motivational skills. I am fortunate that I am an Athlete, I get to experience and learn the things that should be taught. The majority of P.E. majors do not have this opportunity and will probably struggle for a few years when they first get their coaching job.*

---

*I believe my teacher education program is adequately preparing me for teaching. It is teaching me the proper skills I will need to know when I begin teaching. It goes in to great detail of specific things that will help me when I am trying to teach students. The teaching program shows me how to handle each student.*

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*My expectations of the program have slightly been let down in my first semester of education courses. I had my*

*mind set on teaching after I finished my August Experience, but things soon took a turnabout. I would like to explain in further detail why I feel differently now as opposed to before.*

*First of all, my classes seem to focus more on the downside of teaching. For example, I hear complaints about salaries, parents complaining, lawsuits, and for the most part about how teaching is so stressful. By hearing these complaints, I feel now that teaching is not for me. I want to be in an occupation where I feel appreciated and needed instead of feeling belittled.*

*Secondly, I feel that my classes are full of busy work. I would rather have more experience with children or practicing getting in front of a class and teaching. I understand that assignments are probably necessary, but I feel that other skills are more necessary and should be taught.*

*Overall, I feel that my teacher education program is not what I expected. It could be the classes I am presently taking are not all that interesting to me or that I have realized by taking some of the classes that I no longer want to be a teacher. I would possibly be more satisfied with the program if the classes I am taking were more of a hands on experience with teaching.*

---

*Overall, I think the regents had good intentions when they decided the curriculum for secondary education. But, they have failed to follow up on those choices over the*

*years, and that has brought about the downfall of the meaningfulness of many of the classes. Maybe it is time for the regents to ask some important questions regarding the teacher education program; questions that, if answered, could enhance the teacher education program for everyone.*

---

*I have not had very many education classes. However, the ones I have had are very superficial. They breeze over the top of all the information. This gives you a general understanding, but not enough to truly understand. The expectations are so great when you are a teacher in a classroom, yet so little as a student.*

*Truthfully I believe four years might not be enough. I think more student teaching time should be required. Hands-on is the best kind of learning.*

---

*This is a difficult question to answer. Therefore, I will discuss two different possibilities. On one hand, experience is a necessity for a teacher to be able to handle the class. The only way to get that "hands on" training is to spend more time in the classroom as a student teacher or helper. One cannot learn everything from a textbook or lecture. There are situations that happen in the classroom that are not discussed on paper or verbally. Therefore, if we as college students had more time in the classroom before our last semester of college we might get a better feel of what is expected of us. Also, if we had time to talk and have*

*discussions with teachers from the field/area of study that we were interested in, it would give us a better insight of what to look for and be prepared for.*

*On the other hand, the knowledge that we are gaining from being in class is also very important. Many methods and ideas for presenting material to students are found in our textbooks and from lecture. From books we will find answers to our questions or they will point us in another direction for the solution. Lecture brings out the difficult areas that books explain and enables the recipient to absorb more ideas for further use. If books could be more interesting to the recipient while reading them, this would help retention of material and the eventual practice of the ideas.*

*I would like to see more field experience time put to use and I would like to see class/seminars of discipline, presentation of materials, reinforcement, and enthusiasm available with discussion from the other students.*

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*I know that I could begin teaching and love it and do it for the next thirty years or I could hate it and last for 6 mos. I know I can handle the lack of supplies and funding. I am resourceful. I know I can handle the kids. I just want to know how to handle parents & adm. I don't think college professors who have left teaching can teach this.*

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*The August Experience Program was very helpful in deciding whether I wanted to teach or not. The August Experience allowed me to see what some of a teacher's everyday duties are. The program allowed me to have hands on experience with students. I realized that teachers have a lot of extra duties that are rarely seen. It helped me to see the "real picture" of teachers and their responsibilities.*

*In our CIED class we were told to really read the book and then decide if teaching is actually what we want to do; the book, in itself, has been a big help to me. I also appreciate discussion class, because we are able to discuss the pros and cons of what happens in schools today. Discussion class has made me ponder whether or not these are things I want to deal with; or even if I have the ability to deal with them.*

*I believe my teaching education program has helped me out a great deal in making some important career decisions. The (university) teaching program tells it like it is the good and the bad. I have learned a lot and am thankful for it.*

*There is only one change that I feel should be made, Monday morning lecture class. I feel that not a lot is learned, and it is difficult to pay attention. I don't feel that the Monday morning lecture has been beneficial to me, the class, or the program itself.*

---

*Looking at the degree sheet, I feel that there are very many unnecessary requirements. As a secondary English major I was required to take Trigonometry. This I feel is very inappropriate because not only did I not understand it and made a poor grade, but I will never be teaching a math class. I and others have often asked why do we have to take such pointless classes. There is about an entire semester worth of classes that I am required to take that I feel are not necessary in preparing me to become a teacher. This is a waste of valuable time and money on all college students.*

*Rather than requiring such meaningless classes, other options should be available in the teacher education program. More in-depth programs about classroom management and discipline should be offered because that is one of the primary concerns for incoming teachers. Another issue that I have noticed is that the education classes often discuss being a teacher but not how to be a teacher. In other words, classes should be offered on how to teach subjects to certain ages of children and teenagers.*

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*I think there needs to be more time spent in the classroom before you actually become a teacher and you need to look at whole lesson plans for a year instead of for an hour. The more experience you have the better off one will be.*

---

*I think the teacher education program is partially preparing me for teaching, that is I feel no one is fully prepared for teaching until they usually have a job at doing so and have gained experience and know their students and what they need. In my studies thus far I have benefited some way or another in every class I've taken. I just wish that more classes that are mandatory to take dealt explicitly with teaching. I would also like to see the opportunity of getting more hands-on experience with teaching. It would also be nice to have more teachers come into our classes and share their experiences and view of teaching. I have already learned more from this class as far as teaching goes, and requirements, etc., than I have in almost all of my other classes put together. It would be helpful to have less general education courses and more beneficial explicit teacher education courses. The way the teacher education is set up is probably just fine, I am just nervous about entering the teaching world and want all the possible experiences and knowledge that I can get. this way I will be the best teacher that I can be and will be able to help children learn and be successful and cope with society. I don't want to go out into the teaching world not feeling comfortable with the knowledge and experiences that I have.*

---

*I believe that my teacher education program will not adequately prepare me for the real world of teaching. My*



*teacher education program focuses too much on written facts. In this program we are taught the history, philosophies and also the do's and don'ts of teaching without any real hands on teaching. The program owes (sic) us a great background for making intellectually stable teachers but not teachers that are experienced in handling a class full of eager children.*

*(Long discussion of various teacher education reform movements discussed in class...) I personally agree with the Holmes Group because I agree that a future teacher should go through a post bachelor's than only the bachelor's degree because to me this better prepares the students in this program.*

---

*I think I am not getting my money's worth out of the program. Too many of the classes that education students are required to take are a waist of time. No offense, but I think that this class is a waist of time. Almost everything in our book is common sense and what is not common sense is covered in every other education class. The only class that I can think of that I have learned anything in was my exceptional learners class. I think that class was valid. All of the educational psychology classes that are required by education students are redundant of PSYCH 1113. It is almost as if the education department can not think of enough different classes for their students to take that they*

*must make up 50 different classes that are required that all cover the same material.*

*There are also several things that are required of education students that are simply ridiculous. For example, all of the many hours of observation that are required. I think a certain amount of observation is useful and important but not 40+ hours of it. There are also some programs that are useful but are only offered to elementary education students. For example, elementary education students must have 40 hours of fall experience. They are sent to a cooperating teacher in early August and they help that teacher set up their room for the beginning of school. I think that would also be valuable to secondary education students but it is not. Also, for example, Elementary education students can student teach in the fall or spring. I was told that I could only student teach in the spring which has fowled up my entire graduation date and etc...*

*I honestly think that an education degree is most easily obtained of any college (or vo-tech). I realize that there are many education students that want to be teachers and are extremely intelligent. I also think that if someone comes to college and can not hack it in any other department that they decide to get a teaching degree. This is one reason why we do have many incompetent teachers across this country.*

*I would like to see a change in the course selection that is required of teacher education students. I would like to see the standards of admission to the college of education*

*raised. It is the easiest college to get in to at (university). I would like to see equal programs offered /required for elementary and secondary education students. I would like to see useless classes eliminated, i.e. 40+ hours of observation. I do not see any of these changes taking place any time in my life span but I do think that any one of these changes would improve any education department and the quality of teachers that department is putting out every year.*

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*I feel that in the education program that there are many classes that could be arranged differently. For example, Instructional Media, which I feel is a course that could be taught in probably two or three days, instead it is taught in eight weeks.*

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*I don't think that the teacher education is preparing me for a career as a teacher. Sometimes I sit in class and wonder when or if I will ever use the material being presented.*

*I think as students, we spend too much time learning the basics. We need to have more field experience. I don't think that there is any one class that I have to take that will help me any more than being in an actual classroom. I feel I would learn more from a teacher than from any book.*

*Having more observation time would allow us to see problems that we might run into as teachers. We would see*

*how they are handled. If we see a mistake it might prevent us from making the same mistake with our own students.*

*I like the idea of having two student teaching experiences. We would spend time in a classroom and develop questions or ideas to share with other students. We could learn more and then have another chance to go back into a classroom and put our previous experiences to use with the help of a cooperating teacher before we are out on our own.*

*I hope that once I finish the program, I feel more confident than I do now.*

---

*People going through teacher education should definitely get more in class experience. ... We should not have to wait until the last semester of college to finally get some real classroom experiences. I am taking an observation class, and I think that is definitely helping me to decide what age of children I want to teach, but I'm not really getting much experience because I just sit in a chair and watch.*

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*Many of the classes that are required in this program seem trite and useless. There are classes in which you spend weeks going over useless information in great detail. These also seem to be the classes hardest to pass, either because the instructor thinks it is the only class you are*

*taking or because they feel it is their duty to "weed-out" all unexceptional prospective teachers.*

*Then there are classes that are very interesting and useful that are skimmed over like they mean nothing. Sometimes the class is jammed into an eight hour week session you are swamped with projects and can't enjoy the knowledge you are gaining along with it. Other times teachers let you out on your own, not really lecturing on the topic at hand.*

*Classes should be informal enough that students are able to feel they can speak their mind. It is all right to go around the book and lecture when what is being said is useful. Many times this is the more important information you learn and remember. It is also more effective in helping you shape your role as a teacher.*

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*I am a junior now and I don't feel like I'm anywhere close to being prepared to be a teacher. The few education classes I have had, have not prepared me to be in a classroom. For example, Microcomputers was an easy course, but how will it help me if the school where I work does not have apple computers. Also, Instructional Media teaches us how to cut, paste, and laminate. It's not that hard, why should we take an entire class about it?*

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*One of the areas within the education program that I feel is exceptional is how well prepared the student will be with*

*his or her specialized area. My major is secondary education with an emphasis on English. While I was studying my degree sheet, one of the things I noticed was that I would be well-versed in all aspects of English, literature, and writing by the time I am finished. I am required to take several areas relating to all the different topics usually studied in English class. I think this will prepare me to teach just about anything that might fall under the category of English. I hope that because of this I would be both capable and confident teaching any class that the school system employing me requested.*

*One of the areas that I feel might be improved upon is the interaction among college education students and students of public schools and the real classroom environment in which they will be teaching. Students are not required to student teach until they are otherwise totally prepared to have finished their degree. My opinion is that if there were more hands-on experience throughout the program, and more of observing different teachers it would help the college student to get a real estimate for their attraction to teaching, their own preferences in dealing with discipline problems and the classroom environment, and give them more confidence before being pushed out into the teaching world and expected to perform on their own. If there were more personal experience for the college student, I believe that it would not only benefit the*

*prospective teacher, but also the students they will be teaching as well.*

*There is one last area in which I have observed both incredibly outstanding and lacking points. A strong belief of mine is that most people learn by example. It has been proven that someone who is listening to another, or is put in a position to learn from that person, will put more stock in what that person does, and the example that is set by them, than what that person says. Example is proven to be more effective than theory. Therefore, I believe that the professors and assistants who are in charge of preparing students to become teachers should do their best to set an example in all they do for an outstanding teacher.*

*It is my opinion that the duty of a teacher is to help each and every student to learn as much as they possibly can. I have seen both good and bad examples of this in the teacher education program. From the bad side, I have witnessed individuals who do not go out of their way to put themselves into the students' shoes, or who do not keep in mind helping as many to learn as much as possible, but rather how many can be eliminated from the program by a particular class. I feel that this not only adversely affects the entire program, but damages the credibility of the instructor who claims to uphold high teaching standards.*

*I have also come into contact with people who have served as great examples for me when I become a teacher myself. Because I have witnessed them making a special*

*effort to enhance what each student learns and are willing to stop and listen to [what] the students have to say, I am much more willing to listen to their opinions and ideas and I would be likely to consider anything they might have to say than something presented to me by someone who I thought cared little about their students.*

*On the whole, I feel that the teacher education program at (university) is a quality one that will adequately prepare me to become a teacher. I am looking forward to many of the classes required for my degree and I hope that I will be even more impressed from what I witness in the future.*

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*The latest class I took in my major was the August experience. The first bad impression was when I went to enroll and was talking with my counselor. She wrote some number on my requirement sheet and told me I should take this course. I wouldn't have minded so much but when I asked her where it fit in she said that they haven't found a place to put it on the requirement sheet. This should have been my first clue to how it was going to go. I work with a [town] teacher and was looking forward to a very successful program. The college can't be responsible for the way this teacher conducted herself. I felt as though her work she requested for me to do was simply busy work that I didn't learn a thing from.*

*Earlier student teaching would be more beneficial to education majors. Student teaching is offered senior year,*



*not to mention second semester. This is a little late to be experiencing the real classroom experience.*

*The Wednesday experience can't really be time enough to witness and observe how a class really works. I have a friend who had a situation during an observation class where a teacher had her teach a Chemistry class when she had no idea that she had to or wasn't even prepared. This is rather scary not only would I feel awkward but I would think that the students would suffer if this student wasn't prepared.*

*I think certification tests are good but often they don't show the skills that really make a certain teacher stand out. I think part of the test should be based on observation of them in an action type setting.*

**APPENDIX C**  
**SURVEY OF ENTRY YEAR**  
**TEACHERS**

**OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY TEACHER EDUCATION**  
**Program Review**  
 by  
**OSU Graduates Participating in the 1993-94 Entry-Year Program**

**ALL AREAS**

This review is designed to provide information to the OSU Teacher Education faculty and staff who are responsible for the continual revision and improvement of the Oklahoma State University Teacher Education Program. Please be frank in your assessment and as comprehensive as possible in the open-ended response (Item VII). **Remember that we are asking you to assess your preparation as an entry level teacher, not a master teacher.**

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

**FROM WHICH COLLEGE DID YOU GRADUATE? \*\***

Agriculture	9	Graduate	2
Arts & Sciences	9	Human Environmental Sciences	4
Education	64	Alternate	3
		Business	2

**AREA(S) LICENSED TO TEACH \*\***

Early Childhood	5	Physical/Health	3
Elementary	34	Special Ed.	5
Art	1	Distributive Ed.	0
Foreign Language	2	Speech Path.	3
Health	1	Technical Ed.	1
Music	1	TIED	2
Agriculture	9	Journalism	0
Business	4	Mathematics	7
English	13	Science	8
Home Economics	1	Social Studies	8
Industrial Arts/Technology	1	Speech and Drama	1

**\*\* Indicates unequal count due to some surveys having two or more areas checked.**

**GRADE LEVELS PRESENTLY TEACHING**

K	5	7	22
1	11	8	27
2	9	9	35
3	10	10	26
4	10	11	26
5	11	12	26
6	17	Other	4

**RACE/ETHNIC BACKGROUND**

0.9 % American Indian or Alaskan  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Asian or Pacific Islander  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Black  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Hispanic  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Other  
 99.1 % White

MEAN AGE 26

**NUMBER OF YEARS YOU PLAN TO TEACH BEYOND ENTRY-YEAR**  
**3 TO 36**

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**I. General Education**

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A Very Prepared	B Generally Prepared	C Generally Unprepared	D Completely Unprepared	E No Opinion
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Please indicate your level of preparation the following areas of study:

	A	B	C	D	E
1. English Composition	53.6	37.3	7.3	0	1.8
2. American History and Government	20.9	55.5	19.1	0.9	3.6
3. Analytical Thought (mathematics)	31.2	53.2	8.3	5.5	1.8
4. Humanities	29.1	54.5	14.5	0.9	0.9
5. Natural Sciences	41.8	43.6	11.8	0	2.7
6. Social and Behavioral Sciences	44.5	49.1	4.5	0	1.8
7. International Dimension	10.2	45.4	22.2	12.0	10.2

**II. Professional Education**

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Please indicate your perception of your level of preparation relative to the following outcomes:

	A	B	C	D	E
8. Ability to understand and accommodate individual differences among students including categories of exceptionality.	38.5	44.0	14.7	1.8	0

**II. Professional Education (con't)**

	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
9. Application of various student management procedures.	23.6	46.4	24.5	5.5	0
10. Understanding of how to plan and conduct instruction in your class based on various learning theories.	36.4	51.8	10.0	0.9	0.9
11. Development of a philosophy for working with children.	40.4	48.6	10.1	0.9	0
12. Appropriate Use of measurement and evaluation methods for instructional decisions.	39.4	41.3	15.6	1.8	1.8
13. Development of valid student assessment procedures.	36.4	47.3	14.5	0.9	0.9
14. Communication of assessment results to students, parents, administration, and others.	36.7	37.6	22.9	1.8	0.9
15. Understanding of multi-cultural society.	27.5	39.4	24.8	5.5	2.8
16. Understanding of how schools are organized.	22.0	46.8	23.9	5.5	1.8
17. Understanding of social and economic problems and their impact on schools.	24.8	41.3	26.6	6.4	0.9
18. Understanding of the demographic changes America will go through at the beginning of the next century.	14.7	35.8	38.5	6.4	4.6
19. Ability to demonstrate a general knowledge of micro-computer operations and applications.	11.0	45.0	32.1	8.3	3.7

**II. Professional Education (con't)**

	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
9. Application of various student management procedures.	23.6	46.4	24.5	5.5	0
10. Understanding of how to plan and conduct instruction in your class based on various learning theories.	36.4	51.8	10.0	0.9	0.9
11. Development of a philosophy for working with children.	40.4	48.6	10.1	0.9	0
12. Appropriate Use of measurement and evaluation methods for instructional decisions.	39.4	41.3	15.6	1.8	1.8
13. Development of valid student assessment procedures.	36.4	47.3	14.5	0.9	0.9
14. Communication of assessment results to students, parents, administration, and others.	36.7	37.6	22.9	1.8	0.9
15. Understanding of multi-cultural society.	27.5	39.4	24.8	5.5	2.8
16. Understanding of how schools are organized.	22.0	46.8	23.9	5.5	1.8
17. Understanding of social and economic problems and their impact on schools.	24.8	41.3	26.6	6.4	0.9
18. Understanding of the demographic changes America will go through at the beginning of the next century.	14.7	35.8	38.5	6.4	4.6
19. Ability to demonstrate a general knowledge of micro-computer operations and applications.	11.0	45.0	32.1	8.3	3.7

**II. Professional Education (con't)**

	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
20. Production and utilization of a variety of media formats for instruction. (e.g., video, laminating, overheads, etc.)	47.3	48.2	3.6	0.9	0
21. Ability to plan and carry out an effective lesson plan.	60.0	36.4	3.6	0	0
22. Implementation of appropriate instructional learning activities and techniques.	51.4	41.1	6.5	0.9	0
23. Knowledge of current school curriculum.	31.8	46.4	20.9	0.9	0
24. Knowledge about appropriate instructional material.	42.7	40.0	13.6	2.7	0.9

**III. Pre-Student Teaching**


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	<b>A</b> Strongly Agree	<b>B</b> Agree	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b> Disagree	<b>E</b> Strongly Disagree
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	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
25. My early lab and clinical coursework in the pre-student teaching experience was useful in helping me to decide to become a teacher.	33.9	41.3	15.6	7.3	1.8
26. My early lab and clinical coursework in the pre-student teaching experience allowed me to observe a sufficient variety of teacher styles, techniques, and student assessment.	30.3	43.1	7.3	15.6	3.7

#### IV. Student Teaching

A Completely Satisfied	B Somewhat Satisfied	C Somewhat Dissatisfied	D Completely Dissatisfied	E No Opinion
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Please indicate your satisfaction/dissatisfaction with your ability as a first year teacher to engage in the following activities:

	A	B	C	D	E
27. Demonstrate long and short term planning practices.	40.9	55.5	2.7	0.9	0
28. Use a variety of teaching methods and materials.	50.0	40.0	10.0	0	0
29. Demonstrate mastery of the subject matter taught.	50.5	39.4	10.1	0	0
30. Demonstrate several evaluation strategies, to determine what students have learned.	40.9	40.9	17.3	0.9	0
31. Utilize good classroom management techniques.	39.1	40.9	13.6	6.4	0
32. Use current learning theory to select instruction activities appropriate to the objectives, age and social background of students being taught.	32.7	50.0	14.5	0.5	1.8
33. Exhibit professionalism at all times.	78.9	20.2	0.9	0	0
34. Exhibit oral and written communication in a clear and concise manner.	67.6	31.5	0.9	0	0
35. Demonstrate sensitivity to cross cultural issues.	51.8	36.4	9.1	0	2.7



## V. Application of Skills and Knowledge to Professional Responsibilities

	A Very Proficient	B Generally Proficient	C Generally Non-Proficient	D Completely Non-Proficient	E No Opinion
Indicate your level of proficiency as a <u>first year teacher</u> in these areas:					
	A	B	C	D	E
36. Accommodation of Student Differences	35.5	61.8	2.7	0	0
37. Administration of Student Extra-Curricular Activities	41.8	34.5	4.5	0	19.1
38. Classroom Management	31.5	60.2	3.7	3.7	0.9
39. Community Involvement	33.3	42.6	19.4	0	4.6
40. Curriculum Development	27.3	55.5	10.9	0.9	5.5
41. Discipline	26.4	60.0	10.0	3.6	0
42. Evaluation	40.0	52.7	7.3	0	0
43. Human Relations	65.5	33.6	0.9	0	0
44. Individualized Instruction	55.5	40.9	3.6	0	0
45. Material Development	34.5	57.3	8.2	0	0
46. Methodology, Techniques and Strategies	39.1	47.3	11.8	0	1.8
47. Motivation	52.3	42.2	4.6	0.9	0

**V. Application of Skills and Knowledge (con't)**

	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
48. Parental Relations	43.6	40.9	12.7	0	2.7
49. Professionalism	82.6	17.4	0	0	0
50. Records Management	52.7	38.2	9.1	0	0
51. Expected Learner Outcomes for Your Subject Matter	39.1	50.9	8.2	0.9	0.9
52. State of Oklahoma Expected Learner Outcomes	34.5	50.0	11.8	0.9	2.7
53. Accommodations of Multi- cultural Students	29.1	49.1	16.4	0	5.5

**APPENDIX D**  
**QUALITATIVE RESPONSES FROM**  
**ENTRY YEAR TEACHERS**

Entry-year teachers were asked to discuss their teacher education programs and how they could be improved. Responses are printed as they were received, with names and schools deleted. A series of dashes indicates a new voice.

*I am a white female from a small town who is now teaching in an innercity 95% black school. I felt totally unprepared to deal with the unpredictable race relations! More multicultural courses or involvement would be beneficial, I believe.*

*I really enjoyed learning about whole language and wish it were possible to implement it into my class more often but my students need tons of structure and unfortunately basals are the way to teach that seems to work best.*

---

*I feel the General Education and Professional Education classes helped me tremendously! The only class that (university) lacked and would have helped me tremendously was a class on classroom management and discipline techniques!! I struggled a lot with that my 1st year.*

---

*As a first year teacher I see a major need for college students to be in the classroom as much as possible!*

---

*I would like to have had more experiences in the classroom earlier (Freshman/sophomore). I believe more emphasis should be made on classroom management/ discipline techniques. This has been very difficult for me! I also would like to have had a class just about IEP's and all*

*the Special Education paperwork and laws. I would like to have had a class just about the different types of handicaps so that I might be more likely to identify students and understand their characteristics and needs.*

---

*I feel my general education somewhat prepared me. Although much of the general coursework does not relate to my current profession.*

*My professional education helped to prepare me for my first year of teaching. However, I do feel the classes need to be more geared to actual situations that happen in the classroom. The theory part of education is important, but so are the actual experiences. It would be helpful to have teachers visit and give insight to the classroom.*

---

*I wish there would have been more hands on experience early in the program. Going to a classroom and observing really is not adequate experience. Especially late in the program. I enjoy teaching, but the 1st year is nothing like student teaching or observation.*

*I would have liked a more realistic curriculum including how to use a reader properly, as well as how to teach handwriting. These things may seem very basic and simple, but these are a reality! I have to teach handwriting and use my reader, whole language is not an option. I also would have liked more coursework in classroom management. A six week course is really not enough. I felt there were*

*extremely too many reading courses, but 3283? was the most beneficial (Foundations).*

*I got alot out of my coursework, but student teaching is where you find out if teaching is for you.*

---

*Most of the classes I took for certification were graduate classes. I feel that these classes prepared me well for professionalism I would need to obtain and retain a position in the school system in which I work.*

*The only aspect of general education that I seem to be missing is an introduction to Shirley English. Our Superintendent of schools is very high on it.*

---

*I received an Elementary Education degree with an option in middle school science (DIRECT). I feel very prepared in all areas to teach competently and effectively. My content classes and educational classes were very helpful to me. My methods classes were especially useful.*

*I really think I would have liked more pre-student teaching observation. I would have liked to have seen more of a variety of teaching methods before I student taught. Other than that, I feel that (university) has done a wonderful job preparing me as a teacher.*

---

*I felt that (university) prepared me to go out and handle my own classroom. I would have liked more workshops or classes that dealt with discipline and how to react with*

*parents in different situations. Many learning center and classroom ideas that I used came from ideas I got while at (university).*

*As my first year passed I really appreciated (name) and her help. She was always positive and I felt very comfortable calling her any time of day.*

*My over all experience from (university) was a very positive one and I'm looking forward to my masters.*

---

*I understand that the school has changed a few things since I have attended the university. I definitely suggest more experience in an actual classroom setting. I think the tutoring sessions weren't very helpful and we were not prepared, as a class, to help the students with exactly what they needed. I feel that actually being in the classroom observing and becoming involved helped me learn and grow as an educator. It helped me get to know myself, not to mention getting lots of ideas from the atmosphere with the children in itself.*

---

*I really do not feel I learned enough about classroom discipline during my professional education. I feel the picture which is painted in the college classroom is completely different than the actual one in a "real" classroom. You do not learn classroom discipline from a text book. You must actually be involved in the process.*

*I also feel, in college, you do too much "busy" work. There is not enough outside interaction with the schools. I feel it is very important for education majors to get a taste of what life is really like. If I did not have such a wonderful supporting faculty and principal, this would probably be my last year to teach. There needs to be much more real involvement with the schools.*

*I also feel the entry-level committee is worthless. I have learned a great deal, but it has been from my superiors at my school, not from (university).*

---

*As a first year teacher, I feel that I was generally prepared. Although, I feel that the most beneficial part of my major courses were the pre-clinical observations, and student teaching.*

---

*I think the Higher Education Representative should be someone the Entry Year Teacher knows prior to the observations. My Consulting Teacher was my cooperating teacher during my student teaching. This made it very relaxed because we had already developed a relationship. I think the Entry Year Program makes the education process complete.*

---

*I feel there should be more classes in the education graduate courses concerning everyday occurrences in the classroom such as daily lesson plans, substitute planning,*



*and parent relationships. Parent conferencing is an ideal example. Another area of importance is how to prepare effective portfolios. Another area is in presenting the classroom. Students should be encouraged to prepare general bulletin board items so that when they get a classroom they are semi-prepared. That takes up so much time!*

*In place of the currently used textbooks that most people don't read and sell back, Professors should incorporate unit books such as Carson Delosa or Frank Schaefer. These are needed when you get a classroom and it is expensive to buy all at once.*

*Student teaching should be encouraged in the fall so you get ideas on how to prepare and begin a school year. In the Spring, you walk into an already routine classroom. By the second semester, you are on your feet as an entry level teacher.*

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*As a first year teacher, I had several problems with curriculum. My college courses did not prepare with the necessary knowledge of how to use basals. There was a lot of information in my classes about whole language, but not much about basal instruction. At my school, there is an emphasis on basals.*

*The psychology/sociology classes helped to prepare me for the ethnic, economic backgrounds in my classes.*

*Overall, (university) prepared me for my teaching career. Experience is the best teacher though.*

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*The main area with which I would have liked to have been better prepared for would have been dealing with administrators and knowing what could possibly be asked of me. It would have been beneficial to me to have been prepare to change my teaching style to accommodate the administration instead of the students. Being prepared for administrators to cut corners and not follow all the laws and to possibly ask a teacher to do the same is a reality, and educators should be prepared to stand for what they truly believe in and to know how far they go to enforce what they believe.*

*I was fairly prepared in knowing what is legal and illegal in the school system. I was not prepared for the school system to operate knowingly under illegal situations. One has to be extremely up to date to know what is legal and allowed, but teachers need to know how their actions can be interpreted and how to make the best of certain situations when administration is not helpful.*

*Needed: The Real World in Education: The Rural Setting  
The Real World in Education: The Big City*

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*As a student it would have been in my best interest to have had more classroom exposure. It would have been very helpful to see many different teaching strategies and*

*techniques. Discipline is one of the hardest areas of teaching and I would have liked to have more discipline and classroom management ideas.*

*Bulletin boards and learning centers are essential in a classroom but there is no class at (university) to do this sort of thing. I would have liked to have walked into a classroom with some bulletin boards and learning centers done. Perhaps this could have been part of the media class.*

*I would also like to have had more whole language units. To make these requires a lot of time and classroom experience. Doing this at school would have been of benefit to me.*

*During all teachers entry-year program, it would have been beneficial to have some sort of support group that could meet throughout the year. This would give all entry-year teachers a chance to help each other. It would also be nice to know that your all experiencing the same problems and concerns.*

*(Name) has been my (university) Representative and she has been extremely kind and helpful. Entry-year teachers definitely need people like her to help us through the first year difficulties.*

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*After working in the real world for one year and still having the ideas and new ways to teach fresh in my mind from college; I have realized that what they're teaching in college is a new and different way of teaching and maybe*

*even better but it's not the way they're actually teaching or allowing us to teach.*

*For example, I was not taught anything in college about phonics; however it is now what I teach everyday. Another example is the whole language approach – we do not really use it.*

*I do believe that in order to change the way our school systems teach they must teach the new college teacher/student but it doesn't benefit when we're not allowed to use our new approach.*

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*The area that I felt least prepared for was with students w/severe behavior problems. I had one student that was diagnosed severely emotionally disturbed and two that are being tested for SED. It has been a very trying year – and at times I felt at a real loss. I feel that (university) prepared me for an ideal teaching situation. I teach in a school that is 100% African American (I am white), surrounded by gang activity and drug dealings. 99% of the parents seem apathetic to anything that goes on at school. I feel that (university) should prepare new teachers for the "real world" as difficult and scary as it may be.*

*\* of all the teachers in the college – (name) – (math) gave me the most useful ideas and materials! I feel she is an outstanding educator for the Education college students.*

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*Overall, I was generally prepared for my experience. I would not, however, contribute this to my education at (university). It was an intrinsic motivation to succeed. The school provided a basis for success but left some things untouched.*

*I appreciate guidance from advisors and most staff members. There are some I feel have little information that is vital to a teacher. I will expect that (university) is working to employ only those individuals that will effectively contribute to the student's career.*

*I felt the higher ed. component on Entry-Year was not helpful. Students need more classroom experience beginning the sophomore year and continuing every semester, perhaps in every grade level possible.*

*Please work on the area of classroom management! This is the hardest part – for almost all entry-year teachers. We need practical information, various methods, and practice, practice, practice! The block class in no way prepared me for what I encountered. We should also learn effective ways to build student self-esteem. Isn't that what management is about?*

*Additional Comments: (see Appendix B for questions)*

*Question #20 - This course I felt was useless.*

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*It is my opinion that a teacher learns 80% of what she needs to know to teach during her first year of teaching. It is*

*not the department of education's fault, it's just that there is nothing like being in your own classroom with the sole responsibility of teaching around 20 small children.*

*My only suggestion would be to allow for more observations in a variety of classes as well as grade levels. All of my experience has been based on lower grade levels so I have no idea of what occurs in upper levels.*

*If possible, I feel it would also value a first year teacher to take 1 or 2 days of professional leave to observe other teachers in the same grade level. There are so many little things that you just don't realize you have to deal with until you are actually teaching. I keep thinking, if only I could remember those little but very important things (like what to give a student to do when they've finished before everyone else).*

*A great idea would also be to organize a meeting ( fun – like dinner or something) where first year teachers could share experiences. It helps to hear others' similar experiences. I'd even volunteer to organize such a program!*

**Additional Comments:**

*Question #21 – Lesson plans we made at college are not practical in a real school.*

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*You should be told at the beginning of the year how much time you should spend with your consulting teacher. Evaluations should be typed from everyone on the committee so you can use these for references later.*

*My observations helped me a lot!*

*(University) should be more careful about their graduation checks. I know of several people who thought they were finished and then found out they still had one more class to take. They could not decide if I needed a class. I enrolled in the class and then half-way through the class they (university) said I did not need to take it. Their mistake cost me about \$600.00.*

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*I am very glad that this entry year is available. It contributed to my effectiveness. My committee offered suggestions, insight, and their experience so that I may benefit. I had a really good committee. They helped in every way. My advisor from (university) -- (name), really offered a lot of good suggestions. There's nothing I can really say to improve what you are doing. Keep it up.*

---

*All teachers need more time spent on the following:*

- \* Record Keeping*
- \* Alternative Assessment*
- \* Effective Discipline for grades above 5th*
- \* Documentation for legal purposes*
- \* Multi-Cultural Lesson-Planning*
- \* State Learner Outcomes*

*My area of specialization (math) was thoroughly taught and I have been completely prepared for that aspect. The*

*professional aspect was not well developed at all; I had to learn it all as I taught my first year.*

---

*Overall, the education department at (university) is excellent! I graduated from (university) in 1984. I was out of school for 9 years before I started teaching. I was very nervous at first, but the excellent education I received at (university) helped me tremendously.*

*(Name) is an excellent teacher. She is a person who really cares. I would love to attend any seminar or workshop that she gives.*

*I had an excellent social studies teacher, (I can not think of her name). I would love to attend workshops or seminars of hers.*

*If you need any more information please contact me.*

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*The major problem I ran into my first year of teaching was classroom management. I think (university) should offer at least one class devoted to the many types of management skills we will need. That would have been helpful for me.*

*Also, my degree is in Elementary Education. My impression was that I would be able to teach 1-5th grades. Upon graduation I found out that I need to get an endorsement in early childhood to teach 1st and 2nd (possibly 3rd). Had I known this, I would not have requested to student teach 1st or 2nd. I feel (university) should have*



*informed me of this. I know it is still going on because I spoke to a woman last week who wants to teach 2nd grade and is in Elementary Education and plans to student teach 1st or 2nd grade.*

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*This was my second entry level year. I felt that last year was one of the hardest years of my life. My committee was totally unresponsive to my questions. They treated me with absolutely no respect as a person or professional. Several times I was yelled at in front of the children as well as in front of my peers. They wouldn't answer questions or when they did it was with sarcasm and with little tact.*

*This year has been totally different. I have been treated with nothing but respect and kindness. It was much easier to ask questions and get valuable responses. My consulting teacher was friendly and fair. When she felt there could be improvements made in any areas, she told me with tact and kindness. This was a much better experience for me!! My last Higher Education representative should have never been in education and is in complete contrast to the warm caring professional that was on the committee this year. This year has been much more positive!*

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*Need more practicum experiences! Student teaching should be longer with more observations in first two years of study.*

*Less emphasis on extensive lesson plans! No time in real world*

*More on using community resources!*

*Discuss ways to get along with peers in working world. There are some different people out in our schools.*

*Less book work on theories not any one theory applies to students. Need more practical experiences – role play more – with behavior problems, parent problems, etc.*

*I think our general education program needs lots of help. My special education classes prepared me the most. But most of my CIED classes were worthless.*

*Additional Comments:*

*Question #55 – Need to assign a consulting teacher that's not your immediate boss.*

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*Area of Specialization – excellent!*

*Professional Education – excellent!*

*General Education – excellent!*

*With all that (university) was going through when I attended I am amazed at the quality instruction and quality of instructors. The education dept. is good for us as humans learning about other humans and how to teach them – I haven't expertise enough to try to tell you how to improve on this program.*

*Your program is only as good as the students you're trying to teach.*

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*I feel that my years at (university) in the gen. ed. classes were well rounded. The methods classes were helpful and informative. You can never have enough of them! I feel where I was ill prepared now in retrospect, was in the area of my specialization (MR). I do not feel that enough time is given to instructing in IEP preparation. This is a vital part of my job and I was all but in the dark as to how to even begin. More attention should be spent on IEP language and the actual writing of these instruments. Also you cannot over stress the need for confidentiality. The other area that needs more attention is to get these prospective teachers into classrooms earlier and keep them there. Book learning is needed and it is good. But the education of teachers is teaching.*

*I enjoyed my time at (university) and I found (name) to be a great resource.*

**Additional Comments:**

*Questions #14-17 – This really falls somewhere in between the two!*

*Question #26 – Not sufficient*

*Question #53 – I'm working on it!*

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*I believe the entry-level program is a good way to help first year teachers become successful. The only recommendation I have is for the university representative to be knowledgeable about the field you are teaching in. My*

*representative did an excellent job but he didn't know enough about my field to know if what I was doing was the best way to teach my students or not.*

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*I believe the system of education was very in depth and on target for the areas of specialization. In these areas many varieties were taught as well as different views and different social areas. My preparation for lesson plans was excellent. However, I do think more classes are need (sic) in the areas of classroom discipline and how to handle different situations. I know there are a million possible situations but at least give a brief overview of possible paths to travel and help our minds get on the right track.*

*I also think there needs to be a class that acts just as a school would and tell you all the small things that I never heard until school started. Ex. insurance, (life, health), food plans, various duties, weekly eligibility cards, how to figure grades, fill out a gradebook – Just to mention a few. I know that education is very tough and aimed to meet the needs of many students and it is hard to hit every small article of information that is needed by an entry year teacher.*

*I do believe that the educator's system (college) is good and did an excellent job and I appreciate it. Thank you.*

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*There was never a class that prepared me for the paperwork and the formation of my files and grade book. I think that the best way to involve these types of things is to*

*check out the host teacher's procedures before and during the student teaching process. Make sure that the students are seeing how to get organized and not just how to get by.*

*As for my entire education I would say that I was prepared and I'm glad that (university) has the quality of program that it does. I feel that I came out one step in front of most other entry year teachers. Thanks (name).*

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*I would like to see the requirements for endorsement areas changed so that more "methods" courses are offered in place of some of the upper-level courses in the specific area of endorsement.*

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*I feel that the only part of my education that truly prepared me to run a classroom is my student teaching experience. I don't mean to take away credit from the outstanding teachers I had at (university) but books and research papers can't prepare you for the reality of today's classrooms.*

*However, I do feel that I had a number of instructors at (university) who served as great mentors. The teachers whose instruction was most effective were those who had actually been classroom teachers. Usually, the people who had masters degrees but no experience in the classroom had very little impact on my experience.*

*One suggestion I have concerns observations. I observed all 42 hours in the same classroom during one*

*semester. I think it would be better to make the observations be done over at least 2 semesters with several teachers. I really didn't see a variety of teaching before student teaching. Luckily, I had an outstanding cooperating teacher that I will always admire.*

*Thank you for an excellent Education!*

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*After going through my first year as a teacher I have found I do not know enough about my subject matter, nor do I know enough about teaching this matter to at this time be very positive. As far as who best prepared me to be a teacher, I would have to say that professors in the (university) Geology Department were tops. Without what I learned from them this year would have been far more negative. If the Education department would like advice, force every future teacher to write out a week's worth of lesson plans and actually teach a class of their peers. Force every future teacher to keep a grade book and grade tests and homework and have all these averaged on Friday. Have classes that expose the behavior of retarded kids, attention deficit kids, kids on drugs, kids being abused at home and kids who do not care about school or grades or whether they live or die. Besides this you are just taking your student's money and wasting their time.*

---

*Upon completion of my undergraduate degree in education and student teaching 5 years ago I decided not to*

*teach at that time. I felt totally unprepared — I did not know what was appropriate to expect from myself and my students, or what resources were available to me.*

*It was through my graduate degree that I came into contact with people who helped me identify my philosophy in education, increase my knowledge of people and in subject matter, and familiar with available resources. Very few of these were in the college of education. It is entirely possible, and my hope, that many things have changed in the college of education since my experience.*

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*A lot of the education courses seem to focus more on primary education and not on secondary ed.*

*The lesson plans we are required to write in college are much more elaborate and time-consuming than in the "real" school.*

*Teachers-to-be hopefully know to let their students kind of guide their lesson plans and time-table and expect not to get to all material they hoped to. We have to be flexible.*

*Talk to teachers-to-be about finals — how much more it be worth — how questions — so on —*

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*More specialized Education in major fields of study.  
More in class experience than just 8 weeks.*

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*I think there need to be more classes offered in the area of classroom management, and that they should be a*

*requirement for all education majors. My subject knowledge and teaching methodology were solid, but I felt I had not been taught enough about how to discipline effectively.*

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*My parents have been in education all of their lives and if it wasn't for that I would be lost. I don't think I learned a lot in my education experience at (university). The classes were all the same and taught you nothing of in-school techniques. My student teaching helped a lot because, I had to do it all. I learned a lot of history in college, luckily. My uncle teaches at — University and he gave me a lot of different teaching strategies to work with. When I was hired, they basically said "Here is your classroom; here is your text, Good Luck?" I mean it was really trial by fire. No one really helped me at all. I had to learn to do everything on my own.*

---

*The first 3 1/2 years in the teacher education program at (university) did an excellent job of preparing me in the areas of educational theory and general pedagogical principles. However, I learned very little about student-teacher interaction and classroom management until I actually spent time in the schools. I definitely learned the most about teaching during my student teaching period. Younger undergraduates need to be exposed to the experiences. The following are my suggestions to acclimate students in the college of education to an actual classroom environment:*



1) *Earlier observation requirements accompanied by extensive discussion.*

2) *Films of actual classroom situations (from hidden cameras) that students could watch and dissect with a professor, e.g. what should the teacher do, how should the teacher respond to this student, etc.*

3) *An alternative school for (town) students run by the (university) College of Education. This would be a terrific laboratory for student teachers and it would provide an invaluable service to the community.*

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*Two areas I have felt unprepared for is individualized instruction and discipline. Somehow I am the homebase teacher of a class full of students with learning disabilities. I have struggled all year with modifying assignments and trying to set up individual instruction. Discipline has been a major area of concern for me. I teach in a city school. I have had to break up fights. It concerns me greatly.*

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*Need 2 non-consecutive semesters of student teaching to re-evaluate strategies. Math – not differential equations, okay for engineers.*

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*I think (university) Ed Students need to get into the actual classroom setting for at least a limited time as early as freshman year. Let them get a taste of exactly what they'll experience when they graduate.*

*Also one exercise we did in (name)'s class was to have the "teacher" (one of us) walk into a class room of college students behaving like 9th graders or high school students. This gave us a chance to learn from our peers some effective discipline/motivation techniques. We saw both what works and what doesn't.*

*Overall -- Prof Ed Class and English classes at (university) were adequate and meaningful.*

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*I feel that the education that I received in my content area was great. The professors were wonderful. However, my education in the area of actual teaching was not very helpful. Many of the CIED and ABSED classes I took were of no help to me. I feel that my time would have been better spent in classes dealing directly with things like discipline, making lesson plans, coming up with creative lesson plans, etc. The 2 methods classes were wonderful but classes such as tests and measurements, reading for secondary teachers and international problems and the role of the schools have been no help. There need to be more classes offered that deal with practical things. Examples of practical things would be progress reports, report cards, letters to parents, and discipline notices. These are the things that can scare a first-year teacher. I hope that soon, the classes required for education students will meet the needs that these students will have when they become teachers.*

---

*I have been pleased overall with (university) and their assistance in my teacher education program. However, I felt after I first graduated that many of the undergraduate classes were monotonous and I felt the material could have been covered in one class instead of 2 or 3. This has to do with the English classes. I wish more classes were offered concerning teaching styles and learning styles, etc. instead of most of them focusing on subject matter. I feel subject knowledge will come as a follow-up as a teacher. However, a basic knowledge is important. I feel this problem is with the State Department also because the certification tests focus only on subject matter. A criterion-referenced test would be fairer to those of us that have test-taking difficulties.*

*However, my student teaching and entry year teaching experiences were positive and successful. I feel nothing gives one more experience than experiencing the classroom environment personally. All of my committee members were helpful, positive, and of great benefit to me and my teaching career. thank you very much for helping to make my teaching career a success.*

---

*Overall I was satisfied with the education I received at (university). The only two complaints I have concern the Tests and Measurements class and the lack of grammar classes. The tests and measurements class was too*

*general and did not address my subject area. I feel that students would be better served if this class was focused more closely to their major. I was the only English major in my class and I feel that I wasted my time and money.*

*I also feel that the English department should include more grammar classes. I felt I was not completely prepared to teach grammar after having only two grammar classes to my credit.*

---

*I think education majors should be given a very early chance to experience what teaching is really like. Without knowing the perspective teachers have of their job until you "student-teach" is entirely too late. But then we probably would not get many teachers that way would we. I know that if I stick with teaching that I can make it a worthwhile career for myself. However there are plenty of other jobs (which pay exceptionally well) that I feel would be more fulfilling than teaching. That is a sad but true realization, but I have learned (by teaching) that only teachers really seem to appreciate teachers today.*

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*I teach female inmates math and electronics along with some living skills. It is an open entry controlled exit program. All initial teaching is done through "LAPS" with one on one review and discussion. Oklahoma department of Vo-tech ed has very limited funds for curriculum preparation and media production. It has been, to say the least, a difficult year.*

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*In the area of classroom management and discipline, I feel there is a great need for an individual course. During my first year of teaching, I found that classroom management was an area that I needed more experience and knowledge. I feel that adding an individual course on classroom management would be very beneficial to all education students at (university). For example, education students might take a class on assertive discipline.*

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*In my opinion, student teaching should be a two semester requirement. This is when you learn more about teaching and discipline styles. The thing that I would change is to have the student teacher in Physical Education do: eight weeks elementary, eight weeks secondary, and then make a choice for the second semester to be at the level they prefer. There should also be more time required for observation in Physical Education. This is when a student learns about several different types of classroom management. The entry year system is not as much help as the student teaching experience. The classroom work should be condensed and the actual student teaching and observation time should be increased.*

---

*In retrospect, my first year as a public school teacher has been overwhelming. There are many areas in which I feel inadequate, perhaps even dissatisfied. The first of these*

*is the time (or lack of) spent observing and instructing students (of all ages) during my time of preparation in college. The pre-student teaching experience is an essential time for the prospective teacher to gain insight in many areas of the learning process – including classroom management, curriculum development, and parental and community support. Basically, the preparation periods in college should offer more responsibilities to the prospective teacher.*

*The second of these areas of inadequacy is the entry year of teaching. I know now that I accepted too many responsibilities with this job. The pressures of too many students, the lack of discipline, the lack of support from virtually all sides – all together with my (collegiate) inexperience with discipline, curriculum, room management, etc. have led to doubts in my career choice. I am just now asking myself ... are the experiences and treatment of public school teachers worth all the effort and preparation?*

*Additional Comments:*

*Question #23 – extremely vague in f. language*

*Question #26 – there's a definite need for more interaction during this time; not only to observe in many settings, but also to manage*

*Question #31 – felt very inexperienced in dealing with discipline*

*Question #39 – too much responsibility to plan any programs, etc.*

*Questions #51 and 52 -- much too vague for my area*

*Question #54 -- would have benefited me to have a mentor or career teacher for support and/or guidance during this stressful first year*

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*I have some strong concerns about the applicability of some of the general education coursework requirements at (university) to my specific field of study, Art Education. Much of the information from those courses is not relevant to my day to day functioning as an art teacher or to the particular needs of my art students. Other coursework more pertinent to my area of expertise might have helped to better prepare me for the demands of teaching art in the public schools.*

*I am extremely appreciative of the effort of (name), my advisor and Art Education professor, who regularly provided supplementary information beyond what was called for in the Art Education Curriculum. She rose above necessary instructional duties in order to fill the academic gaps of the education curriculum. Her actions made a tremendous difference in my level of preparation for teaching.*

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*Although I don't encourage frightening the students preparing to be teachers, I would encourage much more awareness of real multiculturalism. Most of my students are minority and poor. They have no motivation to learn ... to attend school. More discussion of motivation techniques*

would have helped me. Students like mine like structure — worksheets are their favorite activities. I despised worksheets in college, but I've had to learn to make simple steps of complex procedures. For example I can't teach the writing process as I learned it — a series of complex thought, prewriting notes, organization, specific and well-developed style. The students need simpler baby steps. I must read aloud and paraphrase to help students comprehend literature. We reduced Emerson's concept of an oversoul and listening to our inner voice to Jiminy Cricket of Pinocchio. *EEK*. The only other suggestion I could share is that a good teacher must have strong self-confidence and a good sense of humor. Students best talent is identifying a teacher's weakness and aggravating it.

---

Due to the fact that I never went through a teacher ed. program, it is difficult for me to answer. However, I attribute my success/ability/etc. to a solid educational background in Spanish at OSU as an undergrad and at OU while working on my Ph.D. Additionally I worked as a family counselor for 5 years (and therefore learned and was trained extensively in dealing with children).

Perhaps this "social work" training has aided me most in the classroom — in addition to the fact that I am the mother of teenagers (experience helps a lot!)

I am preparing to take a grad level exceptional child course and a K-12 methods course this year to satisfy the



*requirements for my Alternative Certification. Perhaps I could answer this section more thoroughly after having completed these courses.*

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*My area of certification is Speech Pathology and my committee consisted of an administrator, a Speech Pathologist (consulting teacher) and a higher ed rep from AgEd. I believe a higher ed rep from my area of specialty would have been more beneficial. I feel my education was extremely beneficial and did prepare me for full time employment although experience in the field is the real teacher.*

---

*My first year of teaching has been an eyeopener. I thought the classes that I had taken at (university) had sufficiently prepared me for any obstacles I might encounter. I was wrong. It is true that I learned to handle crises as they are dealt, but that had more to do with my "college experience" and extra-curricular activities than anything I learned in the classroom. Case studies and role playing can only go so far. Future teachers are told half-truths and wishes instead of cold, hard facts. The truth is you can plan, but each student is going to put their own spin on your plans until it looks like a plate of spaghetti. Our only hope as a teacher is to look at this chaos like a computer-generated fractal image and try to find the common thread running through it all – truth, knowledge, understanding, wisdom.*

---

*My only complaint about the education classes at (university) is that most of them are geared to Elementary level classrooms. High school is very different and a variety of different problems arise that do not in the grade school class. Otherwise, I applied much of what I learned from those classes, especially Educational Psychology as taught by (name). Much of his wisdom was retained my first year. I also used items I "built" in the Instructional Media class.*

*My area of specialization classes I attended at (university) were a wonderful resource. The theater department is great, and they continue to be supportive of me and my career.*

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*It was an invaluable experience for me! (Name) was especially insightful and helpful.*

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*The professional Education program for Early Childhood needs to have someone who will direct and aid students. I have been informed that (name) is no longer in charge which is a big improvement. For student-teaching the students need a leader.*

*In the area of specialization we need more curriculum classes and less history and other departments classes. We also need some professors that are accepting. Some professors are great and then some need to be retired.*

---

*The entry-year program should be explained more in college. I was totally unaware of this program until I was hired.*

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*As a non-traditional student (I graduated at age 42), I had the experience of raising three children and teaching preschool before completing my degree. This experience outside of the required courses enabled me to graduate with honors and have a very successful entry year. I feel I received a balanced education at (university). The required teaching in lab is vital to all ECE majors. Don't decrease this requirement.*

*(Name) is one of the best teachers in ECE. She was most helpful on my entry year committee – very professional at all times. She represents the finest of (university) as she lectures at ... in Tulsa and visits the area elementary schools.*

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*I felt that I learned the most from my classes in the Human Environmental Sciences College. I really did not learn that much from the general education courses I took. Most of the instructors were rude to the Home Economics Education students and made us feel uncomfortable by referring to our chosen career as a dying profession. We could never use our chosen education field in preparing lessons or examples for class. We always had to change*

*our examples to make it easier on the professors. I feel that the people who major in home economics education could learn a great deal more if they could take classes under agricultural education when classes are not provided in their chosen area. I was totally unprepared in computers. The only thing I remember from college was playing elementary games on the apple computers.*

---

*I wish I had a class on discipline when I was going to college.*

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*Try to make all observations by the middle of April. Observations made after this time might not show the actual ability of the teacher due to the impatience of the students who are ready to indulge in summer time activities.*

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*I felt that on the whole my first year teaching was everything I thought it would be. There are a lot of things that school has taught me and there are those things that I feel have come to me the longer I have taught throughout the year. The biggest thing is always be prepared and look for new ideas that may help you in future teaching.*

---

*My certification area is K-8. I believe there is room for significant improvement in the teacher ed. program. Rather than taking a content area course, perhaps a better approach would be to have semester courses on*

*cooperative learning theory and application, learning styles, classroom management, classroom discipline, writing process such as Six Trait or Writing Workshop approaches, Questioning strategies, etc. Also thematic planning integrated curriculum.*

*Much of the methods coursework I took was redundant and ineffective. There has to be a better way to prepare preservice teachers.*

*Involve Teachers of the Year with preservice teachers. Develop mentor programs etc.*

*Teach students how to understand and use current educational research.*

*Students also need a deeper understanding of educational psychology-learning theory, developmental issues, brain research, etc.*

*Along with all of this, students also need a basic understanding of sociology, family structures, and other issues pertinent to those in the helping professions.*

*One last point, involve career classroom teachers who are (university) alumni in improving curriculum studies for teacher ed. Ask those who have been in the classroom 3 - 10 years what they see as needs.*

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*I feel that my educational training prepared me well for Speech Pathology work in a hospital, rehabilitation, or private clinical setting. My preparation for a public school setting was minimal. My current job is in a public school*

*where collaboration is in full force. My third day at work, I went into the classroom to collaborate with the regular education teacher. I had no knowledge base for curriculum and had a very difficult time adjusting. I feel that the Speech Pathology department should incorporate more than 9 hours of education into their course work. I also feel strongly that the Speech Pathology department should mandate a semester of practicum in the public school since the school is where most of the jobs in Oklahoma are. Finally, I feel there is a great need for a faculty member from the Speech Pathology department to serve as a supervising professor for the entry year teacher. Although my supervising professor was very capable, he was unsure of what my field consisted of and was only able to make recommendations based on minimal knowledge of Speech Pathology.*

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*I am on alternative certification, so a lot of these areas do not apply to me. I have taken two courses by correspondence – Special Education and measurement and both have been useful in the classroom.*

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*In general, I felt very prepared to teach. I felt that (name) in the Foreign Language department did an excellent job of preparing me to be a F.L. teacher. My methods classes were definitively the most helpful to me.*

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VITA

Ann Gibson Horne

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

**Thesis: NARROWING THE GAP BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE IN TEACHER EDUCATION**

**Major Field: Curriculum and Instruction**

**Biographical Data:**

**Personal:** Born in Blairsville, Georgia, November 9, 1965, the daughter of Clarence E. Sr. and Wanda Brown Gibson. Married Jeffrey Wilson Horne, July 29, 1989.

**Education:** Graduated from Union County High School, Blairsville, Georgia, May 1984; received the Associate Degree in Agriculture from Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College, Tifton, Georgia, May 1987; received the Bachelor of Science Degree in Agricultural Education from the University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia, December 1989; received the Master of Science in Agricultural Education from Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma, July 1992; completed requirements for the Doctor of Education Degree in Curriculum and Instruction at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma, December 1995.

**Professional Experience:** Camp Counselor, State FFA-FHA Camp, Covington, Georgia, Summers 1986-88; Student Worker, University of Georgia Agricultural Education Department, 1987-89; Agricultural Education Teacher, Macon County High School, Montezuma, Georgia, 1989-91; Graduate Research Assistant, Oklahoma State University Department of Agricultural Engineering, 1990-91 and 1993-94; Graduate Teaching Assistant, Oklahoma State University Department of Agricultural Education, Stillwater, Oklahoma, 1992-93; Graduate Teaching Assistant, Oklahoma State University Department of Curriculum and Instruction, 1994; Curriculum Consultant, Arkansas State Department of Agricultural Education, Little Rock, Arkansas, 1995-present.