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Mid-Western Educational Researcher

Journal of the Mid-Western Educational Research Association

Proposals are currently being sought for the Editorship of the *Mid-Western Educational Researcher*. The *Researcher* is the quarterly publication of the Mid-Western Educational Research Association. The journal serves the dual function of providing MWERA members with timely information about the organization and of providing a vehicle for dissemination of scholarly work in education or education related fields. This dual mission reflects growth and change of the organization itself in recent years.

The appointment of the next editor or editorial team will be from October, 2010, through October, 2013, with duties commencing at the Annual Meeting in October, 2010. Proposals are sought from individuals or teams interested in assuming responsibility for the operation and direction of the *Researcher* for a three-year period. The format for proposals is open, but each proposal should include at least the following:

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3. A proposed plan for promoting this vision;
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Questions may be directed to Dr. Doug Feldmann at the address below. Proposals should be submitted no later than November 15, 2009, to:

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Need for Practice-Based Research in School Administration

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Abstract

Purpose: This article's first objective is to establish the need for elevating the quantity and quality of practice-based research in school administration. The requirement is addressed in relation to (a) persisting social demands for school reform, (b) heightened demands for evidence-based practice in all professions, and (c) persistent criticisms indicating that field's knowledge base and practice protocols are fragmented and weak. The second purpose is to propose that the need should be addressed at the level of individual preparation programs; specifically, faculty should assume responsibility for identifying and eradicating barriers to practice-based research.

Proposed Conceptual Argument: In the context of an information-based society, practitioners in all professions are expected to access and analyze empirical data when addressing problems and making decisions. In school administration, the failure to respond to this anticipation presents both a social challenge (improving school effectiveness) and a professional challenge (legitimizing the need for practitioners to be licensed), and both are magnified by philosophical and epistemological dissonance among faculty.

Implications: Reliance on external accountability in the absence of internal accountability will neither foster school improvement nor build social authority in school administration. Specifically, persistent indifference toward practice-based research and evidence-based practice will fuel doubts about the efficacy of professional administrators and the need to license them.

Authors of two relatively recent national reports, *Better Leaders for America's Schools: A Manifesto* (Broad Foundation and Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2003) and *A License to Lead? A New Leadership Agenda for America's Schools* (Hess, 2003), criticized university-based preparation programs for school administrators and urged state policymakers to deregulate licensing standards for superintendents and principals. Two years later, Levine (2005) released an equally critical report of educational administration departments. His most publicized recommendation was to eliminate the Doctor of Education (Ed.D.), a credential he described as "unnecessary for any job in school administration" (p. 63). Concerns expressed in these three reports, however, were not new. The most prevalent, previously identified by school administration professors, included (a) the absence of rigorous academic standards (e.g., Clark, 1989; Guthrie & Sanders, 2001), (b) the persistence of disjointed and irrelevant curricula (e.g., Björk, Kowalski, & Browne-Ferrigno, 2005; Murphy, 2007), (c) an anti-intellectual culture (e.g., Elmore, 2007; Griffiths, 1988), (d) the lack of work-embedded instruction (e.g., Björk, Kowalski, & Young, 2005; Elmore, 2007), and (e) a weak body of research that fails to address the central problems of practice (e.g., Bridges, 1982; Foskett, Lumby, & Fidler, 2005; Heck & Hallinger, 2005; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003).

In the wake of these problems, school administration's social capital has been diminished to a point where state policymakers are now reconsidering the need to license

practitioners in this field. Addressing the mounting popularity of deregulating licensure for superintendents and principals, Kowalski (2004) argued that this policy decision would destroy the delicate balance between politics and professionalism in public education; and as a result, school boards would be permitted to employ persons for pivotal positions even though they had little or no academic preparation or experience relevant to the challenges they would face.

In light of prevailing conditions, our primary purpose here is to focus on what is arguably the most troubling criticism of administrator preparation—a weak body of research that fails to address the central problems of practice. In addressing this issue, we first summarize school administration's past and present status as a profession; focused attention is given to the evolution of the field's knowledge base. Next, we define evidence-based practice (EBP), a concept now normative in many other professions, to demonstrate why the production and use of practice-based research is more essential now than at any other time in the past. Last, we urge faculty in preparation programs to identify and eradicate conditions that diminish the value placed on practice-based research.

School Administration as a Profession

Professions are occupations with distinctive power and prestige. "Society grants these rewards because professions

have special competence and esoteric bodies of knowledge linked to central needs and values of the social system” (Larson, 1977, p. x). In return for services rendered, practitioners are granted influence, autonomy, social status, and often a considerable amount of compensation. When practitioners fail to meet society’s expectations, their privileges are likely to be rescinded. At a collective level, a profession’s effectiveness is determined by the extent to which society’s problems are solved or managed and by the quality of decisions made by its practitioners (Kowalski, Petersen, & Fusarelli, 2007).

Practice in school administration has been and continues to be shaped by ubiquitous tensions between democracy and professionalism (Wirt & Kirst, 2005). During the first few decades of the last century, many school boards resisted yielding too much power to superintendents (Callahan, 1962; Carter & Cunningham, 1997); they were especially suspicious of administrators who tried to cloak themselves in professionalism in order to gain status and power (Björk & Gurley, 2005; Kowalski & Björk, 2005). By the 1930s, a compromise was reached to ameliorate tensions between democratic localism (citizens pursuing their individual interests) and professionalism (educators acting on behalf of societal interests); specifically, school administrators were permitted to call themselves professionals but they were denied the levels of trust and autonomy accorded to practitioners in other professions (Kowalski, 2004).

Though licensing standards for many professions have been strengthened over the past 2 decades (May, 2001), those for principals and superintendents have diminished in a number of states. As examples, 4 states no longer issue or require principals to be licensed and provisions for alternative licensure have been ratified in 18 others (Anthes, 2004); concurrently, eight states and the District of Columbia no longer issue or require a superintendent’s license and provisions for emergency or alternative licenses exist in over half of the remaining states (Feistritzer, 2003).

Professions are considered to have three classical pillars: the cognitive, the collegial, and the moral (Starr, 1982). The cognitive is especially relevant here because it constitutes the intellectual justification for professional standing. Accordingly, society expects a profession to have a pertinent, accurate, and expanding knowledge base that is the foundation for practice protocols. Evaluating conditions in school administration, Elmore (2007) argues that neither benchmark is being met. Specifically, he contends that the knowledge base is fragmented and incomplete and that practice protocols either do not exist or are ignored. Since a knowledge base and practice protocols stem from research (Heck & Hallinger, 2005), the nature, quantity, and quality of formal inquiry conducted in and for a profession are significant factors determining a profession’s social capital.

Defining Evidence-Based Practice

After America began transitioning from being a manufacturing society to becoming an information-based society circa 1970, the volume of research conducted in the country increased rapidly resulting in the unprecedented expansion of knowledge across most professions (Howard, McMillen, & Pollio, 2003). Acceptance of EBP as a normative standard, especially in human services professions, was one result of this scientific revolution (Kowalski, 2009). According to Eraut (2004), EBP is rooted in decision-making research and is “aimed at improving rather than understanding human capability” (p. 93). Originally, it was construed as a decision-making philosophy emphasizing “the conscientious and judicious use of current best evidence” (Sackett, Strauss, Richardson, Rosenberg, & Haynes, 2000, p. 2). Intended to enhance effectiveness and accountability, the concept sets up three standards for practitioners: (a) intended outcomes must be stated clearly; (b) a rationale must be provided for selected interventions; (c) the evidence guiding decisions must be identified (Rosen, 1993).

In the medical profession, EBP is commonly called evidence-based medicine. Cordell and Chisholm (2001) describe the process as (a) formulating answerable questions, (b) rapidly searching for best evidence to answer these questions, (c) critically appraising the evidence for validity and applicability, and (d) integrating this appraisal with clinical expertise and a patient’s values, and then applying it to the individual patient (p. 13). The last integrative activity illuminates the essential nature of craft knowledge and values in EBP.

EBP in School Administration

Though some degree of cynicism about the validity and utility of research is expressed in all professions, the level of doubt conveyed by educators has been extraordinary (Gersten, 2001). Two factors partially explain skepticism toward empirical evidence. The first is a lack of expertise; that is, many educators, and especially those without doctoral degrees, feel unprepared to conduct, analyze, or even apply research findings in their efforts to solve problems (Immegart, 1990). The second factor relates to the nature of research conducted in education generally and school administration specifically. According to Heck and Hallinger (2005) many studies, including those published in leading journals, have been basically irrelevant to practice. After reviewing several books published on research in educational leadership in 2005 and 2006, Levin (2006) concluded that the knowledge base remains weak, especially on the most important questions posed by the field. He added that disagreements over the value of research and dissimilar interpretations of the same studies prevent empirical findings from influencing practice. As a result of negative or indifferent attitudes toward research,

many superintendents and principals have developed an idiosyncratic perspective of practice—that is, they perceive problems to be unique situations requiring unique responses (Elmore, 2007).

Summarizing education's aversion to research and the passage of the *No Child Left Behind Act* ([NCLB], 2002) at the dawn of the 21st century, Slavin (2002) lamented that educators had to be dragged, kicking and screaming, into the scientific revolution that previously swept across other professions decades earlier. Characterizing most educational research during the 20th Century as being haphazard, he added that evidence had been respected only occasionally and only if it corresponded "to current educational or political fashions" (p. 16). Though EBP has not been widely embraced or even considered in the field of school administration (Kowalski, 2009), pressures to engage in data-based decision making are pushing practitioners to consider the concept (Kowalski, Lasley, & Mahoney, 2008).

Implications for Practice-Based Research

Practice-based research (or practice research) is predicated on the conviction that only some aspects of problems and contextual variables are unique. This perspective elevates the need to integrate theory and practice, primarily by conducting research that tests and refines theory in the context of practice-based problems. Thus, practice-based research is defined as inquiry that integrates theoretical, technical, and practical knowledge domains (Oancea & Furlong, 2007). Mayer (2003), however, cautions that it does not involve developing evidence from fads, doctrines (e.g., constructivism), and popular practices. Applied effectively, practice-based research produces evidence that is (a) relevant to a problem or decision, (b) corroborated by other evidence, and (c) is free of errors and bias (Thomas, 2004). A failure to produce relevant practice-based research is clearly detrimental for a profession for at least two reasons. First, the knowledge base is not expanding as it should in an information-based society, and second, it is less likely that practice protocols are being developed or improved.

Given the critical role of practice-based research in professions, why has so little attention been given to this process in school administration? In large measure, indifference is explained by the evolution of the field's knowledge base during the previous century.

Stage 1 (1900 to 1949). Until 1950, the practice in school administration relied heavily on trial and error. Inattention to theory was so pervasive that the word rarely appeared in administration textbooks (Culbertson, 1988). Professional preparation during this period relied heavily on tacit knowledge gleaned from prominent practitioners, many of whom became professors after leaving practice.

Stage 2 (1950 to 1975). After World War II, the social sciences developed rapidly in academe. The quantity of research being conducted multiplied and quantitative controlled studies became the gold standard for theory building (Maxwell, 2004). School administration professors, especially those at

research universities, were pressured to emulate colleagues in fields such as anthropology, political science, psychology, and sociology, primarily by developing theories and making them the nucleus of classroom instruction. Leading figures in the theory movement espoused that empirical research and theoretical courses would elevate both practitioner effectiveness and the profession's status (Culbertson, 1988).

Stage 3 (1976 to 2000). Four cross-cutting developments intersected to move educational administration away from logical positivism. The first was a growing interest in the development of in-use (or action) theories (Riehl, Larson, Short, & Reitzug, 2000). During the 1970s, noted scholars (e.g., Argyris & Schön, 1974) posited that a profession's knowledge base could be enhanced by constructs developed in practice and based on reflections of relevant experiences (Osterman & Kottkamp, 1993). The second was intense and persistent criticisms of positivist methods (e.g., Apple, 1979; Bates, 1980; Greenfield 1978; Pinar, 1975) that challenged research quality, relevance, and transferability (to practice). The third was mounting advocacy for qualitative research (e.g., Everhart, 1988; Lincoln & Guba, 1985); and the fourth was a growing interest in infusing critical theory into school administration (e.g., Blase, 1995; Foster, 1986). Collectively, these conditions encouraged professors to focus more directly on school administration as a tool for social reconstruction (e.g., social justice, gender equity, and multiculturalism); and as this new perspective was embraced, parameters for acceptable research in the field broadened substantially (Donmoyer, 1999).

After analyzing the evolution of the knowledge base during the previous century, Donmoyer (1999) concluded that school administration professors resigned themselves to co-existing under a big tent. That is, they agreed to disagree about the most fundamental elements of the profession rather than confronting and reconciling obvious philosophical dissonance.

Ironically, the volume of research conducted in and for school administration has actually expanded over the last 4 or 5 decades; however, the scope of research topics has become increasingly diverse and the number of studies legitimately identified as practice-based appears to have declined. After validating this trend, Heck and Hallinger (2005) concluded that philosophical dissonance and dissimilar dispositions toward research were responsible for the ever widening range of studies conducted by school administration faculty and doctoral students—research that became progressively more inattentive to practice. Both Elmore (2007) and Levin (2006) concur that the lack of focus on practice-based research is the primary reason why evidence is not used as in other professions to shape and refine practice protocols.

Practice-Based Research in Preparation Programs

Literally thousands of articles, dissertations, and books are published every year on the subject of education; yet, only

relatively few focus directly on problems of practice. This fact is more disturbing in the aftermath of NCLB, because the law requires educators to identify and weigh empirical evidence when making consequential decisions affecting schools and individual students. In essence, NCLB directs professors to better prepare their students to engage in EBP. To do this, faculty in preparation programs must not only recognize why greater attention has not been given to practice-based research, they must identify and eradicate program-specific barriers that prevent this type of inquiry from being at the center of professional preparation and practice.

Common Barriers to Practice-Based Research

Generalizing about the nature and quality of academic preparation and research is precarious because programs and faculty dispositions are not homogeneous. Nonetheless, each of the following issues arguably is relevant to determining the value placed on practice-based research in most preparation programs.

Practitioner indifference toward research. Making practice-based research a priority requires an attitude change not only among professors but also among future and present practitioners. Not infrequently, novice superintendents and principals consider research largely irrelevant to problems they encounter, partly because they have not learned to apply research in problem solving and decision making and partly because they do not observe more experienced practitioners making such applications (Kowalski, Petersen, & Fusarelli, 2009). In his studies of elementary and secondary schools, Sarason (1971, 1996) found that educators knew little about research and made virtually no effort to use empirical data to make important decisions. Thus, many educators come to believe that problems of practice are idiosyncratic, and therefore, they rely on intuition to make choices (Hall & Hord, 2006). Elmore (2007) describes this proclivity as anti-intellectual and ineffective.

Limitations on conducting practice-based research. Often professors and graduate students are unable to conduct practice-based research because they are denied access to schools and lack necessary resources. Moreover, they may choose to avoid human subject research fearing that they will be unable to obtain required institutional approval for such studies.

Indeterminate parameters for acceptable research. Agreements to disagree over the fundamental nature and purpose of school administration often foster a departmental culture in which parameters of acceptable research never get defined. Consequently, faculty and doctoral students are able, if not encouraged, to conduct studies that have little relevance to superintendents and principals.

Low quality of research. The quality and relevance of research in school administration also have been criticized for more than 4 decades (Tschannen-Moran & Nestor-Baker, 2004). After the 1970s, many school administration professors embraced process-oriented modes of inquiry, such

as ethnography and case studies (Everhart, 1988). Often researchers concluded erroneously that qualitative methods permitted them to self-define rules and procedures; and as a result, qualitative projects often were poorly constructed, inexact, conducted without appropriate controls, unconnected to specific elements of the knowledge base, and unrelated to pervasive problems experienced by administrators (Kowalski & Place, 1998).

Disputes over methods. After it was enacted, NCLB reignited questions about the correct definitions of empirical evidence and scientific research (Maxwell, 2004). Within a year, the American Educational Research Association (2003) forged a resolution on scientific research, defining the concept broadly as encompassing various methodologies. The declaration also asserts that because no single method is de facto superior, methodology should be determined by the nature of the research problem and the context in which the study will be conducted. Though educational administration professors generally recognize the potential of various methodologies (Riehl & Firestone, 2005), many are wedded to a single approach. Thus, method may dictate topic; and when this occurs, the general principle of form following function is violated.

Diverse convictions and interests. School administration professors remain deeply divided about their role, epistemology, the profession's future, and the need to reform and standardize academic preparation (Kowalski, 2004). These divisions manifest themselves in research. Professors and graduate students in school administration have pursued four separate research agendas, albeit to varying degrees: (a) research on educational organizations, (b) research on leadership, (c) research on teaching and learning, and (d) research on social context (Rowan, 1995). The last agenda has been pursued more passionately than others in past 10 to 15 years. Advocates of this line of inquiry (e.g., Gunter, 2001; Marshall, 2004) recommend that scholars and practitioners use their research, status, and power to transform school administration into a social justice movement.

What Should Be Done

If practice-based research is to play a more prominent role in the school administration, it must be valued, promoted, developed, and applied in professional preparation. As described, reversing the status quo will be difficult and perhaps distasteful in departments where faculty members have self-defined school administration and the boundaries of acceptable research. Nevertheless, we believe that the elevation of practice-based research is most likely if faculty in individual programs rescind their agreement to disagree and enter into deliberate discussions about research, EBP, practice protocols, and the scope of acceptable pre-service preparation. For those willing to accept this challenge, the following tasks provide a framework for their deliberations.

Defining practice-based research. Both the expansion of the knowledge base and substantial diversity in research frameworks and methods discussed previously have resulted

in faculty, even in the same department, conducting and using vastly different types of research focused on vastly different topics (Heck & Hallinger, 2005). Before practice-based research can be valued, it must be defined uniformly. Then, that definition must be applied early and consistently in professional preparation courses, because “the deeper the understanding of a normative standard, the greater the inclination to respond in accord with it” (Kowalski, 2009, p. 15).

Connecting practice based research to professional practice. The essential nature of practice-based research emerges more clearly when school administration is studied in the context of professionalism and expectations that practitioners rely on empirical evidence as well as tacit knowledge and values to make important decisions. Accountability mandates in NCLB intensify expectations that administrators will use data to make important decisions (Petersen & Dlugosh, 2009).

Promoting practice-based research. Symbolically, professorial behavior speaks volumes with respect to what is valued, important, and rewarded in professional preparation (Deal & Peterson, 1999). In this vein, the types of research faculty conduct, supervise, and assign to their students communicate critical messages about the value of research to administrative practice.

Building capacity for practice-based research. Conducting studies that address real problems confronted by principals and superintendents often requires faculty to establish positive and trusting relationships with school officials and to secure necessary material resources. Moreover, faculty should define for themselves and for their students the parameters of acceptable human subject research.

Rewarding practice-based research. From an institutional culture perspective, that which is rewarded is valued. In this vein, faculty can reinforce the importance of practice-based research by honoring the outstanding work of colleagues and students.

Final Thoughts

Our purposes in this essay were to identify the need for practice-based research in school administration and to urge faculty in individual preparation programs to enter into deliberate discussions on this topic. We believe that the value of such studies cuts across social needs, professional responsibilities, and political realities. From a social perspective, practice-based research has the potential of eradicating recurring school-improvement errors—mistakes such as the proclivity of resurrecting old ideas under new labels and presenting them publicly as reforms (Hall & Hord, 2006). From a professional perspective, practice-based research enhances the quantity and quality of a profession’s knowledge base, making it more probable that practice protocols will be developed and applied (Oancea & Furlong, 2007). And from a political perspective, practice-based research and EBP can build social capital (Eraut, 2004), an outcome that has become highly relevant to reversing the current trend of deregulating

or diminishing state licensing standards for administrators (Woodruff & Kowalski, 2008).

Ideally, normative standards for a profession are forged and adopted broadly, usually through a mix of program accreditation and national associations. To date, the issue of practice-based research neither has been defined nor promoted by these forces. Thus, the responsibility for these essential tasks falls most directly on preparation program faculty. Hopefully, the information and perspectives provide here will inspire our colleagues to debate this essential topic.

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Applied Use of a Health Communications Model to Generate Interest in Learning

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Abstract

Educators are regularly challenged to design instruction that motivates learners. If interest is lacking, the challenge can be even greater. Tailoring is a message design technique that could help to stimulate interest and consequently, motivation to learn. Effective tailoring requires the formal assessment of learner characteristics and the integration of those characteristics into a given message. Knowing which elements to tailor, however, should not be left to guesswork. This article describes how a health communications framework guided the design and development of three tailored lesson introductions. A step-by-step description of the framework, how it was used, and the resulting product are shared.

Introduction

“What’s the point?” “But when will I ever need to know this?” “What does this have to do with me?” Questions like these are often asked by students uninterested in performing a suggested learning task. If personal interest in a given task is lacking or situational interest has not been generated, educators may find students unmotivated to learn a given concept, practice a suggested skill, or adopt a suggested attitude. Unfortunately, according to Lipstein and Renninger (2006), many educators do not know or do not recognize their potential role in generating student interest. Consequently, a teacher’s instruction may unnecessarily be less effective and the learning task may be undervalued by students.

Interest, according to Linnenbrink and Pintrich (2002), can be personal or situational. “Personal interest,” they state, “is thought to be somewhat stable over time and partially a function of individual preferences as well as aspects of the task” (p. 318). Situational interest, on the other hand, “is based entirely on the features of the learning context and may be short-term or long-lasting” (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2003, p. 319). Although situational interest may only be short-term, its effects do not go without significance. Schiefele (1999), in a review of 14 studies on situational interest, found a significant correlation between situational interest and text learning. Learners, in finding the content of a text to be interesting, had consequently gleaned more from what they had read. Also to be considered, Hidi and Harackiewicz (2000) point out there are many topics and skills taught in school for which students may not have pre-existing interests. For this reason, as well as the complexity of trying to appeal to each learner’s unique interests makes the generation of situational interest a more feasible approach to generating motivation to learn.

When should and by what means can educators generate situational interest? Regarding when, because an educator ideally needs to capture his or her audience from the start of instruction, a lesson’s introduction is the ideal place to generate situational interest. A student who only becomes motivated to learn midway through a lesson may miss out on

critical or foundational concepts presented in the beginning. Regarding the means, one of the ways by which situational interest is generated, according to Hidi and Renninger (2006), is through personal relevance. While a learner may not have a deep existing personal interest in a topic, he or she may be interested in learning when a task is relevant to his or her life. Tailoring may afford educators a practical solution to increase relevancy.

Tailoring

Tailoring, is a message design technique that incorporates formally assessed audience characteristics into the content of a message, thus making the content of the message personally relevant (Kreuter & Wray, 2003). Assessed characteristics may include, but are not limited to, sociodemographic, behavioral, motivational, and psychosocial factors as well as physical characteristics. Strecher and Kreuter (1999) explain the rationale for using tailoring as a process. By tailoring materials, unessential information is eliminated; what remains is more personally relevant. When information is relevant, it is more likely to be processed thoughtfully, and thus, is more successful in guiding a person to make a suggested behavior change (Kreuter, Oswald, Bull, & Clark, 2000; Latimer, Katulak, Mowad, & Salovey, 2005; Petty & Cacioppo, 1981; Strecher & Kreuter, 1999).

The key to an effective tailored message lies in strategically identifying which elements to tailor and how best to manipulate them. Simply addressing someone by their first name or using a font or color background that appeals to the user may not be enough to generate situational interest. The remainder of this article shares a formative evaluation in which a health communications model was applied to the design and development of tailored lesson introductions. These lesson introductions would later be used in a larger study to generate motivation to learn a potentially undervalued but necessary skill. A summary of that study is shared in the next section.

A Theory-Based Message Design Framework

The communications model used to guide the design and development of three tailored lesson introductions was the Persuasive Health Message (PHM) Framework (Witte, 1995). The *Persuasive Health Message* (PHM) framework is a theory-based message design process that helps educators strategically identify audience beliefs to change, reinforce, and introduce within the context of a message. According to Witte (1995), the PHM Framework is rooted in three different persuasion theories: the Theory of Reasoned Action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), the Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986) and the Extended Parallel Process Model (Witte, 1992). Each of these three theories and their relationship to the PHM Framework are briefly described next.

The Theory of Reasoned Action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) proposes that a person's behavior is predicted by intentions, which are predicted by that person's attitude toward the behavior and subjective norms. The researchers argue that to change a behavior, you must identify and change the underlying set of beliefs. In the PHM framework, audience's beliefs and salient referents are assessed characteristics used to develop an audience profile. This profile helps to guide the design and development of appropriately tailored messages.

The Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986) emphasizes information and the relationship between information processing and behavior change. The researchers proposed messages are processed either peripherally or centrally. Peripherally processed messages use low level cues such as attractiveness and credibility to process to guide decisions. Such messages are not thoughtfully processed. Centrally processed messages contain relevant and/or important information. These messages are thoughtfully processed and are more likely to be considered. The PHM framework strives to guide the design of messages that are centrally processed.

Finally, the Extended Parallel Processes Model (EPPM) (Witte, 1992), the third theory, plays an extensive role in PHM framework generated messages. The EPPM suggests people exposed to a threat tend to respond in one of three ways: *danger-control*, *fear-control*, or *low/no threat-control* (Gore & Bracken, 2005; Morrison, 2005; Witte, 1994, 1998). One's state is determined via responses to risk assessment questions. These questions ask participants to rate their agreement with statements about the severity of and their susceptibility to a given threat, their self-efficacy to perform a suggested response, and the response efficacy of a suggested response (i.e., how likely the suggested response will prevent the threat).

To determine one's risk response state, the added sum of their threat severity and susceptibility assessment responses are subtracted from the added sum of their self and response-efficacy assessment responses. [(Self-efficacy + response-efficacy) – (threat severity + threat susceptibility)].

This score is referred to as the *critical value*. If the critical value is a positive number (i.e., their efficacy level is higher than the perceived threat severity or susceptibility), then the target audience is in a state of danger control. If it is a negative number (i.e., their efficacy levels are lower than the sense of threat or susceptibility), then the target audience is in a state of fear control. If the critical value is a low number (a 1 or 2) and their threat and efficacy responses are low (<3), then the audience is in a state of low/no threat control (Witte et al., 2006).

Each of the response states is associated with a different behavior (Witte et al., 2006). Danger-control behaviors include learning more about the threat or taking action to reduce or eliminate the threat. Conversely, fear-control behaviors usually include a form of message rejection and little action. Finally, low or no-threat control responses usually result in no action. Of the three response states, the danger control state is the preferred state from an educator's perspective (Witte et al., 2001). Individuals in a state of danger-control are more likely to adopt a suggested response. Thus, it is the goal of the PHM framework to guide the design of messages that move individuals to a state of danger control, or maintain them in that state if they are already there. This goal is accomplished by addressing threat and efficacy perceptions in message design and development.

Although the PHM Framework has primarily been used to design motivating messages for health and safety education (McDaniel, Casper, Hutchinson, and Stratton, 2005; Witte, 1995; Witte, Peterson, Vallabhan, Stephenson, Plugge, Givens, et al., 1992), the framework can be used strategically to solicit a suggested instructional behavior or to propagate a suggested belief through the generation of situational interest. For example, the three tailored lesson introductions developed in this formative evaluation served as the intervention for a larger study investigating the impact of tailored lesson introductions on motivation and cognitive achievement (Banas, 2007, 2008). In that study, pre-service teacher education students were surveyed regarding their threat and efficacy perceptions about the risks associated with not recognizing and then using poor quality information from the internet and the act of learning how to evaluate websites as a suggested response. Responses were used to calculate their risk response state (whose name was not disclosed, but rather numbered 1, 2, and 3). Depending on their risk response state, students were given an internet address to a web page containing the appropriate tailored lesson introduction. Control group risk response states were also calculated, but they were directed to the existing standard lesson introduction rather than a tailored introduction. After reading the introductions, students were directed to an online tutorial made available through Xavier University, Cincinnati, Ohio. The tutorial, entitled "Evaluating Websites" (<http://www.xu.edu/library/xututor/evaluating/index.cfm>), teaches learners how to locate reliable and relevant internet resources.

Results of the tailored introduction study (Banas, 2007, 2008) indicated significantly higher levels of motivation

amongst experimental group participants, particularly in regards to self-reported task attraction $t(96) = 3.425, p < .001; d = .737$). Positive trends were also noted for self-reported task relevancy, $t(96) = 2.212, p < .05; d = .450$, and cognitive performance $t(93) = 1.729, p < .10; d = .424$. Cognitive performance was measured by the score earned on the existing post-tutorial quiz. In light of these results, the PHM Framework could assist educators of areas other than health to stimulate motivation to learn.

The PHM Framework: Step By Step

Effective messages, according to the PHM Framework (Witte, 1995), require attention to two primary factors—constants and transients. *Constants* are the structural components that appear in every message, regardless of the issue. These structural components include threat severity and susceptibility, self-efficacy to perform the recommended response, the efficacy of recommended response, the message and source cues, and an audience profile. *Transients*, on the other hand, refer to the situation and audience specific content written into the constant structures. This content is derived from collected information about the target audience, their beliefs, and their salient referents.

Transients, according to Witte, Meyer and Martell (2001), are best uncovered via formative research. To conduct formative research following the protocol of the PHM Framework, Witte et al. (2001) suggest taking three primary steps. These steps include: 1) Determine audience, goals, and objectives; 2) Determine salient beliefs, salient referents, and message preferences; and 3) Analyze results and develop the message(s). Each of these steps and how they were applied to develop the tailored lesson introductions for a lesson about website evaluation are described next.

Step One: Determine Audience, Goals and Objectives

Step One is a foundational step. Knowing one's audience, goals, and objectives will drive the content (i.e. transients) of a message for a given audience and situation. In the case of this formative evaluation, the goal is to prevent harm that could stem from not recognizing and then using poor quality information found on the internet. While the Internet offers an endless supply of advice to those who seek it, no government authority is responsible for the evaluation and regulation of information found, leaving online information seekers to their own self-defense. Despite the potential risks involved with making decisions based on information found on the internet, a study conducted by the Pew Internet and American Life Project by (Fox & Rainie, 2002) indicates that 75% of online health seekers rely only on common sense or a casual protocol to validate information. In light of this information, it appears that knowing how to or actively practicing website evaluation is a undervalued skill. For this reason, the objective of the tailored lesson introductions was to generate situational interest in learning how to evaluate websites.

Regarding the audience, the selected target population was college students. As young adults, college students, for the first time, are responsible for their own well-being and they may turn to the Internet as a source of information (Esoffery, Miner, Adame, Butler, McCormick, & Mendell, 2005). Thus, it is necessary for these young adults to be equipped with the website evaluation skills that will help them to discern poor quality from high quality information.

With university Institutional Review Board approval, fifty students from a 2006 drug education course at a Mid-western university were selected as the sample population. Not random, but rather was a sample of convenience, these students were enrolled in the author's class. Thirty-eight students of the fifty potential students volunteered without a reward or consequence. Of these, 92% (35) were under the age of 27. Twenty-five were female and thirteen were male. Twenty-nine students were undergraduates, three were graduates, and six were students-at-large.

Step Two: Determining Salient Beliefs, Referents, and Message Preferences

Step Two of the PHM requires the message designer to survey a small sample of the target audience to uncover salient beliefs, norm referents, and message preferences. To collect data, a questionnaire was constructed (see Appendix). Many of the questions were derived from the questionnaire template published in Witte's et al. (2001) *Effective Health Risk Messages: A Step-by-Step Guide*. These questions (or more specifically their *format*, due to the fill-in-the-blank nature of the template) had been tested for validity and reliability in previous message design studies including Witte (1995). Open-ended questions probed participants to dispel perceptions about using the Internet to locate health information, their attitudes and beliefs about learning website evaluation skills, who would be in support of (or against) learning these skills, and perceived benefits of and barriers to learning.

Closed-ended questions required students to rate their agreement (on a Likert scale of 1 to 7) with statements about their *susceptibility* to and the *severity* of threats stemming from not learning how to evaluate websites. Students also rated their agreement with statements about the ability of the suggested response to prevent the threat (*response-efficacy*) and their perceived personal ability to practice the suggested response (*self-efficacy*). The purpose of these questions was to identify their risk response state, previously cited to be inherent to the Extended Parallel Process Model (Witte et al., 2001) and the PHM Framework.

The last data to be collected in Step Two of the PHM Framework relates to message cues and the audience profile. According to Green and Witte (2006), message cues are those variables that indirectly influence the processing of a message. Message cue variables in my questionnaire were specific to the type of message they preferred (comic, entertaining, real story, etc.). Audience profile questions were about age, gender, frequency of internet use to locate health information,

and the type of health information researched on the Internet. (Regarding the latter two components, health was emphasized to complement better the PHM Framework).

Step Three: Analyzing Results and Developing Messages

The final step of the PHM Framework includes three components: an analysis of the data collected in Step Two, the development of prototypical target audience members, and the design of tailored messages for those members.

Analyzing Results

Risk response results indicated response-efficacy ($M = 4.9$; $SD = 1.70$) and self-efficacy ($M = 5.92$; $SD = 1.34$) scores were higher than threat severity ($M = 2.65$; $SD = 2.66$) and susceptibility ($M = 2.74$; $SD = 1.44$) scores. See Table 1. When the mean sample threat scores (5.39) was subtracted from the mean sample efficacy scores (10.82), the result was a positive number (5.43) greater than 1 or 2. This means that the sample, as a whole, appeared to be in a state of danger control (threat is low and efficacy is high). These individuals felt confident about learning how to evaluate websites and they felt that learning how to evaluate websites could prevent negative consequences stemming from not recognizing poor quality information. They also felt that the risks associated with not recognizing poor quality information on the internet and their susceptibility to those risks was low. Recalling that a danger control state is ideal from an educator's point of view, the objective of a lesson introduction tailored for this audience would be to maintain participants in that state and to motivate a suggested response.

Table 1
Threat and efficacy perception scores

	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>SE</i>
Susceptibility to threat	38	2.74	1.45	.23
Severity of threat	38	2.66	1.62	.26
Response efficacy	37	4.95	1.70	.28
Self-efficacy	38	5.92	1.34	.22

Despite finding the audience was in a state of danger control, it would be a disservice to the concept of tailoring not to investigate whether other response states were present. When the risk response states were calculated for each individual, it was revealed that the majority, 75.6% ($N = 28$) of participants were in a state of danger control; but, the other two risk responses states were present. Of the remaining, 18.9% ($N = 7$) were in a state of low /no control (low efficacy, low threat perceptions), and 5.4% ($N = 2$) were in a state of fear control (low efficacy, high threat perception). This meant there was a need to develop not one, but three different prototypical members (one for each of the response states), and consequently three different tailored lesson introductions. A chi-square goodness of fit test revealed that these response state variations were significantly different, $\chi^2(2, n = 37) = 35.243, p < .001$.

Other factors in need of analysis were preferred message type, frequency of internet use, most commonly researched health topics (for the purpose of building relevant examples), perceived barriers and benefits, and salient message referents. Regarding preferred message type rankings (with 1 being the highest rank), results indicated that most of the sample would pay greater attention to a realistic ($M = 1.89$), emotional ($M = 2.97$), or scary ($M = 3.83$) message over an entertaining ($M = 3.97$) or research-based message ($M = 4.08$). As for frequency of researching health information on the Internet, 10.8% of participants research daily, 37.8% weekly, 27% monthly, and 24.3% a couple of times per year.

Table 2
Chi-Square Test: Variation in reported threat and efficacy perception scores

	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>MD</i>	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower	Upper
Susceptibility to threat	11.67	37	.000	2.74	2.26	3.21
Severity of threat	10.14	37	.000	2.66	2.13	3.19
Response efficacy	17.71	36	.000	4.95	4.38	5.51
Self efficacy	27.17	37	.000	5.92	5.48	6.36

Regarding commonly researched health topics on the Internet, 89.1% indicated they research particular illnesses or conditions; 83.7% indicated they research issues related to nutrition, weight loss, or exercise; and 59.4% indicated they research sensitive health topics. Time/laziness (25%) was identified as the primary barrier to learning website evaluation skills. The most frequently mentioned benefits included greater confidence in information found (48%), improved internet research techniques (18%), and the prevention of the adverse effects stemming from poor quality or mismatched information (15%). Finally, teachers (24%) and parents (16%) were cited as the primary salient referents.

Designing the Message

Participants had indicated that their preferred message type was "realistic." To pay heed to this preference, the message tone was kept conversational, a scenario was given to place the information in context, and relevant examples that included commonly researched health topics were provided. To counteract the perceived barrier of "time," the word "quick" was used to describe the lesson. Building upon one of the identified benefits, the message mentioned that learning how to evaluate websites would help them to become wiser and healthier consumers of information.

Recalling that the objective of the tailored introductions was to generate situational interest in learning how to evaluate websites, the introductions were designed to move learners into or maintain learners in a state of danger control (the risk response state in which one is most likely to take action). Because all three risk response states were identified as present in the selected audience, a tailored lesson introduction was needed for each state.

Introduction I addressed individuals in the fear-control processing state. See Figure 1. The message focused on increasing the individual's response and self-efficacy toward the recommended response. This was done by emphasizing the simplicity of and the outcome from learning website evaluation skills. Because the perceived threat in a fear-control response state is already higher than the perceived efficacy, the threat was mentioned, but without alluding to severe consequences. Finally, the message attempted to eliminate

barriers to take action by providing an opportunity to learn the suggested response: learning how to evaluate websites.

Introduction II addressed individuals in the danger-control processing state See Figure 2. These individuals' efficacy perceptions were strong enough to counteract their threat perceptions, but they needed continued motivation to practice self-protection and reminders about the severity of the threat. To make the threat more serious, but not enough to push them into a fear-control state, this introduction in-

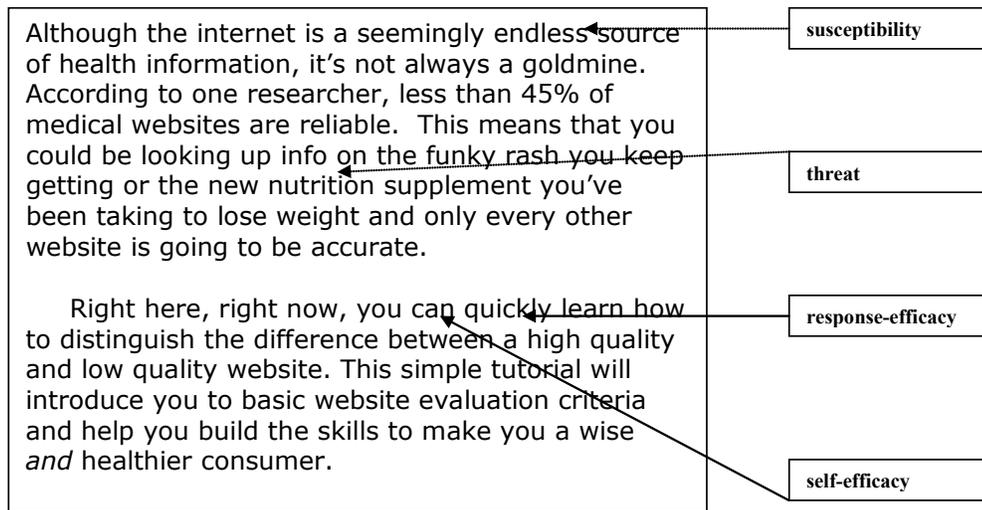


Figure 1: Introduction I. Figure 1: Introduction I.

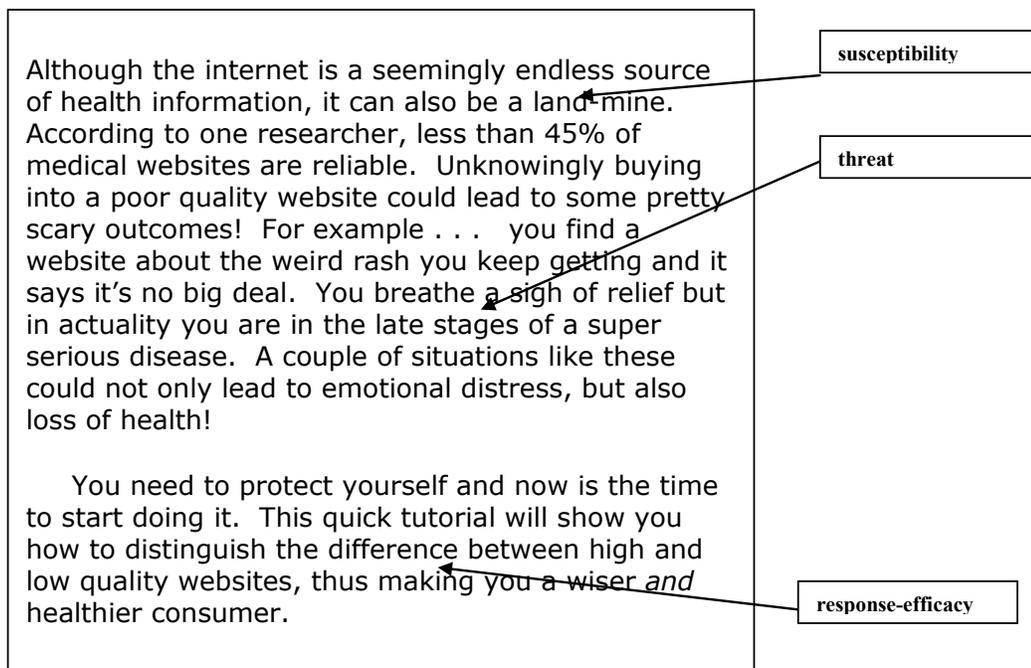


Figure 2: Introduction II.

licated that the negative consequences could be worse than imagined, but offered a solution.

Introduction III addressed individuals who had low threat and efficacy. See Figure 3. These individuals needed to be convinced of the threat severity and their susceptibility; it also needed to increase their perceptions of efficacy. To make the threat more serious, the stakes for not learning how to evaluate websites were raised by mentioning the negative consequences that could happen to a family member, in addition to oneself. To increase feelings of susceptibility, this claim was added: "Are you confident that you can recognize the 55% of medical websites that are unreliable?" To increase perceptions of response efficacy, the introduction indicated that there was an effective solution.

Developed under the strategic guidance of the PHM framework, these messages were now ready to be used to stimulate situational interest to learn website evaluation skills.

Delivering The Message

With the tailored lesson introductions designed, they were now ready to be used as the intervention in a larger study about the impact of tailored lesson introductions on motivation and cognitive performance (Banas, 2007, 2008).

As indicated earlier, experimental group participants were exposed to an appropriately tailored lesson introduction based on their risk response states. The risk response states of control group participants were also determined; however, these individuals were only exposed to the standard lesson introduction. Results indicated significantly higher levels of motivation amongst the experimental group, particularly in terms of task attraction. Positive trends were also noted for perceived task relevancy and cognitive performance on the post-lesson quiz. A significant relationship between task attractiveness and task relevancy with learning intentions was also noted, indicating that attractive, relevant learning materials may be associated with improved learning behaviors.

Conclusion

While the time or effort it takes to tailor instruction or components of instruction might first appear as costly, the benefits may be well worth those costs. Such efforts are particularly needed in electronic learning environments where disconnect may exist between learners and educators. Additionally, if one considers the wide variety of vital messages learners are exposed to every day, the need to differentiate is imperative. Using a theory-based communications framework, like the Persuasive Health Message Framework

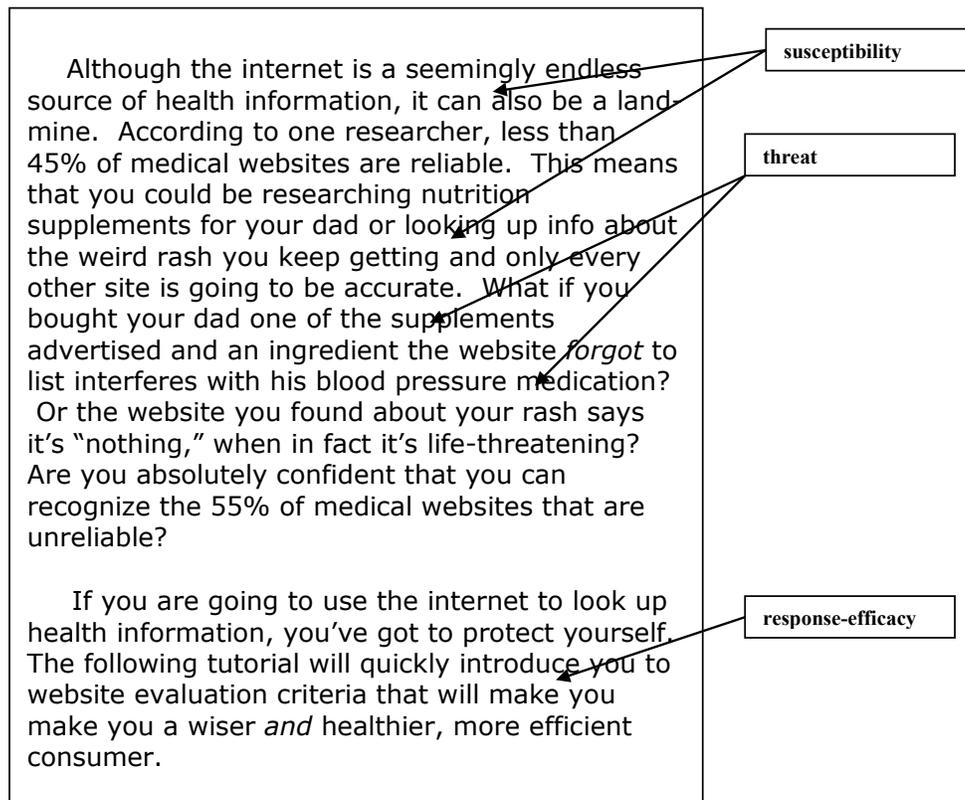


Figure 3: Introduction III.

(Witte, 1995; Witte et al., 2001), helps to build confidence into the predicted outcome of such efforts. In doing so, the answers to “What’s the point?”, “But when will I ever need to know this?” and “What does this have to do with me?” can be answered within the context of instruction. By using tailored lesson introductions, learners will know the answers to these questions before instruction even begins.

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Appendix

Open-ended Questions to Determine Salient Beliefs about the Threat, Appropriate Recommended Responses and Salient Referents

1. Have you or someone you know ever used the Internet to look up health information? (If yes, proceed to question 1a1 and answer all questions that follow. If no, proceed to question 1b1.)
 - 1a1. Describe some, if any, of the positive experiences in using the Internet as a source of health information.
 - 1a2. Describe some, if any, of the negative experiences in using the Internet as a source of health information.
 - 1b1. What, do you imagine, could be some of the positive aspects of using the Internet to locate health information?
 - 1b2. What, do you imagine, could be some of the negative aspects of using the Internet to locate health information?
- 2a. With regards to Internet-based health information, what would be the advantages of completing an online tutorial that teaches you how to identify a high quality website? [attitude toward the recommended response; perceived benefits]
- 2b. With regards to Internet-based health information, what would be the disadvantages of completing an online tutorial that teaches you how to identify a high quality website? [attitude toward the recommended response]
3. With regards to completing an online tutorial that would teach you how to identify a high quality website, is there anyone in particular who would be in support of OR against you learning this skill? What is relationship of those individuals to you and why would they be for/against you learning how this skill? [salient referents]
4. What, if anything, would keep you from learning how to identify high quality health information websites if taught this skill in an online tutorial? [perceived barriers]

Closed-ended Questions to Determine Perceptions of the Threat and Recommended Response

5. I am at risk for experiencing negative health effects due to decisions I make or actions I take based on health information found on the Internet. [perceived susceptibility]

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
6. The chances of me experiencing *serious* negative health effects due to decisions I make or actions I take based on health information found on the Internet are great. [perceived severity]

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree

(Appendix continued on following page.)

(Appendix continued from previous page.)

General Demographic Data

13. What is your age?

17-22

23-27

28-32

33-37

38-42

43-47

48-52

53-57

58-62

63 and up

14. Gender?

Male

Female

Concerns of Teacher Candidates in an Early Field Experience

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Abstract

The present study examined the concerns of teacher candidates in an early field experience. Thirty-five teacher candidates completed the Teacher Concerns Checklist (TCC, Fuller & Borich, 2000) at the beginning, middle and end of their early field experiences. Results showed that teacher candidates ranked impact as the highest concern, self as the second concern, and task as the least concern. The ranking of concerns remained the same across different developmental points of the field experience. The present study suggested that concerns were related to the nature of the field experience, but not to the developmental points of the field experience. Implications for teacher education program were discussed and directions for future studies were recommended.

Field experience was considered to be the most influential part of a teacher education program (Cruikshank, Armaline, Reighart, Hoover, Stuck, & Traver, 1986). The analysis of teacher candidates' concerns showed the interaction between their beliefs and experiences (Poulou, 2007). Therefore, understanding teacher candidates' concerns in a field experience, especially the early field experience, was particularly crucial to the success of a teacher education program. The present study investigated teacher candidates' concerns in an early field experience of an elementary education program at a midwestern university. The early field experience was the first of the four field experiences before the student teaching of these teacher candidates.

Concerns-Based Stage Theory

Fuller and Bown (1975) proposed a model of teacher development which included a sequence of dominant concerns at various stages in the process of becoming an experienced teacher: preteaching, survival, teaching, and pupil concerns. This concerns-based stage theory suggested that teacher candidates would naturally move through these concerns as they progressed through their teacher education program to become experienced teachers. During the preteaching period when teacher candidates had never taught, they identified themselves sympathetically with students but were critical of the classroom teachers whom they were observing. During the student teaching period when teacher candidates had first contact with actual teaching, they were concerned about their own survival as teachers, such as class control, content mastery, and supervisor evaluations. During the teaching period when teacher candidates first became real teachers, they were concerned about the limitations and frustrations in the teaching situation, such as working with too many students, administering too many noninstructional duties, and lacking instructional materials. Later when teacher became more experienced, they were concerned about the social and emotional needs of students, the fairness to students, and the design of individualized content to students.

Subsequent and related research both challenged and substantiated the concerns-based stage theory that the sur-

vival, teaching, and pupil concerns followed a hierarchical pattern with advances through teaching experiences. Findings were divided in both cross-sectional and longitudinal studies. Basically, cross-sectional studies found that impact was ranked higher than self concern while longitudinal studies found that self concern was decreased overtime.

Cross-Sectional Studies on Concerns-Based Stage Theory

Campbell and Thompson (2007) studied the concerns of 1,121 preservice music education teachers from 16 institutions of higher education across four different points in professional development (introduction to music education, methods course, field experience, student teaching). They used a 45-item Teacher Concerns Checklist (TCC, Fuller & Borich, 2000), based upon Fuller and Bown's (1975) concerns-based stage theory, to identify the self (survival), task (teaching), and impact (pupil) concerns. Results showed that at all professional development points, impact concern ranked the highest, followed by self concern, with task concern ranked the lowest. Field experience students were also found to hold higher levels of self, task, and impact concerns than did students in the other development points.

Also, Pilcher and Steele (2005) used the Teacher Concerns Checklist to compare the teaching concerns of 21 regularly certified first-year teachers, 21 Teach For American first-year teachers, and 18 Teach For America second-year teachers. They found that these three groups of teachers did not differ on self, task, and impact concerns. And all groups of practicing teachers showed higher impact concern than self concern.

The concerns-based stage theory suggested that experienced teachers exhibited higher impact concern than inexperienced teachers. However, the above cross-sectional studies showed that impact concern was ranked the highest regardless of teaching experiences (e.g., Campbell & Thompson, 2007; Pilcher & Steele, 2005). The move from self, task to impact concerns with advanced teaching experience was not supported.

Longitudinal Studies on Concerns-Based Stage Theory

In addition to the above cross-sectional studies, longitudinal studies also challenged and substantiated the concerns-based stage theory. For example, Bray (1995) used the Teacher Concerns Checklist to compare the concerns of 50 traditional and 22 nontraditional teacher candidates at the beginning and the end of student teaching. Findings indicated that self concern diminished over the course of the student teaching semester, but impact concern remained the highest for all traditional and nontraditional teacher candidates.

Also, Smith and Sanche (1992) administered the Teacher Concerns Checklist to 125 teacher candidates at three development points during a four-month student teaching (the beginning of student teaching, the middle of student teaching, the end of student teaching). This study found that self concern decreased the most over time, but impact concern continuously ranked the highest throughout student teaching.

In a similar manner, Watzke (2007) used the Teacher Concerns Checklist to investigate developmental change of 79 beginning teachers across two years at six development points (the beginning of 1st year, the middle of 1st year, the end of 1st year, the beginning of 2nd year, the middle of 2nd year, the end of 2nd year). The researcher found that concerns for self and task decreased with gained teaching experience, but concern for impact ranked the highest across time.

In addition, Pigge and Marso (1995) used the Teacher Concerns Checklist to assess the concerns of 60 teacher candidates over a seven-year period (the commencement of teacher preparation program, the end of student teaching, the end of 3rd year of teaching, the end of 5th year of teaching). They found that self concern decreased and task concern increased with more teaching experiences, but impact concern ranked the highest at all development points.

The concerns-based stage theory suggested that self concern decreased with gained teaching experience, but impact concern increased with gained teaching experience. However, the above longitudinal studies only partially supported the concerns-based stage theory. The findings showed that self concern decreased with gained teaching experience, but impact concern remained the highest regardless of teaching experience (e.g., Bray, 1995; Pigge & Marso, 1995; Smith & Sanche, 1992; Watzke, 2007).

Purpose of the Study

Even though concerns of teacher candidates taking educational courses (i.e., Campbell & Thompson, 2007; Pigge & Marso, 1995) and student teaching (i.e., Bray, 1995; Smith & Sanche, 1992) were examined, little was known about the concerns of teacher candidates in an early field experience. An early field experience refers to the first field experience

provided to teacher candidates before their student teaching. The aim of this study was to examine Fuller and Bown's (1975) concerns-based stage theory with elementary teacher candidates in an early field experience of serving as individual tutors to struggling elementary readers and assistants to classroom teachers.

Research Questions

Two research questions were asked to examine the concerns-based stage theory. First, was there any difference between the self, task and impact concerns of teacher candidates in an early field experience? Second, was there any difference between teacher candidates concerns at the beginning, middle and end of an early field experience?

Method

Participants

The elementary education program at a midwestern university required 130 credit hours to graduate. Fifty-five of these credit hours were in professional education courses which required field experiences. These professional education courses were divided into four blocks, and each block required 60 clock hours of field experiences. Upon successful completion of these blocks, teacher candidates proceeded to the student teaching at the last semester of the program.

Thirty-five teacher candidates (five males and 30 females) with a mean age of 24.2 years old volunteered to participate in the present study under university guidelines for research with human subjects. These full-time teacher candidates were in the first block of the elementary education program, and enrolled in professional education courses (i.e., Child Development, Educational Psychology, Multicultural Education) that included their first field experiences. The early field experience involved tutoring elementary students and assisting elementary teachers in the classroom.

Survey Measurement

The Teacher Concerns Checklist (TCC; Fuller & Borich, 2000) was used because it reflected Fuller and Bown's (1975) concerns-based stage theory and identified the self, task and impact concerns of teacher candidates across different points of field experience. The test-retest coefficients, ranging from .69 to .77, and Cronbach's alpha coefficient alpha, ranging from 0.71 to 0.94 (Schipull, Reeves, & Kazelskis, 1995), showed that it was also a reliable instrument to be used.

The TCC was a 45-item self-report survey using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = not concerned to 5 = extremely concerned). There were 15 items associated with each of the self, task and impact concerns. To determine the level of these three concerns, the mean of each of the 15 items was calculated.

Data Collection

Teacher candidates at an early field experience were given the Teacher Concerns Checklist at the beginning, middle and end of a semester. The survey was administered in regular classroom with permission from the instructor. Each teacher candidate took 10 minutes to complete the survey before the regular class started. To complete the survey, teacher candidates were asked to read each statement and ask themselves, "When I think about teaching, am I concerned about this?" With 1 as the least concerned and 5 as the most concerned, teacher candidates wrote a number in a blank line provided before each statement.

Data Analysis

To determine whether difference between teacher candidates' concerns was significant at each developmental point, a 3 concern (self, task, impact) \times 3 time (beginning, middle, end) repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used. The level of significance for all statistical tests was set at .05 so that the probability of making a Type I error or concluding a non-existing effect was limited.

Results

Table 1 presents the means and standard deviations of the scale scores (1 is the least concerned and 5 is the most concerned) for self, task, and impact concerns throughout the field experience. To answer the first research question whether there was any difference between the self, task and impact concerns of teacher candidates in an early field experience, the repeated ANOVAs indicated a main effect of concern, $F(2, 33) = 22.96, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .582$. Further pairwise comparisons using a Bonferroni correction to adjust for inflated Type I error showed that impact concern was statistically significant different from task and self concerns (p 's $< .001$), and task concern was also statistically significant different from self concern ($p < .05$). Teacher candidates were concerned most with their impact on students ($M = 3.04, SD = .85$), their survival as teachers the next ($M = 2.45, SD = .68$), and the limitations and frustrations in the teaching situation the least ($M = 2.26, SD = .50$).

To answer the second research question whether there was any difference among teacher candidates' concerns at the beginning, middle and end of an early field experience,

the repeated ANOVAs revealed no main effect of time, $F(2, 33) = 3.1, p = .058$, partial $\eta^2 = .158$, nor interaction between concern and time, $F(4, 31) = .153, p = .96$, partial $\eta^2 = .019$. Even though teacher candidates' concerns decreased throughout the field experience (beginning: $M = 2.68, SD = .67$; middle: $M = 2.58, SD = .67$; end: $M = 2.49, SD = .7$), the differences were not statistically significant.

Since no statistically significant differences were found among the concerns across different developmental points of the field experience, the three mean concerns at the three development points were collapsed as three overall mean concerns. Table 2 presents the ranking of each concern, with 1 in parentheses as the highest concern and 45 in parentheses as the lowest concern. Nine out of the ten highest concerns were impact concern, and one was self concern. The three highest concerns were about the impact on students, i.e., "whether each student is reaching his or her potential," "helping students to value learning," and "challenging unmotivated students." The highest self concern, ranking the fourth, was "doing well when I'm observed," whereas the highest task concern, ranking the seventeen, was "too many standards and regulations set for teachers."

In sum, teacher candidates ranked impact as the highest concern, self as the second concern, and task as the least concern. Such pattern remained the same across different developmental points of the field experience.

Discussion

The present study examined the concerns of teacher candidates in an early field experience. Two research questions were asked (a) Was there any difference between the self, task and impact concerns of teacher candidates in an early field experience? (b) Was there any difference between teacher candidates' concerns at the beginning, middle and end of an early field experience?

To answer the first research question, the present study found that teacher candidates identified impact as the most important concern at the beginning, middle and end of the early field experience. Impact concern included reaching students' potential, helping students to value learning, challenging unmotivated students, recognizing the social and emotional needs of students, meeting the needs of different kinds of students, and helping students to apply what they

Table 1
Means and Standard Deviations of Teacher Candidates' Concerns at the Beginning, Middle, and End of a Field Experience (N = 35)

Concern	Beginning		Middle		End		Total	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Self Concern	2.54	(.61)	2.45	(.74)	2.36	(.71)	2.45	(.68)
Task Concern	2.35	(.54)	2.25	(.45)	2.19	(.51)	2.26	(.50)
Impact Concern	3.15	(.86)	3.05	(.82)	2.93	(.88)	3.04	(.85)
Total	2.68	(.67)	2.58	(.67)	2.49	(.70)		

Note. The range of the scale score of teacher candidates' concerns is 1 to 5, with 1 as the least concerned and 5 as the most concerned.

learn. The finding that teacher candidates in early field experience were more focused on students than on their own well-being and their teaching performance was consistent with previous studies (i.e., Bray, 1995; Campbell & Thompson, 2007; Pige & Marso 1995, Smith & Sanche, 1992).

Fuller and Bown (1975) noted that teacher candidates would naturally move through self, task and impact concerns as they progressed through their teacher education program. However, Burn, Hagger, Mutton and Everton (2003) suggested that the linear view of teacher development was too simplistic. They advocated a high level of concern about students' learning and an awareness of the complexity of teaching from the beginning of teacher candidates' training.

In fact, the concerns-based stage theory may not have considered the effect of the nature of field experiences on teacher candidates' concerns. Borich and Tombari (1997) suggested that teacher concerns were context dependent. It was the context of the early field experience of the present study that encouraged teacher candidates to focus on their impact on student learning. Teacher candidates devoted half of their field experience as individual tutors to struggling

elementary students. It was a challenge to motivate struggling students to read and finish the tutoring materials. It was even a bigger challenge to receive immediate feedback from students. Such close contact with students prompted teacher candidates to be concerned more about their impact on students' learning than their survival as teacher candidates or their teaching performance.

In addition, Borich and Tombari (1997) noted that the three stages of concern were not exclusive of one another, and teachers might have concerns predominately in one area and still have concerns of less intensity in one or both of the other areas. Even though impact was ranked the highest concern, that did not mean that teacher candidates did not have any self concern. The present study found that teacher candidates had a high self concern about doing well when they were observed. They also had a moderate self concern about appearing competent to parents, obtaining a favorable evaluation of their teaching, and receiving respect from children.

Task concern was ranked the lowest throughout the field experience. Task concern in the Teacher Concerns Checklist

Table 2

Ranking of Teacher candidates' Concerns throughout a Field Experience (N = 35)

Self Concern	Task Concern	Impact Concern
4. Doing well when I'm observed (4).	12. Too many standards and regulations set for teachers (17).	19. Whether each student is reaching his or her potential (1).
35. Appearing competent to parents (15).	11. The inflexibility of the curriculum (21).	5. Helping students to value learning (2).
20. Obtaining a favorable evaluation of my teaching (16).	25. Lack of public support for schools (22).	23. Challenging unmotivated students (3).
2. Whether the students respect me (18).	33. My ability to work with disruptive students (27).	22. Recognizing the social and emotional needs of students (5).
24. Losing the respect of my students (20).	3. Too many extra duties and responsibilities (30).	36. Meeting the needs of different kinds of students (6).
44. Teaching effectively when another teacher is present (23).	6. Insufficient time for rest and class preparation (31).	43. Whether students can apply what they learn (7).
26. My ability to maintain the appropriate degree of class control (25).	21. Having too many students in a class (32).	37. Seeking alternative ways to ensure that students learn the subject matter (8).
8. Managing my time efficiently (26).	31. Not being able to cope with troublemakers in my classes (33).	15. Increasing students' feelings of accomplishment (9).
28. Getting students to behave (28).	7. Not enough assistance from specialized teachers (35).	45. Understanding what factors motivation students to learn (10).
13. My ability to prepare adequate lesson plans (29).	42. Working with too many students each day (37).	17. Diagnosing student learning problems (11).
30. Having an embarrassing incident occur in my classroom for which I might be judged responsible (34).	1. Insufficient clerical help for teachers (40).	38. Understanding the psychological and cultural differences that can affect my students' behavior (12).
14. Having my inadequacies become known to other teachers (36).	27. Not having sufficient time to plan (41).	41. Guiding students toward intellectual and emotional growth (13).
32. That my peers may think I'm not doing an adequate job (38).	16. The rigid instructional routine (42).	39. Adapting myself to the needs of different students (14).
18. What the principal may think if there is too much noise in my classroom (39).	10. Not enough time for grading and testing (43).	29. Understanding why certain students make slow progress (19).
9. Losing the respect of my peers (45).	40. The large number of administrative interruptions (44).	34. Understanding ways in which student health and nutrition problems can affect learning (24).

Note: Number in parentheses is the ranking and number not in parentheses is the item number of the Teacher Concerns Checklist.

source included areas such as the restriction of too many standards and regulations, the inflexibility of the curriculum and the lack of public support for schools. Again, the nature of field experiences might also account for the low task concern. The tutoring materials of the present study were designed by two elementary teachers and the teacher candidates were assigned to implement the tutoring materials. Since teacher candidates were not held responsible for any administrative or clerical work, they exhibited low task concerns throughout the field experience. .

To answer the second research question, the present study found that there was no difference between teacher candidates' concerns at the beginning, middle, and end of an early field experience. Since the field experience lasted for a 15-week semester, changes in concerns might not be obvious in such a short time. Swennen, Jorg, and Korthagen (2004) also found that the concerns of teacher candidates did not develop much during the first year. They explained that teacher candidates might not have been fully engaged in classroom activities and teaching practices.

Implications for Teacher Education Program

Understanding teacher candidates' concerns is invaluable to teacher educators who would like to design teacher education programs to promote professional development. If teacher education programs address the concerns of teacher candidates, they will not only meet the needs and increase the satisfaction of teacher candidates, but also eventually better serve our children and the society.

Since the present study found that teacher candidates exhibited impact concerns in their early field experiences, impact concerns should be addressed earlier before student teaching. Impact concern focuses on the areas such as social, academic, and emotional needs of students, the fulfillment of student potential, the tailoring of content to students, and the ability to relate to students as individuals. Watzke (2007) suggested that instruction at this stage was characterized by contextualized, intuitive, and adaptive practice.

One way to address the impact concern is to build a connection between theory and the early field experience. Teacher candidates often indicated the lack of practicality of teacher education courses (Beach & Pearson, 1998; Roth & Tobin, 2001). There had also been a gap between teacher education coursework and real teaching and learning in classrooms (Moore, 2003).

Building the bridge between coursework and practice is the responsibility of teacher educators. Reflection after practice was a more effective way of changing teacher candidates' beliefs than reflection before practice (Tillema, 2000). First, teacher candidates are to be encouraged to use what they have encountered from their field experiences to understand the knowledge and skills they learn from their coursework. Personalized examples from field experiences are excellent way to understand various theories. Second, they could use what they have learned from their coursework

to analyze their field experiences. Writing journal of critical events is an excellent way to reflect daily encounters with theoretical framework. Lin, Gorrell, and Porter (1999) stated that reflection allowed teacher candidates to integrate their own learning through an interaction between their beliefs and experiences.

The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE, 2008) expected teacher preparation institutions to design and implement field and clinical experiences so that teacher candidates develop and demonstrate the knowledge, skills and dispositions necessary to help all students learn. The rubrics are "Clinical practice is sufficiently extensive and intensive for candidates to demonstrate competence in the professional roles for which they are preparing." Since the requirements are generally stated, the number of hours and the nature of field experiences and clinical practice vary tremendously from institution to institution.

Another way to address the impact concern is to gradually expose teacher candidates to the teaching profession before student teaching. Teacher educators need to create such opportunities by collaborating with school districts. The exposure may include observing and assisting teachers in the classrooms, working with individual child and small groups of children, preparing lesson plans and teaching single lesson.

One more way to address the impact concern is to provide respective field experiences associated with different coursework. Teacher educators need to partner with classroom teachers to design field experiences that are closely related to the coursework. No matter whether student candidates are taking reading, math, science or social studies, related field experiences should be designed so that teacher candidates would be able to work on particular areas at one time. When teacher candidates do their student teaching, they would be able to integrate what they have learned from previous field experiences. Melnick and Meister (2008) suggested that field experiences exposing teacher candidates to different settings and contexts help them to mold their own beliefs and attitudes.

Limitations of the Study

Even though the effect size of the main effect of impact concern was high, there were some limitations of the present study. First, teacher candidates responded to a predetermined set of concern statements that might not reflect the complete range of concerns held by these candidates. Second, the coursework teacher candidates took when they did their early field experiences might also influence the concerns of teacher candidates.

Recommendations for Future Studies

The present study found that teacher candidates in an early field experience ranked impact as the highest concern, self as the second concern, and task as the least concern.

Future studies could investigate whether these teacher candidates have different concerns at different developmental points of the teacher education programs, or whether teacher candidates at different developmental points of the teacher education programs have different concerns. In addition to longitudinal and cross-sectional studies, it would be beneficial to explore the concerns of teacher candidates under alternative routes to certification, such as those who have already had college degrees and those who study part-time.

In fact, the concerns-based stage theory can be examined from a different perspective. First, qualitative studies are needed to identify a broader range of concerns not accounted for in Fuller and Bown's (1975) concerns-based stage theory. Second, future studies could explore the factors affecting teacher candidates' concerns, such as socio-economic status, cultural background, years of teaching experiences, gender, age, etc. Third, it would also be beneficial to do a cross-cultural study to examine the concerns of teacher candidates from different countries.

Conclusion

Teacher educators have strived to design teacher education programs to address the needs of our children and the society. However, little thought has been given to the needs of teacher candidates who are the agents of bringing changes to our children and the society. In fact, an effective teacher education program should not only build on the needs of children and the society, it should also take the concerns of teacher candidates into consideration. Understanding teacher candidates' concerns is an enormous step towards a strong teacher education program, and addressing these concerns is the ultimate goal of teacher educators.

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Researchers Who Surf: Riding the Waves of Analysis in Self-Study Research

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Abstract

In this paper, two beginning qualitative researchers describe the challenges and successes of conducting a collaborative self-study. For two academic years, the authors wrote and analyzed personal narratives related to their experiences as a lesbian and a gay man, respectively, in educational contexts. This article addresses the data analysis phase of the research process. The authors attempt to make visible their analytic process in hopes that their struggles might be useful to those who conduct similar research. They rely on the metaphor of waves to capture what it was like to engage in their analytic work. Their experience demonstrates the importance of viewing data analysis as a fluid process that involves reflexivity, perseverance, and flexibility.

Introduction

As I transitioned from teaching middle schoolers to teaching undergraduates, I expected many of my anxieties as a gay teacher to subside. I assumed that my lesbian identity would be much less of an issue in the latter context and that I'd feel "safer" and more supported. Yet, within my first few weeks as a teaching assistant I felt deeply conflicted about whether or not to come out to my classes. Would I subtly use "we" and then drop a feminine pronoun in conversation? Or, should I come out more overtly and directly? I felt obliged to take a stand and a desire to break the silence that I had found so stifling as a school teacher...

The excerpt above is representative of the kinds of autobiographical narratives that we collected as part of a self-study research project. Over the course of two academic years, we recollected and documented personal stories through journal writing. We wanted to explore how our sexual identities had shaped our experiences in educational contexts. We collected stories related to our experiences as school children, teacher candidates, professional teachers, and graduate students. These personal narratives contained stories ranging from playground bullying to heterosexism in the workplace. As a gay male teacher with rural roots and a lesbian teacher from an urban background, our stories varied greatly, yet overlapped in surprising places. Our narratives crossed contexts and involved both internal and external conflict. For instance, in the narrative above, Lesley articulates her inner struggle with the coming-out process as she moved from public school teaching to postsecondary teaching. Consistently, we found ourselves telling stories and articulating feelings that had long been neglected both personally and professionally.

Previous research suggests heterosexual teachers lack knowledge about lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and

questioning (LGBTQ) issues and are ill-equipped to construct pedagogies and practices that are supportive of LGBTQ youth and families (Chasnoff, 2005; Conley, 2005; Gallavan, 2005; Lipkin, 1999). As teacher educators with hopes of helping heterosexual preservice teachers develop greater LGBTQ competencies, we were acutely aware of the need for us to interrogate our own experiences and beliefs. We realized that, even as sexual minorities ourselves, we had failed to adequately examine the nature and impact of homophobia in school settings. Additionally, as beginning qualitative researchers we were anxious to delve into the rigorous work of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. However, transforming our lived experience into data caused visible uneasiness for us. Similarly, the analysis process caused us to question our assumed understanding of ourselves, our lives, and our methodology.

Kirsch (1999) indicates that feminist research has "invited those on the margins to come to the center of research, both as participants who can make their voices heard and as researchers in their own right who can study their own communities and cultures" (p. 15). In this spirit, we ventured into a project as both researchers and participants seeking voice and community through self-study. We expected the problems of interpretation and representation to be relatively minimal. However, as we tried to carve out a method of data analysis, we had to face the untidiness of personal narrative, the inadequacy of our methods, and the complexities of qualitative inquiry. This paper describes our foray into data analysis as co-researchers and offers insight into the lessons we learned about this dimension of qualitative research.

Meeting the Ways at Dawn: Framing Our Work

Our stories are the masks through which we can be seen, and with every telling we stop the flood and swirl of thought so someone can get a glimpse of us, and maybe catch us if they can. (Grumet, 1991, p. 69)

Grumet testifies to the power and significance of autobiographical narratives and to the challenges those who make use of them in research endeavors may face. Increasingly, educational research has relied on narrative inquiry as a means to access the interior lives of teachers and learners. The growing popularity of narrative inquiry in education has been well documented (Adalberto, 2005; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Sharkey, 2004; Zeichner, 1999). Based on their review of the use of narrative inquiry in educational studies, Clandinin and Connelly (1994) explain that narrative is a vehicle to study the ways humans experience the world. Carter (1993) adds that stories have become a “central focus for conducting research in the field of education” (p. 5). In considering narrative as an object of inquiry, it must be noted that story knowledge contains rich and nuanced meaning and intrinsic multiplicity. Narrative knowing stands apart from singular or paradigmatic knowing by helping to organize knowledge and create frameworks for interpretation.

Clandinin and Connelly (1994) state, “people by nature lead storied lives and tell stories of those lives” (p. 416). These authors suggest that life experiences not only structure the stories we tell, but stories, in turn, function reciprocally to shape our experiences. In other words, personal experiences count as a bona fide source of knowledge. For the purposes of our self-study, we wanted to interrogate our personal experiences related to our sexual identities. As Stroobants (2005) explains, “telling life stories is an infinite process of reconstructing experiences, events, and choices” (p. 51). We told our stories as a harassed elementary school student, a fearful teacher, a young lesbian feminist activist, and empowered graduate students. Each story embodies who we are today and who we were through our pasts. Each story, obviously, is only a partial telling, a bit of the truth, a foregrounding of one identity at the cost of another. Indeed, the “glimpse” that Grumet speaks of is elusive and poses dilemmas regarding data analysis. Hankins (2003) speaks to this dilemma, noting a “thin and hazy” line between narrative as data and narrative as method (p. 14). She argues that data and method are inseparable and fluid. Accordingly, we found ourselves learning as much about methods of analysis as we did about the stories themselves.

Recently, scholars have argued that more openness is needed in qualitative studies (Anfara, 2002; Harry, Klingner, & Sturges, 2005; Peshkin, 2000). They recognize the need for qualitative researchers to carefully describe their methodology in order to make their processes more transparent. Certainly, analysis of qualitative data will never lend itself to a scripted formula, but by encouraging “open debate and dialogue” in our research reports we can learn from each other and discover more effective ways to reach our research goals (Harry et al., 2005, p. 12). As Stroobants (2005) explains, “the story of the research must be argued for and be open to justified critique” (p. 57).

This paper, then, presents the story of our research process. Throughout this report, we use examples from our

data to illuminate our methodological learning. We describe our three distinct approaches to analysis metaphorically as *waves* in order to capture the fluidity and choppy nature of the process. Like our analysis itself, waves ebb and flow, gain strength, crash, and return. As co-analysts navigating data analysis, we allowed ourselves to be carried along by these waves in order to see where they would take us. The first wave involved locating our stories through labeling and classifying significant topics. The second wave consisted of a focused narrative analysis. The third wave relied on dialogue and collaboration. Through these three distinct but epistemologically intertwined waves of analysis, we began to question ourselves, our stories, and the analytic process. Each wave brought to the surface distinct interpretations and demanded a different kind of intimacy and engagement with our stories. This paper provides a portrayal of our journey through those waves.

We begin by offering an overview of our inquiry project because it is important that readers have a grasp of our epistemological stance, the questions, and our data corpus. After this brief introduction, we proceed to describe our waves of analysis by sharing the personal narratives under scrutiny and detailing our analytic work. We conclude by exploring our methodological learnings and the importance of making the analytic process available to others.

Hitting the Surf: Overview of the Study

We entered this project with the intention of making our voices heard and studying our own identities and experiences. As participants telling our stories through journal entries and dialogue with each other, we felt empowered both personally and academically. Because the data was representative of our lived experience, we assumed the task of analysis would come naturally. We chose self-study, in part, to avoid some of the problematic power dynamics that usually characterize researcher-participant interactions, but soon found that we had not alleviated ourselves of these complications. As researchers with social justice agendas, autobiographical work provided a good place to enter into a feminist inquiry project. According to Kirsch (1999), feminist research often involves an “interactive, respectful, and collaborative relationship” (p. 6). These principles characterized our working relationship and informed our methods of analysis. Grounding our relationship in these principles prepared us to take on the challenges, risks, and confusions of the analytic phase of qualitative inquiry. Because of the personal nature of this inquiry, it was essential that we recall, retell, and rethink who we are/were in order to better understand our experiences. This process is familiar to those in the feminist movement where a similar model has been used to facilitate education and empowerment (Richardson, 1997).

Storytelling as a form of empowerment is also echoed by hooks (1989). hooks takes the idea of finding voice even further, describing it as a form of resistance. hooks asserts that through telling stories and speaking of one’s life in the form

of subject rather than object, tellers engage in what she calls “talking back” (p. 16). Talking back entails finding speech that compels listeners and gives voice to what has previously been nameless and silent. The telling of our stories allows us to peel back layers of silence in order to begin the process of understanding ourselves across time as students, teacher candidates, teachers, and graduate students.

As study participants, we began sharing stories informally as we became friends during doctoral course work. Professors asked for reflective writings for various assignments, and we found ourselves intrigued by the social and political implications of how our personal histories were revealed in that work. In addition, other self-studies by GLBT educators inspired us (Letts & Sears, 1999; Kissen, 2002). Thus, we decided to pursue a narrative self-study in order to afford ourselves the opportunity to explore those stories in more depth. Questions focused on homophobia and heterosexism in educational contexts. Initial, guiding questions included:

- What has characterized our educational experiences as LGBTQ learners and teachers?
- What beliefs do we hold about what it means to be an LGBTQ educator?
- What potential does self-study hold for self-revelation and empowerment?

We set a schedule for ourselves and developed prompts for journal writing and story sharing. We met weekly to share our stories and select new tasks for writing. Our writing prompts were topical, historical, and literary. We started with topical prompts that were thematic, such as accepting oneself and workplace conflicts. Chronology appealed to us, causing us to locate our stories temporally. Matthew, for instance, suggested we write about our earliest memories from childhood, while Lesley proposed stories from our undergraduate years. We also explored diverse forms such as metaphor and poetry. Our data corpus, then, was comprised primarily of journal entries that we composed in the context of our ongoing reflective conversations. Our journals covered a wide range of topics from harassment in middle school to seeking advocacy as elementary teachers. In the end we were left with dozens of personal stories—some written and rewritten many times.

Data collection was ongoing and continued once analysis began. However, we reached a point at which we dramatically shifted our focus from generating stories to analyzing stories. As novice researchers data analysis was still a mystery to us, but we were determined to make this experience meaningful and productive for us as both researchers and participants. Additionally, we were motivated by our desire to examine this tacit stage of the research process (Harry et al., 2005; Peshkin, 2000). While it is impossible for us to separate our exploration of our data from our exploration of the research process, in the sections that follow we delineate the processes and practices that were the most generative.

This Wet Suit Doesn't Fit: First Wave of Analysis

From the outset it is important to note that, in addition to being fellow doctoral students and beginning qualitative researchers, we were also close friends. That is, we entered analysis trusting each other and valuing one another's perspectives and insights. Our friendship allowed us not only to be more critical of each other's stories, but also to be more flexible and less guarded with each other than a typical collegial relationship allows. However, being friends did not mean we entered analysis at the same place. For example, Matthew initially thought the stories would be somewhat self-explanatory and seemed to desire quick closure. Lesley, conversely, seemed to want to question everything and struggled more with the sheer enormity of the data corpus. Although we entered analysis with differing expectations, we shared a strong desire to investigate the significance of our stories. As collaborative analysts, then, our first task was to carve out a jointly owned process that would enable us to make meaning from the data.

As doctoral students, we had been exposed to various techniques for data analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1989; Marshall & Rossman, 1989; Richardson, 2000). Yet, we had not come across specific guidelines or methods of analysis that would work for *our* data. Inexperience only heightened our anxiety. As a first attempt to get on our metaphorical surfboard, each of the authors/participants coded the narratives individually and brought their initial interpretations to the table. Following the advice of many qualitative researchers (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Ellis & Bochner, 2000), we first made a series of iterative passes through the data in order to become intimately familiar with our text set. Accordingly, we read and reread our stories, gave titles to our stories, looked for descriptive labels, and cursorily examined the content of each narrative. This “idiosyncratic enterprise” (Glesne, 1999, p. 136) led us down a path of sorting our stories under headings such as “coming out stories,” “safe and dangerous spaces,” and “finding voice.” These initial headings emerged from our earnest attempts to find cohesive patterns that might lead to sound conclusions. Our work on one of Matthew's stories reveals the nature of this initial analytic wave. (Note: Our analytic notes are in bold).

[Title: Homophobia in the College Classroom]

So there I was in a master's level course. The conversation drifted from the topic at hand to our experiences as undergraduates—particularly life in the dorms. We each shared some sort of horrible roommate story [personal in play]. Tricia shared her story of moving into the dorms as a freshman. She had hoped that she and her new college roommate would grow to be best friends. However, by the end of their first afternoon together, her roommate confided that she was a lesbian [naming sexuality]. Simultaneously, Tricia, fellow students, and my professor said, “Eeeeeeww” in a disgusted, turned-off

tone [demonstrated homophobia]. The other members of our class either held a similar view or did not have the courage to speak up and voice a different opinion [group dynamics]—namely, “Shouldn’t we all question our homophobia here?” . . .

[Researcher Memo: In this story, homophobia is not only accepted, but affirmed. This compromised Matthew’s comfort level as a student. What does this say about classroom power dynamics and heteronormativity in classroom contexts?]

As this example demonstrates, our first wave of analysis helped us categorize our data. We examined each story for literary themes and general content. We identified broadly what we thought were the most significant aspects of our data. Strauss and Corbin (1998) have called this step of the analytic process “open coding.” The purpose of open coding is to “uncover, name, and develop concepts [in order to] expose the thoughts, ideas, and meanings contained therein” (p. 102). Events in our lives and interactions with others were identified, labeled, and categorized. This systematic examination enabled us to locate our data in terms of time, place, range of emotion, and intention. We also wrote detailed researcher memos at the end of each journal entry as a way to capture our initial understandings of the narratives.

* * * * *

This first wave of analysis enabled us to synthesize our data. Our first wave of analysis assisted us in delineating the content of our journals and organizing that content into

more manageable *emergent themes* (see figure 1). Our work related to theme involved (re)organizing our data based on refined definitions of our initial classifications. We arrived at these emergent themes through a process that we irreverently called “data dumping.” Data dumping entailed making multiple copies of each journal entry and highlighting the interpretations we had made during our first analytic wave. Next, we literally took scissors to these copies, cutting apart salient sentences and paragraphs. We found that some stories were cut to shreds three and four times, while other stories remained relatively intact. Subsequently, we physically organized the “piles” of cut data into initial categories and arranged those categories thematically.¹ The end result of our first analytic wave is displayed in Figure 1.

In hindsight, we see how this first wave of analysis helped us capture the most salient points from our journals. It pushed us to examine the broader themes of our stories. It was a necessary step on our analytic path. At the time, however, we were somewhat frustrated. As we rode our boards back to the shore and examined more closely what we had

¹ Initially, we created 17 thematic categories. Through analysis, we adapted our 17 original categories into the ten consolidated themes above. We collapsed, for example, “Multiplicity” into “Self,” and converted “Taking a Stand” and “Finding Voice” into “Power.” We then began “dumping” data excerpts into equivalently named folders. Surprisingly, a folder initially labeled “Closure/Endings” remained empty during this round of analysis, even though we believed this concept would generate significant findings.

Yet, we had nothing to snip—no neat clipping—to represent this concept. For this reason alone—recognizing that we could not account for all our data—we termed our initial findings *Emergent Themes*.

Classroom Spaces: absence or presence of sexuality, affirmed or feeling threatened, assumed heterosexuality, conflict, group dynamics, group size, personal in play, safe/dangerous spaces, threats of violence, visibility/invisibility

Coming Out: community building/contexts, control, critical stance, deliberate/strategic, honesty, intimacy, ownership, self-motivated versus forced, place and time

Community: advocates, authorities, characteristics of, honoring our lives, isolation, marginality, mentoring, need for, ownership, solidarity/alliances, types

Coping Strategies: avoidance, coming out, conforming, constant preparation, denials, language choices, omissions, passing, self-preservation

Histories: family influence, gender difference, identities, lasting memories, socioeconomic markers, urban/rural

Media: in context, responses to, role models, starting points, affirmations, distortions

Power: abuses of, among peers, dealing with authorities, finding voice, fear and anxiety, language issues, taking a stand, silence

Relationships: advocacy, alliances, assumed heterosexuality, avoidance, developing trust, power dynamics

Responses to Homophobia: anger, anxiety, fear, isolation, panic, rationalizations, silence

Self: being “read” by others, constant preparation, denial, fixed versus fluid identities, honesty, internal conflict, multiplicity, positioning

Figure 1. Emergent Themes

accomplished, we realized we had not learned anything new! That is, this first wave of analysis did not alter significantly our understanding of the data. Given the fact that we were researchers studying our own lives, we expected the categories/themes we arrived at to be generated easily enough. And, indeed, they were. We, after all, had close, albeit unexamined, familiarity with the data. We discovered that the labels, titles, and categories we had attached to our data were helpful in developing emergent themes. Yet, we felt as if we were merely restating the obvious, reinscribing our own ideologies, and ignoring the complexities of our data.

Upon further reflection, we speculated that we were too close to our stories to engage in productive analytic work. The lesson we learned from this first wave of analysis was that the stories would not speak for themselves. Indeed, as researchers, we would have to face the onus of interpretive responsibility.

Buying a New Wet Suit: Second Wave of Analysis

After the first wave of analysis, we surmised that we were experiencing what Strauss and Corbin (1998) have termed an “analytic rut.” We realized the need for diverse and multiple approaches to data interpretation—approaches that would move us beyond our preconceived understandings of the data. Indeed, it seemed clear that we would have to find an approach that would push us to examine our stories more critically. However, as students of qualitative analysis, we were frustrated with our inability to find the “right” analytic tool or interpretative device to apply to our data. Harry et al. (2005) capture this frustration: “Students often feel that they are too much on their own in analyzing their data and that, unlike their peers who engage in quantitative studies, they suffer from the absence of clear-cut formulas” (p. 12). We realized we would have to dig deeper to transform our understanding of the data. Because of the personal nature of our stories—and of our relationship as friends and analysts—we sought out what we thought at the time to be a clear-cut formula that might offer us not only a systematic method to further analyze our data but some needed distance, even detachment.

Leaning on the work of folklorists such as A. Shuman (personal communication, September 5, 2002) and Berger (1997), we decided to utilize the tools of narrative analysis in our project. Narrative analysis provided a more concrete point of entry into our stories. We considered several narrative devices, including *reported speech*, *evaluation*, and *frame*. Reported speech is an internal structure of narrative in which the writer directly quotes herself or other players in the story. The use of evaluation in narrative often conveys the point of the story or demonstrates why—from the teller’s perspective—the story is worth telling. Frame serves the purpose of orienting readers through deliberate efforts at introduction and closure. Linde (1993) explains that through such devices tellers and listeners are made more aware of

the gap between the “taleworld” (the world of the story) and the “storyrealm” (the real time and place of the telling/writing). When we reread our stories with narrative criteria such as these in mind, we were forced to look at structure over content.

Reviewing our narratives based on structural components offered a new perspective on the stories and the interpretative process. In analyzing our stories based on narrative structure, we were struck by the importance of reported speech. Reported speech makes present the scene of the story and builds up emotional intensity. Through reported speech, more than one voice can be heard in a story. The use of direct quotes brings the reader closer to the actual event and builds credibility and authenticity. Reported speech also more dramatically reveals the teller’s position in the taleworld by bringing the audience into the moment. In the excerpt below, Matthew describes a colleague’s subtle and implicit support for him as a gay teacher in his rural school setting. (Note: Our second-wave markings also are in bold print.)

[Title: Teaching and Heterosexism]

While teaching elementary school in a conservative, rural area [frame/intro], my principal called me into her office. She didn’t close the door but said she wanted to talk to me about something personal. I was terrified [evaluation]. I lived in fear that an administrator or parent would find out I was gay and that I would lose my job [breaking frame]. I was expecting the worse. I expected to be outed [evaluation]. Instead, she proceeded to ask me to go out on a date with her niece. She offered me Michelle’s phone number and gave me some movie passes. I didn’t know what to say. I was expecting her to question my sexuality. Instead, she was trying to fix me up with a woman. I walked out of her office shaking [evaluation]. Waiting just outside the door was Pat, a veteran preschool teacher in our building whose son was also gay. She grabbed me by both hands and said, “Hon, you just shake that off” [reported speech]. She smiled at me and headed into the workroom. I never talked to Pat about my sexuality, but I was convinced that she knew [breaking frame].

[Researcher Memo: In this story, Matthew emotionally describes how he negotiated his identity in a professional setting. Fear is present in his writing. Assumptions of heterosexuality are in play. Why only one direct quote?]

In this researcher’s memo, we questioned Matthew’s use of direct quotes to capture his colleague’s response to assumptions of heterosexuality. In this example, Matthew’s colleague, Pat, offered support though a collusive response. Matthew does not quote himself or his principal—just Pat, the supportive ally. Reported speech provides an emotional spark that engages the reader and reveals the subtleties of language related to heterosexism. In addition, Matthew breaks

frame several times in order to let the audience know what he is feeling and thinking. This technique aligns the audience with the teller, adding to the story's impact. Matthew also captures his feelings and thoughts through the use of evaluative language. These persuasive statements manipulate the audience by bringing the events to life. Pinpointing the use of these structural features offered new insights into moments of tension and salient issues in our narratives.

Looking at these structural components created a new, more-distanced interpretative lens for us. This distance enabled us to gain alternative perspectives on our stories as both vested participants and interpretive, accountable researchers. As we broke each journal entry into discrete structural components, narrative analysis freed us to think about our stories differently. By taking the stories out of context—dissecting them line by line—we were able to think about why we told the stories the way we did. This allowed for a more systematic analysis the data. In a way, we began to see through the stories—almost as if from a third-person perspective.

This method opened up unforeseen possibilities for interpretation. For example, we were able to detect and study the persuasive devices and stylistic techniques in our stories, making them more transparent. Narrative tools helped us tear down the layers of intimacy and familiarity we had constructed as both authors and analysts. The result was a depersonalization—at least momentarily—of our stories. This process ultimately subjected our stories to harsher criticism. The stories became less taken for granted, and as researchers, we became more willing to question each other's stories with greater focus.

As we tried to draw conclusions from our second wave of analysis, we found ourselves engaged in heated dialogue about the stories and the perceived shortcomings of our analytic process. At the time, we seemed to be seeking some sort of validation we were on the right track. Yet, the only possible next step we could imagine was to return again to the stories.

Catching a Primo Groundswell: Third Wave of Analysis

As we caught our third wave, we began to see the data analysis process to be just that—a process. After the first two waves, we were convinced we had done good work. Certainly, we had made progress. We knew the data better and from varied perspectives. Although our first two waves of analysis could not be described as complete “wipeouts,” they were insufficient in moving us toward theory building. We were aware that our analytic work was far from complete. However, we were frustrated with how mundane the process seemed and how ambiguous our initial findings appeared. At this point, we struggled with how to elevate our preliminary discoveries to a more theoretical analysis. How would we make the necessary interpretative leaps? Now what?

Our frustration caused us to question each other and the entire process. Questioning soon deteriorated into contentious

debate. We lost confidence in our analytic work. We lost faith in the relevance of our stories and what they might mean. Because of this dissatisfaction, we found ourselves interrogating the work of the previous two waves. For instance, Lesley was concerned that the structural analysis had led us too far astray, while Matthew worried that we had begun to confuse and conflate several key themes. We questioned each other about our understandings of the themes then began to question the relevance and adequacy of those themes. We even began to question whether our stories still supported these themes. Despite how argumentative and confrontational this stage of the process initially seemed, we soon determined that negotiating our differing views about the same stories was surprisingly generative.

Therefore, we decided to apply this practice of debating and questioning as an analytic technique. Our dialogic process entailed revisiting every story and eventually led us back to the emergent themes (figure 1). Next, we reread each other's stories with both our emergent themes (Wave I) and narrative elements (Wave II) in mind. We relied on critical questioning to filter our stories through each of our earlier emergent themes. In this way we were able to formally and systematically test all of our stories against all of the themes. Specifically, each of us developed questions about the other's stories based on our knowledge of the stories from the previous waves of analysis. We interrogated each story by holding the author accountable for his/her telling. We also held ourselves accountable as interpreters of those stories. We did not hold back when questioning each other or scrutinizing the themes. Rather, we debated and argued points back and forth. Because of our collaborative relationship, we were able to push each other beyond our taken-for-granted understandings. The dialogue that took place during this wave did not constitute an isolated coding event; instead, this analytic work reflected our ongoing conversations and confrontations. These efforts relied on and were influenced by the previous waves; at times expanding and at other times narrowing our focus. Yet, we understood that all of our analytic efforts were “constructions in need of deconstruction” (Talbur, 2000, p. 233). As researchers and surfers, we were “stoked” at the possibilities this kind of analysis might provide.

Below, we provide an example of how we used dialogic theme testing in our third wave. In the following story, Lesley describes her first, public coming out as a doctoral student. Analyzing this data through the lens of our emergent themes alerted us to several overlooked aspects of this story, particularly with regard to the significance of the theme of classroom spaces. We describe in detail how one story was reconceptualized, leading not only to new discoveries about the story, but to more nuanced understandings of the theme itself. (Note: The questions Matthew developed in dialogue with Lesley are in bold.)

[Title: Coming Out in Doctoral Program]

It was the first evening of my first doctoral class and the professor asked us to explain “how we got here.” We used poster board, markers, and magazine clip-

pings to create a graphic showing significant life experiences. The goal was to help us learn about each other and start thinking about what we bring with us to the profession. I sat on the floor with my paper and markers and Bethany, another new student. **[Who was Bethany to you . . . a potential new friend, a mere professional colleague?]** Bethany and I were working together as supervisors and had started to get to know each other. She had told me about her recent engagement and I'd come out to her **[So it was Bethany's introduction of sexuality that prompted your disclosure? You write about this rather nonchalantly. What was it about this "space" that made coming out necessary/(un)comfortable/ unavoidable?]**

I decided to create a Venn diagram to show how different aspects of my life intersect **[Why did you set it up this way? Were you seeking conflict?]**. I remember including a cross and question marks to represent my struggles with my Catholic upbringing **[Here you are naming religious affiliation. This also brings the personal in to play. Did you know Bethany was also Catholic from your prior conversations? Did a common religious upbringing create a shared sense of community between you and Bethany? Did this make the classroom space easier for you to come out?]**. Additionally, I documented my years as a teacher in two states and my experiences in higher education. But the poster board was still quite empty. I was nervous and unsure about including my sexual orientation on the poster. I looked around the room and noticed that it was a relatively small group (14). **[How is coming out impacted/influenced by group dynamics? Did the smaller classroom space foster more intimate personal exchanges?]** Plus, Bethany knew, and there was another student in the class I thought might be gay, so I decided to come out. I do not know for sure why I felt comfortable enough to do this on my first day in the program. Yet, given the goals of the class as set forth by the professor and my interactions with two peers, I decided to get it out of the way. **[How unusual is it for you to come out on the first night of a class?]**

Based on the work of previous waves, we had located the above story broadly as a fairly apolitical coming out story. In fact, in Wave I, we classified it with other predictable and familiar stories of coming out of the closet. During the second wave, we attended to Lesley's neutral tone and lack of emotion. As we looked at this story yet again in the third wave, we questioned Lesley's decision-making process. Clearly, Lesley had to make a decision about what aspects of her identity to disclose for this class assignment. How that decision was made was far more complicated than our two preliminary analytic efforts revealed.

During our third wave, Matthew questioned Lesley's motivations for coming out by noting how Bethany casually inserted her own sexuality into the official curriculum. While Lesley was silently grappling with whether and if so, eventually how to represent her partner on her display, Bethany was asserting her heterosexual privilege by nonchalantly including her fiancé's name on her poster. Though it is not directly stated in the story, Lesley was reacting to this perceived unfairness. As a result of our open debate related to this story, Lesley was forced to acknowledge her frustration with how effortlessly Bethany included personal aspects of her life on her display. Thus, scrutiny and dialogue revealed that Lesley's coming out was not based on honesty or a desire to build community. Instead, we came to believe that she was responding to heterosexual privilege and feelings of marginalization. We identified this dimension of the story only through intense debate and critical questioning.

This work of debating and questioning not only allowed us to reach a deeper understanding of each story, it also enabled us to rethink our themes. For example, the third-wave process of testing the theme *classroom spaces* led us to build on and complicate it. Figure 2 below captures how this particular theme was clarified and expanded. We came to see how factors such as class size, personal history, and the absence or presence of sexuality functioned as intervening factors. Classroom spaces, therefore, are not static. It was not simply that Lesley had to assess the safety of the environment for coming out during the first class of her doctoral program. Rather, as in any classroom space, identities are affirmed and/

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- Sexuality in Educational Context
 - ◊ absence/presence of sexuality
 - ◊ heterosexual privilege
 - ◊ official curriculum/lived curriculum (personal engagement)
 - Negotiating Identity
 - ◊ assumed heterosexuality (coming out)
 - ◊ gender markers (race, as well?)
 - ◊ personal history/personal agenda (willingness/readiness)
 - Group Size/Dynamics
 - ◊ intimacy (potential for/avoiding)
 - ◊ expectations of/assumptions about others
 - ◊ accountability (small numbers)
 - Settings
 - ◊ elementary school
 - ◊ middle/high school
 - ◊ college classrooms
 - ◊ graduate school
-

Figure 2. Refined and Expanded Theme of Classroom Spaces

or diminished as official curriculum becomes lived curriculum. As classroom spaces are created and perceived, various forces collide—inviting both conflict and community.

As we talked through the stories and brought each theme to bear on each one, we gained new perspective and gained confidence in our analytic process. Dialoguing allowed to extend our existing themes but ultimately caused us to interpret our stories in new ways. Dialoguing made transparent the ways in which our data were not self-explanatory. Instead, dialoguing exposed the subtle nuances, hidden contexts, and tacit motivations contained in our writings. Accordingly, our questioning “produced different knowledge and produced knowledge differently” (St. Pierre & Pillow, 2000, p. 1). Ultimately, we constructed meaning not only from the data itself, but also from our engagement with the data. Explaining her own method of analysis, Talburt (2000) points out that “theme may indeed facilitate understanding and the creation of meaning, but theme does not express and cannot impose essence on what are interpretations of interpretations of lived experience” (p. 233). Indeed, during the work of the first two waves, our findings felt like “interpretations of interpretations.” While we were not necessarily seeking to “impose essence” through analysis, we were seeking some measure of verisimilitude and more confidence in our findings. Accordingly, in Wave III we succeeded in transforming our original, surface themes into more sophisticated, refined ones. For us, meaningful themes evolved over the course of many readings and re-readings, collaborative debate, and probing conversations.

Calling It a Gnarly Day at the Beach

To be forthcoming and honest about how we work as researchers is to develop a reflective awareness that, I believe, contributes to enhancing the quality of our interpretive acts. (Peshkin, 2000, p. 9)

Throughout this paper we have tried to be forthcoming and honest about the work we did as co-analysts. We have responded to the call for greater methodological transparency by describing our efforts at data analysis. We have come to believe that the quality of our work depended on our willingness to explore multiple approaches to analysis. While utilizing these varying approaches, we also gained a better understanding of the importance of reflexivity. We learned to be critical of both ourselves and our methods. We did not want to blindly assume that we had chosen the “right” methods; nor did we want to allow ourselves to overconfidently reach conclusions without adequately critiquing our methods. As Bullough and Pinnegar (2001) state, “in self-studies, conclusions are hard-won, elusive, are generally more tentative than not. The aim of self-study research is to provoke, challenge, and illuminate rather than confirm and settle” (p. 21). This statement accurately describes our experiences as researchers and participants in this project. Our research has allowed us to gain insight into how to analyze content and generalize theory from autobiographical stories. Each wave of analysis

helped us think more critically about the importance of finding a methodology that fits our epistemological stance.

As doctoral students, we entered this project aware that we would have to make difficult methodological choices. Because of the narrative style and personal nature of our data, we knew it could be a struggle to find the right analytic tool. As we began data analysis, we were eager to apply the skills we had learned in our graduate research courses. Accordingly, through each wave of analysis, we developed analytic memos and detailed responses to each journal. In the first wave, we established basic categories by sorting and classifying stories. In the second wave, our work addressed the importance of structural components, thus illuminating our motivations and intentions. During the more collaborative third wave, we experienced a methodological breakthrough. Finally, we began to feel as though our analytic efforts contributed to the creation of meaning. The work of each wave showed us that our stories featured a richly contextualized set of ideas with properties and dimensions that overlapped. It became obvious to us that no singular method of qualitative analysis would make it possible for us to “account for all aspects of the data” (Harry et al., 2005, p. 9). There was no one right method of analysis, no method we could trust completely. We had to trust ourselves to accept the fluid and ever-changing nature of analysis.

With each wave, we gained a deeper glimpse into the complexities of the stories and the subtleties of meanings. As we delved into the data analysis process, we found ourselves simultaneously drawn closer to and pushed farther away from our data. Obviously, the personal nature of these stories made it difficult for us to distance ourselves. Yet, the nature of data analysis both demanded and resulted in some level of distancing. Similarly, the data analysis process forced us to get closer to our stories than we imagined possible. To some, the analysis of our stories may seem almost intuitive, loosely formulated, and unreasonably grounded in the perspective of the teller. However, the very nature of self-study demands a different kind of work on the part of the researcher. As researchers and participants, we felt we “owned” this study. Yet, our seemingly endless and circular efforts toward reflexivity made visible unanticipated challenges and methodological tensions. Through our three waves of analysis, we have come to realize that interpretations and implications from self-study research is always limited. Throughout this study—from data collection to write-up—we grappled with how to get “out of the way” of the data, even though we were inextricably “in the way.” Our data and interpretations reveal both the possibilities and limitations of autobiographical studies by exposing the complications of analysis, contradictions of personal narrative, and complexities of the research process. We began this project searching for a method of analysis, trying to catch that perfect wave. In the end, the task of engaging with our narratives and exploring methods of analysis taught us more about our data and ourselves, intensifying our understanding of the research process and leaving an indelible mark on our lives.

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Our Experience: The Voices of Instructors Teaching a Course on Families

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Abstract

Preparing “highly qualified” special educators that can effectively partner with the parents of students with disabilities is proving to be a daunting task, though widely acknowledged as essential in special education. This descriptive study examines the experience of instructors co-teaching a special education course focused on family-professional partnerships. The qualitative data shared focuses on the experiences of the university instructors. Findings illustrate instructor’s views of teaching a families course, thoughts on delivery methods, as well as perceptions of the impact of such a course on the conceptual change of teachers in regards to families of students with special needs. Implications for the field of special education teacher education are discussed.

A particular challenge in special education teacher education is preparing teachers for the involvement of families in the education of students with special needs, an essential aspect of special education policy and practice. Relationships between families and professionals are often a source of stress for both parties (Summers, Gavin, Hall, & Nelson, 2003). The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) has detailed the role of parents in the diagnosis, identification, placement, and discipline procedures for students with disabilities and research supporting the role of family professional partnerships in the education of students with special needs has grown into an extensive body of literature (Carr, 2000; Harry, Kalyanpur, & Day, 1999; Knight & Wadsworth, 1999; Summers, Hoffman, Marquis, Turnbull, Poston, & Nelson, 2005; Turnbull & Turnbull, 1990; Wang, Mannan, Poston, Turnbull, & Summers, 2004). Although special education has devoted much attention to the importance of parent professional partnerships, how to prepare teachers for this portion of their professional responsibility remains unclear (Summers et al., 2005). Additionally, Brownell and her colleagues found that most programs included collaboration with families in their course work, but were not specific about the pedagogy they used to develop these skills (Brownell, Ross, Colon, & McCallum, 2005).

This article specifically explores the efforts of one university in preparing special education teachers for this portion of their practice through the eyes of the professors teaching the family involvement course with the purpose of better understanding the pedagogy utilized and the outcomes achieved from this coursework. This work builds from the foundational belief that professors are the teachers of teachers and understanding their experience is important in understanding the experience of teacher candidates. Historically, links between the achievement of K-12 students and teacher preparation have consistently illustrated the impact of effective preservice teacher instruction, but only recently have

research efforts focused on understanding the conceptual change of teacher candidates as a measurable outcome of their professional preparation (Cochran-Smith et al., In Press). In order for professors to model best practice and “walk their talk,” examination of their practice and reflection on their experience is foundational.

The Pedagogy of Professors

University teaching has long been thought of as a solitary endeavor (Anderson, 1996). Yet, as many instructors discover, the benefits of being part of a group can be widespread. Johnston (1997) notes that faculty experience more success with different curriculum, various approaches to teaching, and extended learning for themselves and their students when engaged in collaborative efforts. Unfortunately, Stein and Short (2001) found several barriers for collaboration between university faculties, including negative attitudes, worry of hidden agendas, lack of interpersonal skills, and lack of support from university policy and procedure.

Faculties within schools of education seem to be willing to navigate these waters. Collaboration between faculty members is found in high numbers of education program descriptions; unfortunately many do not describe the nature of the collaboration (Brownell et al., 2005). Given the critical role of collaboration in special education practice and in family-professional partnerships, examining the perspective of university professors engaged in preparing students for family-professional partnerships plays a critical role in understanding a conceptual change in teachers in this aspect of their professional growth. This study describes the experiences of instructors negotiating the importance of personal teaching styles, interpreting loosely defined standards, and the infusion of personal experience in teaching while collaborating with colleagues that may hold different views on these issues.

Schools of education working to fill teacher shortages and continue to produce “highly qualified” special education teachers have found technologically formatted instruction as one way to meet this need (Knapczyk, Chapman, Rodes, & Chung, 2001). In a nationwide study of distance education special education preparation programs, Ludlow, Conner, and Schechter (2005) found that many schools of education had developed distance education programs in an attempt to fill teacher shortages and save resources. Programs focused on teacher education and professional development taught with distance education approaches report high levels of success in educating educators (Rodes, Knapczyk, Chapman, & Chung, 2000). However, Ludlow et al. speculates that distance education programs still may not raise numbers of special education teachers to meet current needs, especially considering the variety of barriers to distance education including the need for expensive equipment, high non-resident tuition and fees, synchronizing schedules across time zones, and program dependence on state and federal funding. Additional research regarding the possibilities of distance education to produce a new generation of “highly qualified” special educators is needed (Finely & Hartman, 2004; Graham & Essex, 2001; Ludlow & Brannan, 1999; Ludlow et al., 2005; Ludlow & Duff, 2002).

The Families Class

At one large mid-western university, assisting special educators in learning how to work with families is addressed in a graduate level course, to be called “the families class” throughout this article. The overall purpose of the course is to enhance student knowledge and skills needed to provide services to individuals with disabilities within family and community contexts. The course began as a summer workshop in the early 1980s and focused primarily on the needs of families with young children. As course enrollment and the need for the professional competencies related to family and community collaboration expanded, the summer workshop evolved into the course as it is currently offered, available on campus once a year with 25-30 graduate students in special education and also from related service areas (i.e., counseling psychology, speech and language pathology, and adaptive physical education).

In the fall of 2003, the families class was offered in four off-campus locations using distance education technology including two-way video conferencing and a web-based component. In addition to these four distance education sections, the course was also offered on campus in a traditional format. A tenure track professor was in charge of overseeing the courses and ensuring that all sections cohesively addressed learning goals of the program and NCATE (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education) standards.

All sections of the course provided students with an overview of policy and practice in special education related to the role of families within schools and the communities.

In order to ensure that the course curriculum addressed the needed professional competencies and to share resources and ideas for teaching the course, instructors met weekly to discuss the implementation of the pre-planned class activities provided by the lead professor. Although course sections had some autonomy in determining activities to be used for each class meeting, they were strongly encouraged to use the suggested activities and assignments. These activities included a semester-long family project, family vignettes and course readings. In addition, students in each section participated in cross-section discussion groups (chats) online that addressed a variety of topics related to special education and families.

Researchers within the school of education at this university decided it would be valuable to gain a deeper understanding of the families class. A research team comprised of seven doctoral students and two tenure track professors examined the course from several perspectives including the experience of students taking the course, families participating in course activities, and instructors teaching the course. One of these tenure track professors was the originator of the course in the 1980s and the other was the current lead instructor for the course. This large scale, unfunded project took place over several years and employed a variety of research methodologies.

In this manuscript, I specifically explore the experience of the instructors teaching the families class. The perspective of instructors from each section of the course provide insight of the course delivery methods and how activities were perceived by instructors who differed in teaching experience and preference. Faculty members, like all teachers, are informed by attitudes and beliefs. These are valuable indicators for understanding the instructional activities used and why. The following questions provide focus to the study: (a) What were the experiences of the course instructors teaching the families class? (b) Did instructors perceive the course (and the curriculum) as an effective way to teach their students about family-professional partnerships? and (c) What course innovations or delivery methods are judged by course instructors as especially effective in assisting students in learning?

Method

In order to capture the complexity of information available and gain insight about the research questions, various perspectives were important to acknowledge. Multiple data collection procedures including interviews and observations were employed. The range of data collection procedures were designed to provide this study with a rich depiction of the context of each participant in the study, as well as ensure that disparate views were adequately represented (Creswell, 1998). Data triangulation, member checking, audit trails, and collaborative research team work sessions were research methodologies utilized as credibility measures for this study to enhance trustworthiness (Brantlinger, Jimenez, Klingner, Pugach, & Richardson, 2005). Descriptions of

the course, instructor participants, and the research team have been shared to broaden the context and increase reader particularizability (Brantlinger et al., 2005). By analyzing various personal portrayals, this research relies on inductive reasoning to document emerging themes.

Participants

This study includes the voices of all eight instructors of the families class. Participants included two tenure-track professors and two research related outreach center directors, all of whom had doctoral level training in special education, as well as one outreach center staff member with master's level training in special education. The other three instructors were doctoral students fulfilling the requirements of learning about college-level teaching while teaching the course. In each of the four distance education sections, the graduate students were paired with a professor or center director. The on campus section was taught by the lead professor without a co teacher. Participants were given the option to decline participation in the study, but all chose to be included. Five of the eight instructors had personal experience in a family that included a member with a disability.

Research Team

Since the research reported here is a small part of a larger evaluation study, the research team for this portion of the study was comprised of members of a larger group that had common emerging questions about the role played by the instructors participating in the study. The research team of two doctoral students was sponsored by the lead professor of the families class. This professor also acted as a participant in this study, but did not begin interacting with the study until teaching the families class was completed. All three researchers were Caucasian with middle class origins. Two members of the group were female and the third was male, ranging in age from late twenties to mid fifties. The three researchers all had previous teaching experience within special education and teacher education. Additionally, each member of the research team had family members with identified disabilities which informed their practice. The combination of these experiences gives light to the commitment displayed by the research team about the importance of family-centered practice and the significance of special education teacher preparation (Butera, 1997; Butera, Matuga, & Riley, 1999). The team also had strong feelings about the importance of examining one's own practice as an essential piece of effective teaching (Finley & Hartman, 2004; Gay, 2003; Graham & Essex, 2001).

Interviews

Instructor interviews were conducted by the same member of the research team mid-semester while the course was being taught. Additionally, all previous instructors for the course, including the course originator, were also interviewed to gain historical perspective on the course and its development. Interviews ranged from fifteen minutes to over an hour

in length and were conducted face to face using a discussion format in order to create the opportunity to explore meanings. The instructor interviews were audio taped and transcribed in their entirety. Member checking was employed. Interview transcriptions were returned to the interviewee to check for accuracy and to seek additional response. Instruments used in the study were constructed by the research team in order to specifically target the aims of the research. Interview protocols were used to conduct semi-structured interviews (See Appendix).

Class Observations

A member of the research team conducted two classroom observations in each section of the course. Both traditional on campus courses and distance education formatted class sessions were observed. For the distance education sites, researchers made sure to collect anecdotal field notes from the perspective of both the instructor site behind the camera and the student site watching the monitors. Running field notes of class activities and discussion observed were conducted on the spot, expanded later and then added to the data set.

Data Analysis

Instructor interview data, student comments about the course harvested from course evaluations, and field notes from the class observations were each assembled as separate data sets and examined using qualitative data analysis methods in order to identify themes recurring across individuals and data sets (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997; Merriam, 1998). Triangulation of these various types of data include a cross validation of the data sources to find regularities and patterns (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; McMillan & Schumacher, 1997). Each data set was read and reread by two to three members of the research team to improve reliability. The research team met weekly to develop a deep understanding of the data. Each member of the team developed themes, questions, and thoughts about the data to discuss during analysis sessions. In addition, this smaller research team also met weekly with the larger group to continue weaving this data into the larger study simultaneously taking place. These intense and multifaceted work sessions took place over one academic calendar year. For the purposes of this article only data from interviews and observations are included.

Results

The research team identified four emerging themes related to the research questions; *Family Values*, *Teachers Teaching Teachers*, *Fighting the Good Fight: Teaching My Reality*, *Working Together*, and *How Do We Get to Them?* These themes provide detail about instructors' attitudes and beliefs about family professional partnerships, their experiences teaching the course, and their overall evaluation of course innovations and effectiveness. Each of the themes illustrates the perspective of the instructors negotiating the teaching of the course.

Family Values

Instructors valued the importance of teachers and schools connecting with families. Universally, they describe the overall goals of the course as vital to the profession. Alfred described the purpose of the course and his desire for students to actively listen to families. He shares,

The purpose of the class is to teach students how to relate to families who have kids with disabilities. The behind the scene issues that may affect the relationship so that they can be effective and involve parents in their strategies to help kids with disabilities improve their behavior or academic outcomes.

Lenny is also aware of the impact families have had on the development of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the need for the strong language about parents. He is concerned that teachers and parents often do not appear to collaborate well and he states, "The language in IDEA talks so strongly about families and parent involvement, but it really hasn't filtered down."

However, as a group, the instructors differed in what they viewed as important in the connection between teachers and families. Observational field notes depict a variety of teaching styles that reflect the diverse feelings instructors had about families. Some instructors valued the connection between teachers and families because they thought families had an important role as advocates for their children which could be facilitated by teachers. When discussing his own experiences as a parent Lenny states,

We needed to know about medic-aide, we needed to know about the future. We had always pushed him in reading and writing, but at this point we needed more adult skills. That's what I am trying to get to my students; if you can't think of the family holistically and you don't know that these things are happening in the family, you're probably not doing all you can to help them. There may be struggles going on that you may be missing, just trying to get people sensitive to each others situations.

In contrast, Alfred is concerned with teachers listening to families' dreams and fostering their growth and often spoke about this in his class. He views families as an important ongoing part of education, not merely as advocates but in a broader sense. He worries that his students aren't open to this portion of the class. He wonders how much his students actually take away from the class discussions. He says,

I think sometimes the discussion that we have in class it's important, but I'm not sure they really learn things. This class thinks they already know and it's just a refreshment opportunity to bring up issues and my impression is that they already know most of what we teach.

Other instructors described the importance of the teacher-family connection because the connection allowed

teachers to develop more effective working relationships with families. By soliciting information about his student's family, Ken encourages them to see commonalities between their own family experiences and the experiences of the families they work with in the schools. Ken builds on what his students say about their own family as a means to establish a base line of understanding to encourage growth. He shares,

One of the first questions we ask is, "do any of you have someone in your family with a disability?" Only two or three of them raised their hand, that's all. Then someone will start saying I have an uncle in a wheel chair and I used to have to tell people why he was in a wheel chair. Then we asked why didn't you raise your hand, and he said, oh I never thought of him as someone with a disability.

As instructors tried to convey their own beliefs about the importance of family school collaboration, they found themselves uncovering teacher dispositions in their students that needed to be addressed. Additionally, they began to reflect on their own teaching experiences, past and present.

Teachers Teaching Teachers

Overall, instructors did not have a very positive view of teachers and their relationships with families of students with disabilities. Mitch thinks teachers are "high maintenance" and is concerned about how they can succeed. He feels that his teachers take on the mentality of their students after a while.

They were a bit whiney. Some of them are very shy, I wonder about that. How well you can succeed in today's teaching environment being so shy, but I don't know. More power to you I guess.

Mitch thinks teachers do not like to work hard and are not open to new ideas. Compared to the teachers he taught with a few years ago, he also worries that many of the teachers in his section are not ready to teach. Other instructors sometimes agreed with Mitch's assessment of their students but they also accounted for this by explaining that the teachers (their students) lacked experience. They explained that it was a lack of experience that accounted for teacher's lack of family involvement. In reflections about their teachers' lack of experience Ken thinks teachers have a narrow view of the world and that they need to broaden their perspective. He goes on to explain that teachers often have to make decisions based on a small amount of information. Field notes depict students engaged with the vignettes often voicing concern about not knowing the "whole picture" of the case study families. Ken responded to these concerns by conveying that teachers often did not have a whole picture of the students in their classroom. His response acted as a reiteration of the importance of the content of the course in their professional growth.

Because of their view that teachers were narrow in their perspective several instructors believed it was important for the course to include activities that helped teachers examine their own biases, experience or beliefs about families. Lenny

reported that the way teachers (his students) think about families needed to change and wants the course to have that impact. He says,

I hope what they take away is one very simple thing; I hope that they challenge their way of teaching and what they perceive as the reasons why families are uninvolved. That to me is the whole key issue. I worry that they still view the presence of families in schools as the criteria for what's an involved family. That's a very narrow view. Teachers still feel families should come to them.

David thinks that teachers are not very supportive of parents and that it is hard to change their preconceived notions. As he puts it:

Sometimes teachers are pretty down on parents and in many cases think that parents are the source of the child's problem. That the reason the child is disruptive, not cooperative, or not learning in the classroom is because the students aren't getting the type of support at home, the type of family background that is really going to be beneficial. I think many teachers feel that if only we could get parents to do this or if this student had this type of parent they wouldn't have any problems and one of the things we are trying to get teachers to do is overcome that attitude.

He thinks that teachers need experience to think about families. He thinks students have lots of experiences to draw upon but he finds it hard to get them to reflect on their experiences. Many of the instructors for this course valued this deeply because they relied heavily on reflections of their own lived experience when teaching the course.

Fighting the Good Fight: Teaching my Reality

Instructors often used their own experiences in families to guide their teaching. However, it is noteworthy that about half of the instructors did not report discussing their own family experiences. In such circumstances the overall tone of the class differed. A prime example was Lenny. Lenny teaches the course from his own perspective as a parent of a son with a disability. He explained that students relate to this:

They know I have lived most of what we talk about and I think that helps draw it out of them. They're speaking to somebody who has experiences-who tries to make them feel comfortable with their own experiences.

Lenny's experiences keep him genuine in his interactions with students. He embodies everything he teaches. Observational field notes depict students in Lenny's section engaged in conversations and activities with a personal feel. As Lenny shared his own experiences students responded by asking more probing questions and offering more of their own experiences.

When instructors used their personal experience, more students became engaged in class discussions. Like Lenny, Ken and Gail shared personal stories to illustrate their teaching. Ken explained that his experiences as a parent affected his teaching "a ton." He notes, "As a parent of kids with disabilities what's important to me is that those kids' teachers understand not just what their disability is and not just what my child's limitations are, but also what their high points are." Ken goes on to add how his experience as a parent impacts his interactions with students, and also his fellow instructors.

I probably draw on my experience more as a parent than a teacher. I think they know that I am a parent of a child with a disability. This allows me to pontificate a little more. And I'm good at that. I think it gives me the credibility to do that. Gail is in the same situation and I can't believe how many of us teaching these courses are in the same situation.

Other instructors lacked parenting experience. Cindy cannot speak from experience, "I have a lot of friends who are parents. I am very cautious to say that I know what it's like to walk in their shoes." Cindy has little experience that connects with her students as her own teaching experience is limited. She, along with several other instructors, are teaching this course to fulfill a requirement and strive to remain professionally appropriate. Alfred also feels less personally involved with the course content. He notes, "I'm co-teaching that class as part of my doctoral program requirement, to have some teaching experience." Mitch also lacks experience that would help him understand parent perspective. Under these circumstances, he struggles to connect with his students and tries to simplify the content. Reflecting on the course, he tells us:

I would have varied the lessons more from the very beginning.... After a few weeks of relying totally on what was provided to us, I really sensed that the students were getting bored with the format of the lessons. I've become a great newspaper clipper. I've only been doing this for two months and I already have a box stuffed full of articles I have used in class. They loved that. I was concerned that it was too childish, but they thrived on it.

As if to make up for a lack of personal experience as a parent, instructors sometimes told stories about their experiences teaching students with disabilities. Alfred notes, "Even though I have experience with families that is a more formal type of relationship, we talked about that and I think it was a very good experience." This use of personal stories seemed especially powerful but was not universally employed. When asked what affected his teaching of the course, Mitch stated:

I think probably my own teaching experiences and my father was deaf. So he had an exceptionality in that sense. I can see the impact his exceptionality has had on my family and I appreciate that perspec-

tive, but what I think impacts me most (when teaching the course) is thinking about the vignette and topic for that night so I can vary three hours so they aren't waiting until they can just get out of here.

The data depicts a variety of philosophies and teaching styles displayed by the instructors. Even given these differences, the instructors were fairly unified on their perception of co-teaching the course and collaborating with other instructors.

Working Together

Instructors reported that they enjoyed co teaching the course. They learned from their co teacher, especially in circumstances where one teacher lacked experience. David shared, "The best part is getting to teach with Lenny. We have developed a very complimentary style and we use that to draw students out... Lenny can speak about the severe disability piece, where my daughter had a learning disability. Her disability really didn't have the impact on the family the way that Lenny's son does, so that is a different perspective." Additionally, Alfred lacked experience teaching and valued the opportunity to share ideas and knowledge. "It's nice to know that other people are doing the same thing as you and you can discuss."

While Alfred valued the help he received through co-teaching, some co instructors struggled with differences in personal style and course ownership. Mitch had a sort of "hands-off" attitude to co-teaching. He often questioned the activities that were not his own and personal style was important to him:

But again relating to personal style, the person who is creating those lessons, that was her style, so that's how she does it. How affective that is for her, it's hard to say without being in the room and hearing what the students think. It is ultimately none of my business.

Planning meetings provided an opportunity for instructors to collaborate about their teaching. These meetings were not universally valued by the instructors. A variety of opinions were expressed about the planning meetings but overall the meetings appeared to have a different function for different individuals. Ken, Lenny, and David saw the purpose of the meetings as providing instructors with course content and activities that would enable each section to be "on the same page." Instructors who were inexperienced in teacher preparation valued the fact that planning meetings provided them with strategies about how to teach the course. Instructors with more experience were less likely to value the meetings. However, they also thought the purpose of the planning meetings was to provide a long term goal for the course or to provide an opportunity for collaboration and discussion among colleagues.

I think that it would have been helpful to have time to collaboratively plan the class a little bit

more and for all of us to have a long term vision of the class.

These individuals valued open-ended discussions related to the overall course context. Tina thinks the group should not have met every week. She thought the group should have gotten an overall vision of the class. She felt strongly that you shouldn't be teaching the course if you need a whole lot of information about the content. She enjoyed brainstorming with her colleagues.

The instructors as a group were torn on their views of actual delivery of the course. Some believe the course was framed in a way that met the needs of students and promoted conceptual change, while others did not. Individual instructor assessment on this topic seems to greatly impact their own disposition while teaching the course.

How do we get to them?

Overall, instructors of the course reported enjoying teaching the course for a variety of reasons. All believed that the goals of the course were important and that it was very important for teachers to acquire competencies related to their expanded roles with families and the broader context of schools and families. Their response to questions about the course delivery methods and course innovations were mixed. Three of the instructors questioned the suitability of the use of technology for the course content. All of the instructors expressed frustration with the technology when it failed to operate in some sites on several occasions. However, most instructors acknowledged the value of the technology for its "utility for rural communities" despite the fact that most also explained "I prefer face-to-face."

Responses to questions about various course innovations were also mixed. Most instructors reported valuing the opportunity to make use of activities that were available including the vignettes and the family project assignments. They also reported that they got "ideas and learned from one another in the planning meetings" but several instructors also reported "It's nice to know that other people are doing the same thing and you can discuss it, but, at the end, I'm not sure that they (the other instructors) really try anything."

Overall, there was a good deal of variability in instructor response to assignments and the activities that were provided. Often instructors valued the discussion topics that surrounded the vignette and family projects and reflected about the importance of them. As one instructor described it,

I like what's done with using stories. I've never used stories before. I'm very fascinated by the power of stories and stories get people to take the content of a text and relate it to those stories and connect those to their own life story. I think it's necessary.... There's no better way to feel what you need to feel unless you step into things that are very uncomfortable. It's risky and for most of these teachers it's an opportunity to take risks that they probably wouldn't take otherwise.

This response was not universal, however. One instructor told us, "I think sometimes the discussions that we have in class are important but I'm not sure they really learn anything." Three instructors mentioned that they thought the activities could be structured more clearly and they objected to the amount of work required by the ongoing online assignments as well as the family project. One instructor told us that it was excessive to expect any instructor to "read more than eight pages double-spaced." Additionally, three instructors reported that they were not comfortable with the amount of discussion required for the vignettes. One instructor explained that it was important to prepare activities that provided students with variety because students "don't want to be focused too long on one sort of activity." Instead of facilitating the discussion about the vignettes, they explained how they varied the assignments explaining:

I had a set of activities prepared and it was really varied. I had a lot of positive feedback, they really appreciated that. I know it's a lot of work to do that. It is a lot easier to just sit and talk for three hours, but then you bore them to tears and they can't wait to get out of there.

Observational notes expose a variety of teaching methods taking place. Even though instructors met weekly to discuss the shared curriculum, several sites implemented the curriculum in different ways. According to observational notes, students showed movies and given more passive forms of instruction often were not engaged in the course activities. Observers witnessed students leaving the classroom, grading papers, and even talking on cellular telephones during class activities apparently unknown to the instructor behind the camera.

Contradictory, sites that engaged students in dynamic activities such as student led discussions, interactive debates, and problem solving scenarios displayed higher levels of engagement. Students that appeared to be educationally challenged throughout the course session appeared to remain on task. Interestingly, researchers also observed fewer students reporting to class sessions late or leaving early in sites that maintained a consistent level of interactive engagement over the course of the semester.

Discussion

Following trends within special education, this course was taught following a constructivist philosophy, while displaying competency based features through technological means. This aspect of professional development builds on Cochran-Smith & Lytle's (1999) work by encouraging teachers to collaborate in "deliberating about what is regarded as expert knowledge, examining underlying assumptions, and making the lives of families and communities part of the curriculum," (Bondy & Brownell, 2004). Additionally, the course built on the case study approach described by McLellan

(2004), as a means for instructors to "allow learners to actively construct knowledge that has significant real-world relevance." Following McLellan's strategy, these stories were coupled with discussion questions intended to help each student deepen their understanding of the family's point of view and the effects of the community and culture on family functions and perspective. Even though the course adheres to theories of evidence based best practice in teacher education, this study depicts instructors often conflicted about whether the course curriculum and implementation really invoked a conceptual change in their students.

Harry and Klingner (2006) have found that service providers in an inner-city setting allowed their images of families, which were based on negative stereotypes, to affect the educational decisions made regarding their students. Additionally, Losen and Orfield (2002) document several cases in which school personnel verbalized "unabashed negative opinions" of the families of students referred to special education. The findings of this study support this research in a new way. The professors in this study, like the teachers in Harry and Losen's studies, often responded in similar ways to their students and unintentionally recreated the very practices they are supposed to be interrupting. In the case of Mitch, he believed his students weren't good teachers. He did not seem to recognize the impact of his own negative perception of his students on his practice, even though as a professor he was teaching this concept to his students. In many ways he and other participants were recreating a cycle of practice that they know from research is not best practice. The notion of "do as I say, not as I do" appears to be alive and well. Given the gravity of these trends in the field of special education and the need for conceptual change of special education teachers engaging with families, the findings of this study, while limited to one university setting, are troublesome and should act as a call to action and reflection for special education teacher educators.

The experience of the participants in this descriptive study urges future research to examine whether or not instructors truly have the knowledge and background to teach a course on families in the context of special education. Furthermore, collaboration between faculty members in schools of education should be examined more deeply to further understanding this professional dynamic and its use in the academy. While literature calls for more dynamic collaborative skills for teachers, teacher educators within special education must begin to explore what perspectives of collaborative skills they are depicting in their university classrooms. Special education as a field must learn from the recent work on conceptual change of Cochran-Smith et al. (in press), and pursue ways to assess the conceptual change we invoke in our students. We in special education teacher education must begin to walk our talk and hold ourselves accountable to the standards we have for special education practitioners.

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Appendix

Instructor Questions

1. Do you like the format of this class? Why or why not? (Planning Meetings or Technology Aspect)
2. Do you think students are engaged by the course format?
3. Do you feel this class is impacting students' attitudes and beliefs about families?
4. Is there anything you wish you had done differently so far in teaching this course?
5. Do you feel the Family Project, vignettes, text, and/or discussions were beneficial for your students?
6. Would you change anything about the course chats?
7. Are there any additional resources that you use or would like to have used to enhance the course?
8. What do you feel your students will take away from this class?
9. What do you think is critical about family/professional relationships?
10. Are there any personal or professional experiences involving families that forms your teaching?
11. What were the best and worst parts of teaching the course?

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