CONSISTENCY AND CHANGE IN EARLY CAREER TEACHERS: FINDINGS FROM A THREE YEAR LONGITUDINAL STUDY

Selected Findings from the Teacher Effectiveness Project-Phase II:

THE LONGITUDINAL EFFECTS OF TEACHER PREPARATION ON THE PRACTICE, BELIEFS AND THINKING OF NEW TEACHERS AND THE LEARNING OF THEIR STUDENTS

Teaching Research Division
Western Oregon University
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SESSION OVERVIEW

- Focus of the study
- Questions, design, participants
- Contextual grounding
- Some key findings around beliefs and attitudes
- Some key findings around practices and student learning (effectiveness)

- Questions and Answers

- Ray Pechone: Implications for teacher education polices and research
FOCUS OF THE STUDY

- Effects of specific characteristics within “traditional” teacher preparation programs **NOT** “traditional” vs. “alternative” programs.

- Degree to which specific Standards-Based teacher preparation characteristics are present or emphasized.
  - Orientation to K-12 content standards
  - Overt connections between teaching and learning
  - Developmental teacher assessment system within program

- Logical next step from TEP-I
GENERAL QUESTIONS

The Central Research Question:
- Does teacher preparation – in its design, structure and character – make a difference in the practice, beliefs and thinking of new teachers and the learning of their students?

Sub-Question Areas:
- Descriptive-comparative questions focusing on what teachers do, how they think, what they believe and the quality and quantity of the learning of their students (i.e., questions focusing on what is).

- Longitudinal-development questions focusing on change and what influences change.

- Discrepancy-comparative questions focusing on teaching and learning to accepted standards (i.e., questions focusing on how what is stacks up to what is expected).
SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

- Where do early career teachers get hired, and how does the context of these schools compare to the types of schools in which they are prepared to teach?

- What assistance do early career teachers receive in their development as practicing professionals?

- Do the beliefs and attitudes of early-career teachers change over time? If they do, what influences these changes?

- Do the practices of early-career teachers change over time? If they do, what influences these changes?
DESIGN

The Project in Context – Genres of Research on Teacher Education
From the chapter by Mary Kennedy in, The Teacher Educator’s Handbook, 1996.

- Production-Function Genre
- Comparing the Haves and the Have-Nots Genre
- Ask the Teacher Genre
- Experimental Genre
- Watch Teacher Candidates Change genre

- TEP-II is a hybrid and highly exploratory

- Primarily “ex post facto causal-comparative” study employing mixed-methods with a strong longitudinal component.
DATA COLLECTION METHODS

- Structured interview
- Battery of attitudinal surveys
- Classroom demographic description form
- Open-ended questionnaires
- Classroom observations
- Teacher Portfolios (extended work samples with student learning)
- Self-assessment rating form (proficiencies for Continuing Licensure)
- Focus groups
- Artifact review
- Extant school and district context databases (state developed)
- Third-party ratings
PARTICIPANTS

- 76 full-time first year teachers.
  - 62 were female – 14 were male
    Many went straight from high school through college and into teaching – some were starting a second career.
    A mix of the very young (21-22) and the mature (50’s).

- Public K-5/6 Elementary Schools.

- Prepared both within Oregon and outside of Oregon.
  - 60 from Oregon

- Prepared at both public and private institutions.

- Prepared in both 4-year and 5th year/MAT programs.
PARTICIPANTS

- Attrition has been an issue when working with beginning teachers.
  - Lost 10 during first year of teaching
  - Lost 17 between first & second year
  - Lost 8 between second & third year
    - Too much work (13)
    - family or personal medical reasons (3)
    - Maternity leave (3)
    - Moved out of state (2)
    - Could not find/lost track (10)

- Intact sample of 45 teachers over three years