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# The Effect Of A Teacher Preparation Program On Teacher Preparedness From The Perspective Of First-Year Teachers And Their Principals

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THE EFFECT OF A TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAM ON TEACHER  
PREPAREDNESS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF FIRST-YEAR TEACHERS AND  
THEIR PRINCIPALS

By

Christi D. Wright

Dissertation Approved:



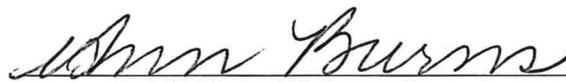
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Date May 5, 2017

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PREPAREDNESS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF FIRST YEAR TEACHERS AND  
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## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband, Derrick Wright, and daughters, Taylor and Grace Tyndall, who provided me with love and support. Also, my parents, Carson and Donna Slone, who always challenged me to pursue my dreams.

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## **ABSTRACT**

Teacher attrition, particularly among first-year teachers, has encouraged research studies at identifying concerns and recommendations for analyzing and improving college and university teacher preparation programs. The purpose of this quantitative study is to examine and analyze the preparedness of first-year teachers from a private university. More specifically, the study identifies how first-year teachers and their principals perceive their preparation to effectively teach students in the classroom. First-year teachers and their principals shared their perceptions of teacher education preparedness by taking an online survey. All data collected from the survey were self-reported. Due to a small sample size, multiple years (2010-2015) were used to analyze the data. The aim of the study is to identify perceptions of first-year teachers and their principals so specific feedback may be provided to teacher education programs.

Overall, first-year teachers identified themselves as proficient, in regard to preparedness, based on their teacher education program. Furthermore, these teachers perceive themselves as proficient and adequately prepared to work with technology integration within the classroom setting. However, there is significant difference in perceptions of principals as related to first-year teacher preparedness. Overall, principals identified that the vast majority of first-year teachers demonstrated proficient to exemplary rating as related to teacher preparedness.

Based on the results of the study, three endorsements are recommended. First, university teacher preparation programs should be more intentional in providing classroom management strategies to assist with managing student behavior effectively. Secondly, specific feedback from graduates should be requested from teacher preparation

programs in order to provide additional data related to assessment practices used to monitor student learning. Lastly, teacher education programs would benefit from an examination of how the institution's clinical experiences influence curriculum and instructional practices, and then make adjustments to courses to address these areas.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The fundamental purpose of school lies in the achievement and accomplishment of its students. For many decades, educators believed John Dewey's view of education; the purpose of schooling is not just about acquiring a certain set of skills, but rather understanding the impact of how to use one's education and skill set for the greater good of social change and reform. Dewey also had ideas about how the process of learning should look for children and the vital impact of the teacher within the learning process. In keeping with Dewey, the teacher becomes a facilitator in the learning process, guiding students to independently discern meaning within the content. Even after 100 years, Dewey's idea is still valued in teacher education. Dewey (1964) wrote, "Scholastic knowledge is sometimes regarded as if it were something quite irrelevant to method. When this attitude is even unconsciously assumed, method becomes an external attachment to knowledge of subject matter" (p. 160). It is Dewey who addressed the fundamental relationship between theory and practice when preparing teachers. The dialogic tension between theory and practice continues to be at odds within university infrastructures.

Teacher effectiveness has a significant influence on student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2006a). A focus on quality teaching must start with adequate and superior training and professional development for teachers as provided within teacher preparation programs (Strong, 2006; Darling-Hammond, 2006a; Feiman-Nemser, 2001). As new initiatives and changes occur in educational reform, teacher preparation programs must continue to stay abreast of teacher effectiveness. At the core of teacher preparation

programs should be the explicit work of practice (Ball and Forzani, 2009; Darling-Hammond, 2006a). Ball and Forzani (2009) emphasize that practice “entails close and detailed attention to the work of teaching and the development of ways to train people to do that work effectively, with direct attention to fostering equitably the educational opportunities for which schools are responsible” (p. 497). The critical work of teaching must be focused on how students learn and are prepared for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Therefore, teacher preparation programs must prepare teacher candidates to effectively deliver quality instruction to all pupils.

More than 200,000 new teachers enter the teaching profession each year in the United States to begin educating and impacting the lives of young people (Sadker & Zittleman, 2010). Morey, Bezuk, and Chiero (1997) (as cited in Rees, 2015) found, “As new teachers enter their classrooms for the first time, they face unprecedented challenges related to changes in societal context, increasing ethnic diversity, and the condition of public education. As a group, they struggle with the transition from college student to classroom teacher; they encounter situations where they question whether they have the necessary knowledge or problem-solving skills to respond effectively” (p. 22).

According to Ball (2010a), explicit knowledge and skill are necessary beyond basic expertise to develop a high degree of fluency in breaking down a skill so that others can learn from it. Morey, Bezuk, and Chiero (1997) address the concerns in education around the expectations and responsibilities of novice teachers being the same or more difficult than those of more veteran teachers. Researchers have long discussed the isolated task of teaching outside of time spent with students. This approach leaves new teachers on their own to “sink or swim” and feels the successes and failures in their own

classrooms, while still held accountable for student learning. Instructional practices are central to the way in which curriculum is used in helping students succeed. Therefore, professional preparation is instrumental in ensuring students learn and teachers are effective.

Educational reform continues to redefine the role of teachers and how they inform their teaching. The accountability for teacher quality has become a priority in every school across the country. In response, teacher education programs have had to adjust to provide necessary curricular guidance. Effective training and professional development opportunities for teachers, as provided by teacher preparation programs, begins the process of quality instruction (Strong, 2006; Darling-Hammond, 2006a; Feiman-Nemser, 2001). Disputably, we are confronted with alternative programs and certifications that lack reliability and alignment to best practices. Studies have concluded the negative effects these fast-track programs promote by producing poorly prepared teachers of high turnover henceforth producing low levels of student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2006a; Cochran-Smith, 2005; Strong, 2006). Furthermore, colleges and universities face challenges in preparing teachers as a result of increased tuition costs and waning resources (Cochran-Smith, 2005).

La Maistre & Paré, (2010) addressed the conflict between novice teachers' expectations and actuality of teaching in a classroom. This conflict is based on beginning teachers' challenge to teach the way they were trained in their teacher preparation programs, which follow research-based best practices or succumb to teaching the way others in their school environment are teaching which contradict their initial training (Brashier & Norris, 2008). Additionally, this conflict serves as a critical decision point

where novice teachers deliver research-based instructional best practices to students or succumb to practices ineffective teachers deliver within the school setting. These practices are a critical part of an ongoing effort to improve beginning teachers' practices and expertise to increase the overall effectiveness of teaching.

### **Background of the Study**

“With a system of schooling that has never delivered high-quality education to all students, policy makers and educational leaders are calling for more complex and ambitious goals to prepare youth for the demands of the 21st century” (Ball & Forzani, 2009, p. 497). In reviewing studies, many suggest government directives have an undesirable influence on how best to prepare teachers. Researchers agree that state and federal mandates, which overpower certification measures and curricular requirements, have an adverse effect on teacher preparation programs where the purpose is to train and develop effective teachers. What’s more, local school districts across the country lack consistency in hiring practices and professional development of first-year teachers henceforth increasing job morality rates. Furthermore, several studies cite high teacher attrition rate with a lack of sufficient teacher preparation, administrative support, teacher resources, and involvement in decision making, especially within the first five years of teaching (Smith & Rowley, 2005; Ingersoll, 2001; Darling-Hammond, 2003).

Many teacher preparation programs are reevaluating and restructuring to improve the overall education and training to teacher candidates (Berry, 2004; Darling-Hammond, 2003). Of nearly the 1,200 teacher preparation programs throughout the country, each differs in how the program is structured and in quality (Ingersoll, et. al, 2007). Cognizing the variations in teacher preparation programs are critical when

understanding the impact of teachers on student learning. Consequently, there is a lack of alignment and unequivocal research for agreement on how best to prepare teachers (Boyd, et. al. 2007).

Sir William Osler, a renowned medical educator, stated: “He who studies medicine without books sails an uncharted sea, but he who studies medicine without patients does not go to sea at all.” What teachers understand and can teach has the greatest significant effect on what students learn (NCATE, 2010). Novice teachers are challenged with balancing theory with practice, to improve teaching and learning.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this quantitative research study is to examine the perceptions of preparedness from first-year teachers and their principals based on a teacher preparatory program. Data for this analysis were collected through the use of survey methodology. The research study included two experimental groups and took place in a private university in northwest Indiana. The first experimental group was comprised of first-year teachers and the second experimental group was composed of the principals who supervise those first-year teachers.

This quantitative research study examined first-year teacher perceptions and their principals’ perceptions of preparedness of a teacher preparation program. For purposes of this study, first-year teachers reported feelings of preparedness on fifteen of the twenty survey questions. Principals also reported feelings of preparedness by first-year teachers on fifteen of the twenty survey questions, despite only three questions showing similar beliefs of unpreparedness among first-year teachers and their principals.

Furthermore, this quantitative study was to contribute to the research concerning the successes and challenging issues of first-year teachers and their principals, and the ways in which teacher preparation programs can be restructured to better prepare teacher candidates for their first year of teaching. Ramono & Gibson (2006) asserts, “Through identification and description of the issues and concerns presented during their first year of teaching, beginning teachers can identify patterns, call on their previous knowledge, and determine what they might need to improve their practice (p. 2)

Darling-Hammond (2010) notes that effective teacher education programs are coherent; that is, excellence in teaching are structured around course work, clinical experiences bridging the connection between theory and practice. First-year teachers state that they do not feel adequately prepared to teach when hired, and their principals often agree (Levine, 2006). Consequently, research confirms teachers who have received pedagogical training and certification have a greater impact on student achievement scores than those who did not (Coggshall, Rasmussen, et.al, 2012). The need for an integrated approach of merging theory concepts into preparatory coursework while applying in authentic classroom settings must be provided to increase teacher effectiveness Darling-Hammond, 2010a).

Council for the accreditation of educator preparation (CAEP) (formerly NCATE and TEAC) revealed the establishment of the Commission on Standards and Reporting to develop new accreditation standards, in 2012, for teacher preparation focusing on data driven program characteristics based upon multiple measures (CAEP, 2013b). NCATE (2010) reports that student learning must reflect the design and implementation of

practice-based teacher preparation programs, the assessment of new teachers, and university and colleges that have prepared newly trained teachers.

It is imperative that each teacher education program, in collaboration with local school districts, must become collaborative in thinking about teacher preparation as a dual responsibility. Through partnerships, teacher preparation programs will effortlessly incorporate content and pedagogy to build teacher candidate knowledge. A review of the correlated literature shows the lack of alignment among teacher education programs; creating feelings of inadequacies in first-year and novice teachers (Berry, 2004; Levine, 2006; Darling-Hammond, 2006b).

### **Limitations of the Study**

This study was limited to self-reported survey data from first-year teachers and principals from the northwest Indiana university, and therefore not representative of all teacher preparatory universities. First-year teacher and principal data may be limited by the perceptions of the respondents. Through the use of surveys, one can collect data in an efficient way by gathering information from individuals or groups with a quick turnaround. Further limitations are based on how well the research participants understand and answer the survey questions based on their own perceptions of teacher program preparedness.

Study findings are based on first-year teacher and principal responses to the questions on the teacher preparation surveys. Certain questions were not answered by all research participants. The self-reported data from first-year teachers and principals may not be honest and true to their actual feelings and therefore, generalizations made are limited. When participants' understanding of questions vary from the definition the

researcher proposed, oversights and errors in the data can occur. It is imperative to mention that self-reported data could result in unreliable and misconstrued analysis.

The timing of when the survey was distributed may also be considered a limitation of the study. Questionnaires were sent to teachers in April 2010 and each year in April until 2015. This timing at the end of a school year, following state assessments and new teacher evaluations could create lack of response and/or rushed responses from some. Additionally, time demands and job responsibilities during this time were high may have influenced their inability to provide accurate responses.

The study is limited to only perceptions of the research participants and not of other stakeholders from the school district or university. Stakeholders such as school administrators, mentor teachers, university faculty, and students were not surveyed regarding perceptions of teacher preparedness from the northwest Indiana university. Further research should be examined through the analysis of other stakeholders' perceptions.

A final limitation of the quantitative study is the exclusion of the written responses provided by first-year teachers and their principals. The qualitative analyses would provide additional insights into the respondent's responses and perceptions of preparedness.

### **Research Survey Questions**

This study focused on the following research responses for first-year teachers at a northwest Indiana university:

1. I demonstrate knowledge of subject matter/content.
2. I understand and address social, intellectual, and personal needs of students.

3. I foster critical thinking and problem-solving in students.
4. I reflect on and revise instructional strategies to meet student needs.
5. I manage classroom activities effectively.
6. I manage students' behavior effectively.
7. I motivate students' effectively.
8. I use effective verbal communication skills.
9. I use effective written communication skills.
10. I prepare and implement lessons and units aligned to student learning outcomes.
11. I prepare and implement lessons and units relevant to student needs and interests.
12. I use formative assessment results to adjust instruction and improve student learning.
13. I evaluate students fairly.
14. I demonstrate professional behavior and attitudes.
15. I participate in professional development opportunities.
16. I interact and collaborate effectively with other school professionals.
17. I interact and collaborate effectively with parents and guardians of students.
18. I use technology available at my school to improve student learning.
19. I adapt teaching strategies and materials for special education students.
20. I effectively address needs of students of diverse cultural and language backgrounds.

This study focused on the following research responses for principals of first-year teachers at a northwest Indiana university:

1. This teacher demonstrates knowledge of subject matter/content area.
2. This teacher understands and addresses social, intellectual, and personal needs of students.
3. This teacher fosters critical thinking and problem-solving in students.
4. This teacher reflects on and revises instructional strategies to meet student needs.
5. This teacher manages classroom activities effectively.
6. This teacher manages students' behavior effectively.
7. This teacher motivates students' effectively.
8. This teacher uses effective verbal communication skills.
9. This teacher uses effective written communication skills.
10. This teacher prepares and implements lessons and units aligned to student leaning outcomes.
11. This teacher prepares and implements lessons and units relevant to student needs and interests.
12. This teacher uses formative assessment results to adjust instruction and improve student learning.
13. This teacher evaluates students fairly.
14. This teacher demonstrates professional behavior and attitudes.
15. This teacher participates in professional development opportunities.

16. This teacher interacts and collaborates effectively with other school professionals.
17. This teacher interacts and collaborates effectively with parents and guardians of students.
18. This teacher uses technology available at my school to improve student learning.
19. This teacher adapts teaching strategies and materials for special education students.
20. This teacher effectively addresses needs of students of diverse cultural and language backgrounds.

### **Research Questions**

**Q1:** What are first-year teachers' perceptions of preparedness upon completion of a teacher preparation program?

**Q2:** Is there a difference between first-year teachers' perceptions and their principals' perceptions of preparedness upon completion of a teacher preparation program?

### **Definition of Terms**

*Curriculum:* the learning goals and experiences designed by the teacher, with the students, standards, content, and activities in mind (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005).

*Instruction:* the interaction between teacher, student, and content, in the context of the environment of delivery (Ball & Cohen, 1999).

*National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE):* an accrediting body for institutions that provide training to teachers and other educational personnel for work in preschool, elementary, and secondary schools (NCATE, 2010).  
*Novice teachers:* teachers with five years or less teaching experience (Kim & Roth, 2011, p. 4).

*Pedagogy:* the “art or science of teaching, which includes instructional strategies and methods” (Gollnick & Chinn, 2009, p. 410).

*Perceptions:* personal convictions, philosophies, or opinions about teaching and learning (Czerniak, Lumpe, & Haney, 1999).

*Teacher Candidate:* a college student who is participating in a teacher education program. The student is not yet certified to teach.

*Teacher efficacy:* the power or capacity to produce the desired effect; effectiveness; the quality of being successful in producing an intended result, the extent to which the teacher believes he or she has the capacity to affect student performance (Reeves, 2011, p, 36).

*Traditional teacher preparation programs (TTP):* are programs where participants may major in either education with a content-area specialty or in a content area with a focus on education. Traditional programs include courses on how to teach (pedagogy) and academic content and may include courses on working with special populations (such as students with special needs or English language learners). Field experience, often called student teaching, is an important part of traditional programs and helps students gain on-the-job experience by working in a classroom with an experienced teacher. Traditional programs often require candidates to pass assessments of their basic

skills in reading, writing, and mathematics to be accepted into the program (U.S. Department of Education; section 201, definitions, 2011c).

### **Summary**

Continued examination of teacher preparation programs in training effective teachers must be reviewed and discussed. Research on teacher candidates' preparation differs based on training features within each teacher education program. Due to inconsistencies among curriculum alignment and training practices, teachers learn different skills and thus, feel differently prepared in different aspects of teacher preparation (Darling-Hammond, Chung, & Frelow, 2002). The lack of consistency in teacher preparation programs make for various perceptions of preparedness among beginning teachers and certain program features appear to be a difference maker in how candidates' perceive themselves prepared to teach in today's classrooms. The impact of student learning based on feelings of first-year teacher self-efficacy contributed to the body of research on teacher preparation in this study.

### **Organization of Chapters**

The following chapters include a review of the literature, research methodologies for this proposed study, results, and discussion of findings. Specifically, chapter two contains a review of related literature as it pertains to teacher preparedness. Research methodology is presented in chapter three, including procedures used throughout the study, sample description of the research participants, instrumentation used in data collection, procedures employed throughout the study, and a description of the data analysis process. Chapter four presents the results of the study, including research design, and statistical analysis. Lastly, a discussion of the findings and conclusions with first-year

teacher and principal perceptions of reported preparedness variables, and recommendations are summarized.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **Introduction**

The study intends to illustrate the influence of a teacher preparation program on the perceptions of first-year teachers and their principals and is relevant due to the nature of knowledge and skills that influence the training of teachers. Also, the review of literature concentrates on current practices of teacher education programs as they pertain to training teacher candidates. Furthermore, understanding whether first-year teachers have different perceptions than their principals regarding their preparation may also offer beneficial insights.

This literature review begins with a theoretical framework of Ball's (2010b) high-leverage teaching practices that give emphasis to a practice-focused teacher educational program. The theoretical framework addresses inequity in teaching how and what to teach within teacher preparatory programs. Next, the history of teacher preparation programs is explored by examining various components emphasized during teacher training. Furthermore, common features in teacher preparation programs are then discussed by considering ways to assist teacher candidates in meeting the needs of a diverse population. In conclusion, possible ways teacher preparation programs can better prepare teacher candidates for the teaching profession are discussed.

#### **Theoretical Framework**

Ball's (2011) high leverage practices for teacher education programs provided a theoretical framework for this study. Ball (2011) states,

“In working to articulate these high-leverage practices, we sought to shift

teachers' training from an emphasis on knowledge and beliefs to a focus on judgment and action. A practice-focused curriculum for learning to teach would focus on the actual tasks and activities involved in the work. Such a curriculum would not settle for developing teachers' beliefs and commitments. Because the knowledge that matters most is that which is used in practice, the professional curriculum would emphasize repeated opportunities to do the interactive work of teaching and to receive feedback-not just to talk about the work" (p. 19).

To provide effective teaching to students, special skills and knowledge are critical in teacher preparation programs since they are not naturally possessive in teacher candidates. Grisham, Lenski, & Wold (2006), note that perceptions of effective teaching practices and student learning have evolved based on experiences the teacher candidate has encountered throughout their academic journey. Ball (2010b) concedes "a need for identifying a common set of high-leverage practices that underlie effective teaching and to develop ways to teach them" (p. 44). Ball (2011) identified nineteen high-leverage teaching practices that can most productively be trained and learned through teacher preparation programs. The practices are:

1. Leading a group discussion
2. Explaining and modeling content, practices, and strategies
3. Eliciting and interpreting individual students' thinking
4. Diagnosing particular common patterns of student thinking and development in a subject-matter domain
5. Implementing norms and routines for classroom discourse and work
6. Coordinating and adjusting instruction during a lesson

7. Specifying and reinforcing productive student behavior
8. Implementing organizational routine
9. Setting up and managing small group work
10. Building respectful relationships with students
11. Talking about a student with parents or other caregivers
12. Learning about students' cultural, religious, family, intellectual, and personal experiences and resources for use in instruction
13. Setting long- and short-term learning goals for students
14. Designing single lessons and sequences of lessons
15. Checking student understanding during and at the conclusion of lessons
16. Selecting and designing formal assessments of student learning
17. Interpreting the results of student work, including routine assignments, quizzes, tests, projects, and standardized assessments
18. Providing oral and written feedback to students
19. Analyzing instruction for the purpose of improving it

Ball's core ideas in understanding the high leverage practices state that everyone must know the practices and be held accountable for demonstrating those practices for teaching and learning. She elaborates on the importance of performance assessment of individual competence before allowing teacher candidates to practice independently based on an agreed-upon standard.

Furthermore, Ball (2011) states that in order to have strong training for responsible practice, teacher preparation programs must focus on clear specifications of skills, capabilities, and qualities of performance necessary for independent practice, as

well as, developmental, clinical training, progressing from observing to simulations, with coaching, to independent practice in settings that support professional learning. Ball's (2011) core components of practice-centered teacher education involves curriculum, instructional activities and settings, and assessment to assist in preparing novice teachers. Overall, teaching is a practice and must be focused on learning and doing the actual work that is crucial to the improvement of teacher preparation.

These high-leverage practices confront the core issues of teacher preparation, which is the importance of helping teacher candidates practice teaching in authentic contexts while taking content area and method courses. Hammond (2014) states, "in some particularly powerful programs, faculty who teach courses also supervise and advise teacher candidates, and sometimes even teach children and teachers in placement schools, bringing together these disparate program elements through an integration of roles" (p. 550). Furthermore, a strong clinical and didactic curriculum are critical to teacher education programs and assist teacher candidates with learning and connecting theory and practice.

### **Historical Background**

In 1672, Father Démis of France, cultivated the first known schooling for apprentice teachers for the purpose of reading Catechism (Cubberley, 1948). In 1685, St. John Baptist de la Salle, established the first teacher training program in France for the purpose of training his potential teachers to teach others about the *Order of the Brothers of the Christian Schools*. Soon after, he established teacher training where inexperienced teachers could work under experienced teachers in practice schools (Cubberley, 1948). However, it was Germany who developed the very first curriculum devoted to developing

teachers in secondary schools, primarily around academics. Their solitary purpose was to provide training to teachers on how to teach.

Around 1800, Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi began work focusing on the development of the whole child. He believed education was a means to improve social justice. Pestalozzi is credited with establishing the first secular elementary school, where the focus was on nurturing children's reasoning and pursuing their observations. His philosophy and practices are still visible in today's pedagogical practices.

In 1827, Reverend Samuel R. Hall was the first to open a teacher training school in the United States. However, it was Governor Clinton of New York in 1827 that envisioned and developed schools in each county for the education of teachers. These were the first legislative funded schools for educating and training teachers (Painter, 2005).

Soon after the conclusion of the American Revolution, the state of Massachusetts reformed the certification process of who could teach teachers according to designated town officials. The criteria narrowed down to a teacher being of acceptable character. According to Fraser (2007), "we know from autobiographies and other sources how important they were. But we know far too little about the teachers who taught in these informal but essential schools and certainly almost nothing about their preparation to teach" (p. 21). Despite the lack of quality training, the nineteenth-century view of teacher preparation began to change with the instituting of common schools.

Common schools started as the first public institution welcoming all cultures, classes, and gender of children from the age of six to sixteen (Cubberley, 1948). Horace Mann is credited with forming the initial public school system, known as the Common

School, in Massachusetts that was systematic across the state. He believed in educating a child where they were and created separate classes to expand the curriculum.

Due to a teacher shortage, in 1839, normal schools were developed to train teachers in structured institutions. Again, it was Horace Mann and colleague Henry Barnard who called for a formal teacher preparation program that taught were based on standards that should be addressed in every classroom. Both Mann and Barnard saw teacher preparation as a vital part of our country's education. The requirement of content knowledge, fundamentals of teaching, and school government were part of the Normal Schools curriculum. Teacher graduates were expected to pass assessments before being issued a license to teach.

With the onset of the Civil War (1861-1865), men were being recruited to leave their families and homes to fight for their country. This change brought women into secondary and higher education as teachers, something not previously allowed (Beale, 1941). This created a paradigm of change in the way education had been traditionally established. Due to our country becoming more industrialized, more students were attending educationally based schools. By the mid-nineteenth century, high schools were established to prepare young adults for a career or college. The training of elementary teachers was growing by 1870, and the United States was at the forefront of developing teachers.

New policy and practice in educating students who were diverse and segregated from state schools were conveyed through the Civil Rights Act (Pulliam and Van Patten, 2003). The bill brought before Congress ensured every child received a free public

education. An additional law was passed giving individuals with disabilities the opportunity to access a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).

Despite more than 200 years of focus on how to prepare teachers within teacher preparation programs, the federal government did not intervene until the mid-1950s. Lyndon B. Johnson identified the need to educate students of poverty, and with assistance from legislators, passed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 which addressed the equalization and accessibility of quality education for all students. By 1967, the federal government created the Education Professions Development Act focusing on teacher training. Resources and support structures were directed by the federal government to improve teacher quality. Now teacher preparation programs are being evaluated with requirements that come with criticism. It is now common for reports to be given regarding teacher quality, where 50% of teachers are regarded as unqualified to instruct in the content area they are teaching in, which has resulted in teacher attrition and ultimately the decline of student achievement.

### **Perceptions of Teacher Preparation Programs**

Excellence in teaching should be the primary focus of all teacher preparation institutions. The training of teacher candidates is critical to the success of schools. Darling-Hammond (2010a) noted, “The traditional elements of the profession are formal preparation, licensure, certification, and accreditation” (p. 36). Monroe, Blackwell, and Pepper (2010) maintain “teacher education programs have the task of developing thoughtful and socially progressive educators who can teach effectively” (p. 1).

Research documents the importance of teacher preparation in other countries, such as South Korea, Finland, and China, where top high school candidates are chosen to

attend universities, where they are trained in theory, as well as pedagogical practices. However, American colleges and universities are under attack because of student achievement concerns. The aim to produce students, who can compete globally, cannot come to fruition without quality teachers. According to Ogle and Beers (2012), “The foundation of good teaching is providing students with interesting and meaningful context” (p.20).

Currently, with four million teachers in the United States, teaching is the largest profession and must continue to grow in order address the high attrition rate, teacher shortage and prepare students for a complex and changing world. The question of how to produce the most effective teachers continues to have dialogic tension among educators and policy makers. Because of varied perceptions on preparation programs, universities face challenges in preparing candidates for the complexities of teaching. “Curriculum development, assessment, and differentiated instruction” are being strengthened to increase the effectiveness of teacher preparation programs and keeping teachers in the field (Scherer, 2012, p. 18).

Due to educational concerns, universities are restructuring their teacher education programs around requirements for admission, evaluating content and curriculum, and increased clinical experiences to address pedagogical skill. Furthermore, by imposing a more rigorous approach to entering the teacher preparation program, ensures that schools are provided with academically capable and effective teachers of content and pedagogy. By improving the selection process and strengthening the curriculum, gives depth and asset to the education profession.

Various research studies suggest that new teachers, who perceive their preparation program to be adequate, tend to have fewer issues within their first years. Powell (2015) indicated the importance of beginning teacher reflection. Powell concluded the following to be essential in effective reflection: “reflective practice requires conscious effort; self-knowledge is vital; reading about and researching aspects of teaching; talking with other educators; and being deliberate – doing what we do for a reason” (p. 21). It is through reflection that affirms teacher growth and improvement. Perry (2011) notes that within the first two years of teaching, significant growth occurs. However, Perry (2011) wrote, “The largest gains in effectiveness occur during the first five years of teaching” (p.4). In quoting Darling-Hammond, Powell (2015) stated, “Substantial research evidence suggests that well-prepared teachers have the largest impact on student learning” (p.27).

### **Teacher Preparation Program Features**

The foundational core of teacher preparation programs is the training of teacher candidates to meet the vast needs of diverse learners. Teacher education must be focused on novice teachers’ ability to know and demonstrate key practices of teaching. Extensive and intensive coaching is necessary to move novice teachers into proficiency. This consideration is central to the practice of producing quality teaching. It is imperative that instructional practices be effective in responding to the differences among student learners across contexts and content. A committee report given by the National Academy of Education starts with the following quote by Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005):

“To a music lover watching a concert from the audience, it would be easy to believe that a conductor has one of the easiest jobs in the world. There he stands, waving his arms in time with the music, and the orchestra produces glorious

sounds, to all appearances quite spontaneously. Hidden from the audience, especially from the musical novice, are the conductor's abilities to read and interpret all of the parts at once, to play several instruments and understand the capacities of many more, to organize and coordinate the disparate parts, to motivate and communicate with all of the orchestra members. In the same way that conducting looks like hand-waving to the uninitiated, teaching looks simple from the perspective of students who see a person talking and listening, handing out papers, and giving assignments. Invisible in both of these performances are the many kinds of knowledge, unseen plans, and backstage moves, the skunkworks, if you will, that allow a teacher to purposefully move a group of students from one set of understandings and skills to quite another over the space of many months.

On a daily basis, teachers confront complex decisions that rely on many different kinds of knowledge and judgment and that can involve high-stakes outcomes for students' futures. To make good decisions, teachers must be aware of the many ways in which student learning can unfold in the context of development, learning differences, language and cultural influences, and individual temperaments, interests, and approaches to learning. In addition to foundational knowledge about these areas of learning and performance, teachers need to know how to take the steps necessary to gather additional information that will allow them to make more grounded judgments about what is going on and what strategies may be helpful. Above all, teachers need to keep what is best for the child at the center of their decision-making. This sounds like a simple point but it is a complex matter

that has profound implications for what happens to and for many children in school” (p. 1-2).

However, teacher preparation programs have features that increase the efficacy and perception of teacher candidates to teach the many needs of students (Darling-Hammond, 2006b). The common features established by Darling-Hammond (2006b) in a seven-program study that produced well-prepared teacher from their initial entry into the classroom include:

1. A common, clear vision of good teaching that permeates all coursework and clinical experiences, creating a coherent set of learning experiences;
2. Well-defined standards of professional practice and performance that are used to guide and evaluate coursework and clinical work;
3. A core curriculum, taught in the context of practice, grounded in knowledge of child and adolescent development and learning, an understanding of social and cultural contexts, curriculum, assessment, and subject matter pedagogy;
4. Extended clinical experiences, at least 30 weeks of supervised practicum and student teaching opportunities in each program, that are carefully chosen to support the ideas presented in simultaneous, closely interwoven coursework;
5. Extensive use of case methods, teacher research, performance assessments, and portfolio evaluation that apply learning to real problems of practice;
6. Explicit strategies to help students confront their own deep-seated beliefs and assumptions about learning and students and to learn about the experiences of people different from themselves; and

7. Strong relationship, common knowledge, and shared beliefs among school and university-based faculty jointly engaged in transforming teaching, schooling, and teacher education (p.548).
8. The shift of moving normal schools to colleges and universities has transformed the power in pedagogy within teacher preparation programs. Darling-Hammond, 2006b, explained, “in contrast to the many critiques that have highlighted the structural and conceptual fragmentation of traditional undergraduate teacher education programs (see, e.g., Goodlad, Soder, & Sirotnik, 1990; Zeichner & Gore, 1990), coursework in highly successful programs is carefully sequenced, based on a strong theory of learning to teach; courses are designed to intersect with each other and are aggregated into a well-understood landscape of learning and they are tightly interwoven with the advisement process and students’ work in schools” (p. 550). Overall, teacher preparation programs must connect experiences for teacher candidates in teaching and learning through shared experiences in working in theory and practice.

Hammond (2014) notes, “many professions, including law, medicine, psychology, and business, help candidates bridge the gap between theory and practice and develop skills of reflection and close analysis by engaging them in the reading and writing of cases” (p.552). Teacher preparation programs can create learning contexts for teacher candidates to develop case studies by providing opportunities to collect data involving authentic student work to observe, examine, and analyze. This professional experience allows candidates to further put their ideals in practice.

Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005) specified a necessary and important prerequisite for teacher candidates is the integration of field experience in working with students under the supervision of a master teacher. Field experiences need to be supplemented by pedagogies that merge theory and practice. Teacher educators must provide explicit instructional strategies in college method courses that model theory and practice. Ball and Forzani (2011) wrote, “the academic training should support the demands of the actual work-what teachers need to know in order to practice effectively and make good judgments” (p.19).

Wright, Horn, and Sanders (1997) stated that teachers are the most important factor affecting student achievement. Hattie (2003) also argues that excellent teachers are influence student learning. Wright, Horn, and Sanders (1997) wrote that more could be done in improving the education of students by providing an increase of effective teachers. Therefore, it is imperative that schools and universities improve their partnerships with local school districts for teacher candidates to see and practice teaching and learning in authentic settings of instruction.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

#### **Research Procedures**

The central purpose of this quantitative study was to measure the perceptions of preparedness of first-year teachers and their principals regarding their teacher preparation program at a northwest Indiana university. Chapter three describes the research methodology and design used in the study by the researcher. Furthermore, research design, participants, research questions and hypotheses, the instrument used in data collection, and data analysis will be explored.

#### **Research Design**

Creswell (2008) explains quantitative research as a means of testing theories by examining relationships among variables. (Leedy and Ormrod, (2001) described quantitative research as a statistical approach that builds upon theories that have been researched and established. Creswell (2003) asserts that quantitative researchers “have assumptions about testing theories deductively, building in protections against bias, controlling for alternative explanations, and being able to generalize and replicate the findings” (p. 32).

This quantitative study will conclude whether or not there is a significant difference in teacher and principal perceptions of preparedness based on a teacher preparation program. First-year teachers and principals’ perceptions of preparation were measured using a Likert-type scale. The use of descriptive statistics and independent sample t-tests were used to answer the research questions and hypotheses.

The comparison means of two or more independent groups will determine if there is a statistically significant difference between perceptions of teacher preparedness.

### **Research Questions**

**Q1:** What are first-year teachers' perceptions of preparedness upon completion of a teacher preparation program?

**Q2:** Is there a difference between first-year teachers' perceptions and their principals' perceptions of preparedness upon completion of a teacher preparation program?

**H2<sub>0</sub>:** There is not a statistically significant difference in principals' perceptions and first-year teachers' perceptions of preparedness based on a teacher preparation program.

**H2<sub>a</sub>:** There is a statistically significant difference in principals' perceptions and first-year teachers' perceptions based on a teacher preparation program.

### **Instrumentation**

Two surveys were released to collect data needed to complete this research study. The two survey instruments, "First-year Teacher Perceptions of Preparedness and Principal Perception of First-year Teacher Preparedness", had content validity, as it was based on Ball's (2011) theoretical model of teacher preparation programs and was created and agreed upon by the Teacher Education Committee, comprised of secondary and elementary faculty members, at a northwest Indiana university. The survey was field tested with 20 first-year teachers and 22 principals as a part of the validation process. Additional comprehensive studies on content validity, criterion-related validity, and predictive validity, have been conducted since the initial field test in 2000. Cronbach's

alpha coefficient of internal consistency is .97, which indicates high reliability.

The twenty core items created were the same for first-year teachers and their principals.

A total of 144 first-year teachers and 167 principals responded to a survey about their perceptions of teacher preparedness in a northwest Indiana university. A 5-point Likert scale (0 = not observed, 1 = below basic, 2 = basic, 3 = proficient, and 4 = exemplary) was used in the questionnaire for self-assessment. The overall goal of the surveys was to quantify perceptions of first-year teachers and their principals regarding preparedness in their teacher preparation program.

The beginning of the surveys began with questions regarding demographic information of the first-year teacher and principal. Next, a written questionnaire, using a 5-point Likert scale, regarding their perceptions of the teacher preparation program in preparing them for teaching, assessing, and student learning was given. A core set of items were analyzed from a review of the literature as effective components in teacher preparation programs and thus reflected in this study's research questions.

The survey consisted of 20 core items, which will be analyzed in this study (see Appendix C) and were separated into four categories: (a) Content Knowledge & Instructional Knowledge (7 items):

1. Knowledge of content,
2. Fostering critical thinking,
3. Reflecting and revising Instructional Strategies to Meet Student Needs,
4. Use of Technology to Improve Student Learning,
5. Addresses Social, Intellectual, and Personal Needs of Students,

6. Adapts Teaching Strategies for Special Needs Students, and
7. Adapts teaching strategies for diverse cultural and language backgrounds;

(b) Classroom Management (3 items):

1. Management of Classroom Activities,
2. Management of Student Behavior, and
3. Motivating Students;

(c) Curriculum and Assessment (4 items):

1. Prepare and Implement Lessons Aligned to Student Outcomes,
2. Prepare and Implement Lessons Relevant to Student Needs,
3. Use of Formative Assessment, and
4. Evaluating Students fairly;

(d) Professionalism (6 items):

1. Demonstrate Professional Behavior,
2. Participate in Professional Development,
3. Effective Verbal Communication,
4. Effective Written Communication,
5. Interact and Collaborate with School Professionals, and
6. Interact and Collaborate with Student Guardians.

Table 3.1 shows an alignment among Ball’s (2010a) high-leverage practices, Hattie’s (2016) effect sizes, and Marzano’s (2008) database of instructional strategies. Ball (2010a), Hattie (2016) and Marzano (2008) each agree that effective teaching strategies influence student learning.

Table 3.1

Effective Teaching Strategies Influencing Student Learning

<b>Survey Questions</b>	<b>Ball’s High Leverage Practices</b>	<b>Hattie’s Effect Sizes</b>	<b>Marzano’s Practices</b>
1. I/this teacher demonstrate(s) knowledge of subject matter/content.	2. Explaining and modeling content, practices, and strategies	Teacher subject matter knowledge = .09	1. Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum
2. I/this teacher understand(s) and address(es) social, intellectual, and personal needs of students.	10. Building respectful relationships with students	Teacher-student relationships = .72	6. Instructional Strategies
3. I/this teacher foster(s) critical thinking and problem-solving in students.	3. Eliciting and interpreting individual students’ thinking	Problem solving teaching = .63	2. Challenging Goals and Effective Feedback
4. I/this teacher reflect(s) on and revise(s) instructional strategies to meet student needs.	6. Coordinating and adjusting instruction during a lesson	Teaching strategies = .60	6. Instructional Strategies
5. I/this teacher manage(s) classroom activities effectively.	8. Implementing organizational routines	Classroom management = .52	7. Safe and Orderly Environment

Table 3.1 Continued

<b>Survey Questions</b>	<b>Ball's High Leverage Practices</b>	<b>Hattie's Effect Sizes</b>	<b>Marzano's Practices</b>
6. I/this teacher manage(s) students' behavior effectively.	7. Specifying and reinforcing productive student behavior	Classroom behavioral = .63	7. Classroom Management
7. I/this teacher motivate(s) students' effectively.	5. Implementing norms and routines for classroom discourse and work.	Motivation = .44	11. Motivation
8. I/this teacher use(s) effective verbal communication skills.	1. Leading a group discussion. 18. Providing oral and written feedback to students.	Teacher verbal ability = .22	6. Instructional Strategies
9. I/this teacher use(s) effective written communication skills.	18. Providing oral and written feedback to students.	Provide Feedback = .73	6. Instructional Strategies
10. I/this teacher prepare(s) and implement(s) lessons and units aligned to student learning outcomes.	13. Setting long- and short-term learning goals for students.	Teacher clarity = .75	8. Classroom Curriculum Design
11. I/this teacher prepare(s) and implement(s) lessons and units relevant to student needs and interests.	14. Designing single lessons and sequences of lessons. 9. Setting up and managing small group work.	Teacher estimates of achievement = 1.62 Small group learning = .47	8. Classroom Curriculum Design

Table 3.1 Continued

<b>Survey Questions</b>	<b>Ball's High Leverage Practices</b>	<b>Hattie's Effect Sizes</b>	<b>Marzano's Practices</b>
12. I/this teacher use(s) formative assessment results to adjust instruction and improve student learning.	15. Checking student understanding during and at the conclusion of lessons.  17. Interpreting the results of student work, including routine assignments, quizzes, tests, projects, and standardized assessments.	Providing formative evaluation = .68	1. Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum
14. I/this teacher demonstrate(s) professional behavior and attitudes.		Collective teacher efficacy = 1.57	5. Collegiality and Professionalism
15. I/this teacher participate(s) in professional development opportunities.	19. Analyzing instruction for the purpose of improving it.	Professional development on student achievement = .51	5. Collegiality and Professionalism
16. I/this teacher interact(s) and collaborate(s) effectively with other school professionals.		Collective teacher efficacy = 1.57	5. Collegiality and Professionalism
17. I/this teacher interact(s) and collaborate(s) effectively with parents and guardians of students.	11. Talking about a student with parents or other caregivers.	Parental involvement = .49	3. Parent and Community Involvement

Table 3.1 Continued

<b>Survey Questions</b>	<b>Ball's High Leverage Practices</b>	<b>Hattie's Effect Sizes</b>	<b>Marzano's Practices</b>
18. I/this teacher use(s) technology available at my school to improve student learning.	19. Analyzing instruction for the purpose of improving it.	Computer-assisted instruction = .45	8. Classroom Curriculum Design
20. I/this teacher effectively address(es) needs of students of diverse cultural and language backgrounds.	12. Learning about students' cultural, religious, family, intellectual, and personal experiences and resources for use in instruction.	School cultural effects = .20	10. Learned Intelligence and Background Knowledge

### **Research Participants**

The study participants were first-year teachers and their principals, who were teaching in private and public schools during the years 2010 to 2015. The first-year teacher participants all graduated from the same teacher preparation program, participated in a similar student teaching experience, and completed common educational courses of study. All principals supervised first-year teachers who graduated from the same teacher preparation program.

### **Data Collection**

The rater and self-rating survey were distributed electronically to first-year teachers and their principals who were near completion of their initial year of teaching or supervising the first-year teacher. First-year teachers were emailed a letter of cooperation and asked to complete the survey regarding their perceptions of preparedness, based on a teacher preparation program, and submit electronically through SurveyMonkey.

Principals were emailed a letter of cooperation and encouraged to complete the survey in SurveyMonkey based on their perceptions of preparedness of first-year teachers and the items centered on a teacher preparation program. Furthermore, principals were requested to score the first-year teachers on the 20 items, in comparison to other first-year teachers they had supervised in the past. To ensure high participation was obtained, follow-up written communication was sent to all first-year teachers and their principals in the same format two weeks after the initial email was sent. Continued measures were taken in the following two weeks to complete the survey. Based on the continued efforts to request completion of the survey, a higher rate of return is noted in Table 3.1 and Table 3.2.

The sample represented in Table 3.2 represents the 2010-2015 sample from first-year teachers survey data, based on a university teacher preparation program in northwest Indiana. First-year teacher surveys data, from 2010, shows a sample size of 28, with a 93% response rate. First-year teacher survey data, from 2011, shows a sample size of 28, with a 65% response rate. First-year teacher survey data, from 2012, shows a sample size of 17, with a 79% response rate. First-year teacher survey data, from 2013, shows a sample size of 17, with a 61% response rate. First-year teacher survey data, from 2014, shows a sample size of 33, with a 94% response rate. First-year teacher survey data, from 2015, shows a sample size of 21, with a response rate of 50%.

Table 3.2

Sample N Counts by Year (First-year Teacher Survey)

Year	N	Percent
2010	28	93%
2011	28	65%
2012	17	79%
2013	17	61%

Table 3.2 Continued

Year	N	Percent
2014	33	94%
2015	21	50%
Total	144	74%

The sample represented in Table 3.3 represents the 2010-2015 sample from principal survey data.. Principal survey data, from 2010, shows a sample size of 29, with a 94% response rate. Principal survey data, from 2011, shows a sample size of 32, with a response rate of 86%. Principal survey data, from 2012, shows a sample size of 11, with a response rate of 52%. Principal survey data, from 2013, shows a sample size of 23, with a 93% response rate. Principal survey data, from 2014, shows a sample size of 34, with a 97% response rate. First-year teacher survey data, from 2015, shows a sample size of 38, with a response rate of 86%.

Table 3.3

Sample N Counts by Year (Principal Survey)

Year	N	Percent
2010	29	94%
2011	32	86%
2012	11	52%
2013	23	93%
2014	34	97%
2015	38	86%
Total	167	74%

Each survey administered to first-year teachers and principals was entered into an SPSS data file to safeguard the accuracy of the data.

## Data Analysis

Data analysis focused on defining areas where first-year teachers and their principals felt prepared, and areas preparation was deficient. The use of descriptive statistics was engaged in defining the research study sample groups of first-year teachers and their principals.

The data for first-year teachers and principals was collected through Survey Monkey. The specific questions to guide the study are as follow:

1. What are first-year teachers' perceptions of preparedness upon completion of a teacher preparation program?
2. Is there a difference between first-year teachers' perceptions and their principals' perceptions of preparedness upon completion of a teacher preparation program?

Two hypotheses related to finding a difference between first-year teachers' and their principals' perceptions of preparedness upon completion of a teacher preparation programs are as follows:

**H2<sub>0</sub>:** There is not a statistically significant difference in principals' perceptions and first-year teachers' perceptions of preparedness based on a teacher preparation program.

**H2<sub>a</sub>:** There is a statistically significant difference in principals' perceptions and first-year teachers' perceptions based on a teacher preparation program.

The use of an independent sample *t*-test assessed the two hypotheses. The purpose of using the independent-sample *t*-test is to provide a mean comparison across two single groups to determine if a statistically significant difference exists. Descriptive statistics

were conducted to identify possible relationships between first-year teacher and total question scores in the four categories in the survey: content knowledge and instruction; classroom management; curriculum and assessment; and first-year teacher and professionalism. The statistical tests applied in this research study were based on an alpha of .05. All data analyses were conducted using the predictive analytic software system SPSS or Statistical Package for the Social Sciences.

### **Survey Reliability and Consistency**

The survey was administered to all first-year teachers and their principals at the end of each 2010 to 2015 school year. A reliability analysis of the variables within the data showed all 144 completed surveys to be valid. Table 3.4 shows the internal reliability analysis among the questionnaire items.

Table 3.4

#### Survey Reliability Summary

		N	%
Surveys	Valid	144	100.0
	Excluded	0	.0
	Total	144	100.0

Survey data was collected, coded, and analyzed using SPSS statistical software. The questionnaire consisted of 20 core items on a 5 point Likert scale ranging from 4 = Exemplary to 0 = Not observed. The survey was based on Ball's (2011) theoretical model of teacher preparation programs, provided the data regarding perceptions of teacher candidates and their principals of a teacher preparatory program in northwest Indiana. All statistical tests, including the internal consistency of the survey items, used Cronbach's alpha level of .05 for the basis and results of the small-scale research study. The survey

was to measure the perceived perceptions of preparedness among first-year teachers and their principals, in the areas of Content Knowledge and Instruction, Classroom Management, Curriculum and Assessment, and Professionalism, who attended the same university, after completion of their first year of teaching. High numbers in reliability statistics, using Cronbach’s alpha, proves consistency and cohesiveness among the survey questions within each domain. Table 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7 and 3.8 show reliability among the survey response items.

In Table 3.5 below, the reliability statistics shows the Cronbach alpha value of .899 and reflects high reliability among the seven survey questions. This indicates a high level of internal consistency in the area of Content Knowledge and Instruction.

Table 3.5

Reliability: Content Knowledge and Instruction  
Reliability Statistics

Cronbach’s Alpha	N of Items
.899	7

In Table 3.6 below, the reliability statistics shows the Cronbach alpha value of .885 and reflects high reliability among the three survey questions. This indicates a high level of internal consistency in the area of Classroom Management.

Table 3.6

Reliability: Classroom Management  
Reliability Statistics

Cronbach’s Alpha	N of Items
.885	3

In Table 3.7 below, the reliability statistics shows the Cronbach alpha value of .881 and reflects high reliability among the four survey questions. This indicates a high level of internal consistency in the area of Curriculum and Assessment.

Table 3.7

Reliability: Curriculum and Assessment

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.881	4

In Table 3.8 below, the Reliability statistics shows the Cronbach alpha value of .875 and reflects high reliability among the six survey questions. This indicates a high level of internal consistency in the area of Professionalism.

Table 3.8

Reliability: Professionalism

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.875	6

**Ethical Considerations**

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Eastern Kentucky University and a northwest Indiana university, was contacted before acquiring the dataset. It was determined by both institutions that by using a secondary dataset, with unidentifiable data, that approval was not needed due to the research not involving human subjects.

**Delimitations**

This study focuses on perceptions of preparedness of first-year teachers and their principals based on a teacher preparation program. The decision to not include teachers

with more than one-year experience delimited the study. Despite implications for teachers beyond their first-year teaching, the study was further delimited to only full-time new teachers that attended the teacher preparation program where the secondary dataset was collected.

### **Limitations**

The 2010 to 2015 first-year teacher perceptions of preparedness survey and the 2010 to 2015 principal perception of first-year teacher preparedness survey is a secondary data set. Due to the nature of the data, limitations are to be expected. This research study did not look at all variables that could impact first-year teachers.

Self-reported data is provided in the first-year teacher and principal survey, and only first-year teachers that attended the same northwest Indiana university, were asked to report. Secondly, the researcher is employed at the northwest Indiana university, in which the secondary dataset was collected. However, the researcher was not employed at the time of collection from the reported years in the survey.

Despite similar educational experiences, it is important to note differences among the participants. The quantitative study doesn't sample according to gender, race, geographical region (rural, suburban, or urban), or by area of concentration among elementary, middle, secondary, or special education teachers. This variation will give information, despite different teaching contexts, on the impact of their perceptions of preparation during their initial teaching assignment.

The study was limited to first-year teachers and their principals in one teacher preparation program in northwest Indiana. In a small-scale study, findings are limited in their generalizability by the latitude of the study.

A final limitation of this quantitative study is that the qualitative responses were not used to determine the results or findings of the research. To obtain a broader perspective, a qualitative study with first-year teachers, principals, and teacher education faculty professionals, would aid in provided clarification and further insight into possible improvements to teacher preparation programs.

Furthermore, the findings from this study intend to guide teacher preparation programs to revisit and revise the identified categories that decrease the perception of success for first-year teaches and their principals in having an impact on teacher effectiveness and furthermore, student achievement.

### **Summary**

The purpose of this study was to provide further research on the perceptions preparedness of first-year teachers and their principals based on a teacher preparation program. Items of inquiry included: (a) Curriculum Knowledge and Instruction, (b) Classroom Management, (c) Curriculum and Assessment, and (d) Professionalism. To conclude, chapter three emphasized the methodology used to conduct this quantitative study. Points of interest the chapter outlined are the research design, research questions and hypotheses, instrumentation, research participants, and data analysis. Lastly, chapter three concluded with ethical considerations, delimitations, and limitations of the research study. Provided in chapter 4, will be the data analyses and findings of the research.

## CHAPTER 4

### ANALYSIS OF DATA

This study's purpose was two-fold: (a) to analyze first-year teachers' perceptions of preparedness, and (b) to examine the difference between first-year teachers' and their principals' perceptions of preparedness upon completion of a teacher preparation program. Analyses and findings are structured and reported in this chapter four around the research questions posed in this study.

Data analysis focused on an attempt to measure (a) perceptions among first-year teachers' perceptions upon completion of a teacher preparation program, and (b) if there was a significant difference between first-year teachers' perceptions and their principal's perceptions based on a teacher preparation program? Multiple quantitative analytic methods were used in the study. Survey responses were not analyzed according to ethnicity, gender, age, educational program, or years of experience serving as principal.

The chapter results are organized by the research questions that guided this study to determine:

**Q1:**What are first-year teachers' perceptions of preparedness upon completion of a teacher preparation program?

**Q2:** Is there a difference between first-year teachers' perceptions and their principals' perceptions of preparedness upon completion of a teacher preparation program?

The survey was administered at the conclusion of each school year, 2010-2015, to all first-year teachers who attended the same northwest Indiana university teacher preparation program and their principals who supervise them. A northwest Indiana university provided

the use of existing data for this research study. The survey questions for both first-year teachers and their principals remained constant throughout the years 2010-2015. The survey questions were based on categorical areas identified within a Likert-scale: (4) exemplary; (3) proficient; (2) basic; (1) below basic; (0) not observed.

### **First-Year Teachers' Perceptions of Preparedness Results**

In research question one, "What are first-year teachers' perceptions of preparedness upon completion of a teacher preparation program?", descriptive statistics were conducted to analyze first-year perceptions of preparedness. First-year teachers' results on perceptions of preparedness in the area of Content Knowledge and Instruction (M=3.18), Classroom Management (M=2.85), Curriculum and Assessment (M=3.07) and Professionalism (M=3.12), are presented below. Results indicate that first-year teachers perceive themselves as prepared in all areas, except in the area of Classroom Management.

In Table 4.1, first-year teachers provided scores on perceptions of preparedness in the area of Content Knowledge and Instruction. Question one, identified in the category of Content Knowledge and Instruction, "*I demonstrate knowledge of subject matter and content*" had the highest mean score of 3.34, indicating perceptions of proficiency in content knowledge and subject matter. Questions six and seven contained the lowest scores under the category of Content Knowledge and Instruction. Question six, "*I foster critical thinking and problem-solving in students*" and question seven, "*I effectively address needs of students of diverse cultural and language backgrounds*, resulted in mean scores of 3.06, indicating less proficiency in addressing critical thinking and meeting the needs of various diverse populations. Both mean scores indicate proficiency

in perception of preparedness from first-year teachers in the area of Content Knowledge and Instruction.

Table 4.1

Content Knowledge and Instruction Item Means (First-Year Teacher Survey)

Response Item(s)	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I demonstrate knowledge of subject matter and content.	143	3.34	.581
I reflect on and revise instructional strategies to meet student needs.	142	3.27	.673
I adapt teaching strategies and material for special education students.	142	3.25	.736
I understand and address social, intellectual, and personal needs of students.	143	3.16	.657
I use technology available at my school to improve student learning.	138	3.09	.782
I foster critical thinking and problem solving in students.	143	3.06	.714
I effectively address needs of students of diverse cultural and language backgrounds.	142	3.06	.742

In Table 4.2 below, first-year teachers provided mean scores on perceptions of preparedness in the area of Classroom Management. Question eight, “*I motivate students effectively*” had the highest mean score of 2.93, indicating below proficiency perceptions of in classroom management. Question ten, “*I manage student behavior effectively*” resulted in the lowest mean score of 2.76, indicating less proficiency in managing classroom behaviors.

Table 4.2

Classroom Management Item Means (First-Year Teacher Survey)

First-Year Teacher	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I motivate students effectively.	143	2.93	.738
I manage classroom activities effectively.	143	2.87	.740
I manage student behavior effectively.	143	2.76	.824

In Table 4.3, first-year teachers provided mean scores on perceptions of preparedness in the area of Curriculum and Assessment. Question eleven, “*I evaluate students fairly*” had the highest mean score of 3.28, indicating proficiency in perceptions of preparedness. Question fourteen contained the lowest mean score of 2.92, “*I use formative assessment results to adjust instruction and improve student learning*”, indicating less confidence in preparation in assessing for student performance.

Table 4.3

Curriculum and Assessment Item Means (First-Year Teacher Survey)

First-Year Teacher	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I evaluate students fairly.	139	3.28	.762
I prepare and implement lessons and units aligned to student learning outcomes.	139	3.02	.775
I prepare and implement lessons and units relevant to student needs and interests.	141	2.96	.731
I use formative assessment results to adjust instruction and improve student learning.	139	2.92	.703

In Table 4.4, first-year teachers provided mean scores on perceptions of preparedness in the area of Professionalism. Question fifteen, “*I interact and collaborate effectively with parents and guardians of students*” had the highest mean score of 3.29, indicating proficiency in perceptions of professional preparedness. Question twenty contained the lowest mean score of 2.88, “*I participate in professional development opportunities*”, indicating less confidence in gaining professional growth outside the classroom setting.

Table 4.4

*Professionalism Item Means (First-Year Teacher Survey)*

First-Year Teacher	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I interact and collaborate effectively with parents and guardians of students.	140	3.29	.742
I use effective written communication skills.	142	3.27	.651
I use effective verbal communication skills.	143	3.27	.692
I participate in professional development opportunities.	128	2.88	.717
I demonstrate professional behaviors and attitudes.	140	2.99	.831
I interact and collaborate effectively with other school professionals.	134	3.04	.750

**First-Year Teachers’ and Principals’ Perceptions Results**

Research question two, “Is there a difference between first-year teachers’ perceptions and their principals’ perceptions of preparedness upon completion of a teacher preparation program?”, descriptive statistics and Independent Samples T-Tests

were conducted to explore possible differences between first-year teachers' and their principals' perceptions of preparedness based on a teacher preparation program.

Table 4.5 shows the category level variable means, in descending order, from the surveys completed by the first-year teachers and their principals. The data were analyzed using Descriptive Statistics. Both first-year teachers' and principals' results showed proficient mean scores on average. Proficient mean scores were identified in the domains of Professionalism (M=3.15), Content Knowledge and Instruction (M=3.13), and Curriculum and Assessment (M=3.09). In the area of Classroom Management (M=2.91), first-year teachers and principals reported a score just below proficient, indicating least feelings of preparedness. Results show a difference of .24 from the highest mean (Professionalism=3.15) to the lowest mean score (Classroom Management=2.91) from first-year teachers and principals. All mean scores and standard deviations were based on full-scale scores.

Exemplary 4	Proficient 3	Basic 2	Below Basic 1	Not Observed 0
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Table 4.5

Combined Variable Means of Teacher Preparedness Categories in Descending Order

First-Year Teachers and Principals Preparedness Categories	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Professionalism	274	3.15	.564
Content Knowledge and Instruction.	272	3.13	.545
Curriculum and Assessment	289	3.09	.616
Classroom Management	310	2.91	.719

Table 4.6 provides mean scores of first-year teachers' and their principals' perceptions of preparedness in the category of Content Knowledge and Instruction. Both first-year teachers' and principals' results showed mean scores in the proficient range. Results indicate that principals feel first-year teachers are prepared in subject matter and instructional strategies as the first-year teachers feel prepared.

Table 4.6

Content Knowledge and Instruction Item Means by Role

Response Item(s)	First-year Teachers			Principals		
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I/this teacher demonstrate(s) knowledge of subject matter and content.	143	3.34	.581	167	3.26	.632
I/this teacher understand(s) and address(es) social, intellectual, and personal needs of students.	143	3.16	.657	167	3.01	.772
I/this teacher foster(s) critical thinking and problem-solving in students.	143	3.06	.714	165	3.02	.694
I/this teacher reflect(s) on and revise(s) instructional strategies to meet student needs.	142	3.27	.673	164	3.14	.758
I/this teacher use(s) technology available at my school to improve student learning.	138	3.09	.782	164	3.08	.646
I/this teacher adapt(s) teaching strategies and materials for special education students.	142	3.25	.736	146	2.88	.694
I/this teacher effectively address(es) needs of students of diverse cultural and language backgrounds.	142	3.06	.742	148	2.99	.700

Table 4.7 provides mean scores of first-year teachers' and their principals' perceptions of preparedness in the category of Classroom Management. Results indicate that principals feel first-year teachers are prepared in classroom management techniques more than the first-year teachers feel prepared. First-year teachers posted mean scores slightly below proficiency, while principals showed scores slightly above proficiency.

Table 4.7

Classroom Management Item Means by Role

Response Item(s)	First-year Teachers			Principals		
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I/this teacher manage(s) classroom activities effectively.	143	2.87	.740	168	3.0	.812
I/this teacher manage(s) student behavior effectively.	143	2.76	.824	168	2.90	.849
I/this teacher motivate(s) students effectively.	143	2.93	.738	167	2.99	.825

Table 4.8 provides mean scores of first-year teachers' and their principals' perceptions of preparedness in the category of Curriculum and Instruction. Both first-year teachers' and principals' results showed mean scores in the proficient range. Results indicate that principals feel first-year teachers are prepared in curriculum implementation and assessment strategies as the first-year teachers feel prepared.

Table 4.8  
Curriculum and Assessment Item Means by Role

Response Item(s)	First-year Teachers			Principals		
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I/this teacher prepare(s) and implement(s) lessons and units aligned to student learning outcomes.	139	3.02	.775	161	3.13	.663
I/this teacher prepare(s) and implement(s) lessons and units relevant to student needs and interests.	141	2.96	.731	162	3.07	.710
I/this teacher use(s) formative assessment results to adjust instruction and improve student learning.	139	2.92	.703	157	2.96	.710
I/this teacher evaluate(s) students fairly.	139	3.28	.762	162	3.29	.786
I/this teacher prepare(s) and implement(s) lessons and units relevant to student needs and interests.	141	2.96	.731	162	3.07	.710
I/this teacher use(s) formative assessment results to adjust instruction and improve student learning.	139	2.92	.703	157	2.96	.710

Table 4.9 provides mean scores of first-year teachers' and their principals' perceptions of preparedness in the category of Professionalism. Both first-year teachers' and principals' results showed mean scores in the proficient range. Results indicate that principals feel first-year teachers are prepared in demonstrating skills in professionalism as the first-year teachers feel prepared.

Table 4.9  
Professionalism Item Means by Role

Response Item(s)	First-year Teachers			Principals		
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I/this teacher use(s) effective verbal communication skills.	143	3.27	.692	167	3.20	.731
I/this teacher use(s) effective written communication skills.	142	3.27	.651	162	3.20	.639
I/this teacher demonstrate(s) professional behaviors and attitudes.	140	2.99	.831	167	3.11	.769
I/this teacher participate(s) in professional development opportunities.	128	2.88	.717	163	3.11	.770
I/this teacher interact(s) and collaborate(s) effectively with other school professionals.	134	3.04	.750	166	3.23	.730
I/this teacher interact(s) and collaborate(s) effectively with parents and guardians of students.	140	3.29	.742	161	3.11	.707

Levene’s Test of Equality was run to measure the homogeneity of variance. The results indicated that the two groups measured were equal in variance based on a significance level greater than 0.05.

Inferential statistical tests were conducted using SPSS. To determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between the means of principals’ and first-year teachers’ perceptions of preparedness based on a teacher preparation program, an independent samples t-test was run on the data with a 95% confidence interval for the

mean difference. It was found that there was no statistically significant difference between principals' and first-year teacher perceptions of preparedness in the categories of Content Knowledge and Instruction, Classroom Management, Curriculum and Assessment, and Professionalism. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted since  $p > .05$ . Tables 4.15, 4.16, 4.17, and 4.18 provide a summary of the independent sample t-tests from the four categories measured.

### **Content Knowledge and Instruction**

The independent sample t-test results presented in Table 4.15 with a 0.05 significance level showed mean scores for perceptions of preparedness in the area of Content Knowledge and Instruction for first-year teachers to be 3.18 and a 3.08 for their principals. Therefore, the difference in the mean scores was small and not statistically significant at 0.05 level.

Table 4.10

#### Independent Samples T-Test on Content Knowledge and Instruction

##### Group Statistics

	First-year Teachers				Principals			
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Content Knowledge and Instruction	138	3.1843	.53569	.04560	134	3.0885	.55309	.04778

##### Independent Samples Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances					t-test for Equality of Means		
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Std. Error Mean
Content Knowledge and Instruction (Equal Variances Assumed)	.312	.577	1.451	270	.148	.09578	.55309	.04669

## Classroom Management

The independent sample t-test results, presented in Table 4.11 with a 0.05 significance level, showed mean scores for perceptions of preparedness in the area of Classroom Management for first-year teachers to be 2.85 and a 2.97 for their principals. Therefore, the difference in the mean scores was not statistically significant.

Table 4.11

### Independent Samples T-Test on Classroom Management

#### Group Statistics

	First-year Teachers				Principals			
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Classroom Management	14 3	2.8531	.66387	.05552	167	2.9741	.76222	.05898

#### Independent Samples Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				t-test for Equality of Means			
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Std. Error Mean
Classroom Management (Equal Variances Assumed)	.878	.350	1.477	308	.141	-.12091	.55309	.05724

## Curriculum and Assessment

The independent sample t-test results presented in Table 4.12 with a 0.05 significance level showed mean scores for perceptions of preparedness in the area of Curriculum and Assessment for first-year teachers to be 3.07 and a 3.11 for their principals. Therefore, the small difference in the mean scores was not statistically significant at 0.05 level.

Table 4.12

Independent Samples T-Test on Curriculum and Assessment

Group Statistics								
	First-year Teachers				Principals			
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Curriculum and Assessment	135	3.0778	.60275	.05188	154	3.1136	.62954	.05073

Independent Samples Test								
	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				t-test for Equality of Means			
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Std. Error Mean
Curriculum and Assessment (Equal Variances Assumed)	.299	.585	-4.93	287	.623	-.03586	.07277	.05130

**Professionalism**

The independent sample t-test results presented in Table 4.13 with a 0.05 significance level showed mean scores for perceptions of preparedness in the area of Professionalism for first-year teachers to be 3.12. Perceptions of preparedness in the area of Professionalism for principals showed a mean score of 3.17. Therefore, the difference in the mean scores was not statistically significant at 0.05 level and the null hypothesis was accepted.

Table 4.13  
Independent Samples T-Test on Professionalism

Group Statistics		First-year Teachers			Principals			
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Professionalism	122	3.1270	.53669	.04862	152	3.1700	.658635	.04756

Independent Samples Test		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				t-test for Equality of Means			
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Std. Error Mean	
Professionalism (Equal Variances Assumed)	.150	.699	-.625	272	.533	-.04291	.06867	.04809	

### SUMMARY

The quantitative research study involved analysis of first-year teachers' and their principals' perceptions of preparedness after completion of a teacher preparation program and their first-year of teaching. A Likert-scale survey was used to identify first-year teachers' and their principals' perceptions of preparedness to be effective in the educational setting and classroom. Based on the responses from the participants, the data was analyzed to answer the research questions, draw conclusions, indicate implications for program improvement, and recommendations for additional and future research.

In response to research question one, *“Is there a difference between first-year teachers' perceptions and their principals' perceptions of preparedness upon completion of a teacher preparation program?”* descriptive statistics indicated that first-year teachers perceived to be most prepared in the category of Content Knowledge and Instruction;

demonstrating knowledge of subject matter and content, with a mean score of 3.34.

Overall, first-year teachers perceived to be least prepared in the category of Classroom Management; managing student behavior effectively, with a mean score of 2.76.

Therefore, first-year teachers demonstrate an affirmative association with their own perceptions of preparedness in the classroom.

In response to research question two, *“Is there a difference between first-year teachers’ perceptions and their principals’ perceptions of preparedness upon completion of a teacher preparation program?”*, the independent sample t-tests indicated that the differences in the means between first-year teachers and their principals were not statistically significant in all four categories measured: Content Knowledge and Instruction, Classroom Management, Curriculum and Assessment, and Professionalism.

The analysis, summary, and findings of this small-scale research are presented in Chapter Five. Implications for further research, recommendations for practice, policy and program improvements are also addressed.

## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### **Discussion of Findings**

Chapter five consists of four major sections. First, it provides a summation of the study, procedures used to collect the data, and data analysis methods. Second, a restatement of the research questions and statistical data, along with the results and findings, are presented. Third, conclusions and recommendations will be provided. Lastly, implications for further research, policy, and practice, are noted.

#### **Research Summary**

The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine perceptions of preparedness of first-year teachers and their principals based on a university teacher preparation program in northwest Indiana. Data from 144 first-year teachers and 167 principal survey responses from 2010-2015 were collected at the end of each school year between the years of 2010-2015. A university teacher preparatory program provided the core for this research study, as well as conclusions about first-year teachers' preparedness that is supportive from reviews of literature and relative studies.

Data and results from 2010-2015 surveys, First-year Teacher Perceptions of Preparedness and Principal Perception of First-year Teacher Preparedness, were utilized to further the research to improve the preparation of teachers during their preparatory program. The research study began with an analysis of the two surveys, 20 core question items, based on categorical areas identified within a Likert-scale: (4) exemplary; (3) proficient; (2) basic; (1) below basic; (0) not observed. The survey questions (6-25) were used for assessing the effectiveness of the teacher preparation program and divided into

four categories: 1) Content Knowledge and Instruction; 2) Classroom Management; 3) Curriculum and Assessment and; 4) Professionalism. High numbers in reliability statistics, using Cronbach's alpha, proved internal consistency and cohesiveness among the survey questions within each domain. Next, variance in perception responses concerning perceptions of preparedness between first-year teachers and their principals were affirmed.

### **Results and Findings**

The results from two research questions were answered based on the research and framed this study:

1. What are first-year teachers' perceptions of preparedness upon completion of a teacher preparation program?
2. Is there a difference between first-year teachers' and their principals' perceptions of preparedness upon completion of a teacher preparation program?

Descriptive statistics and an independent sample t-test were performed to assist in the research on teacher preparation programs. As universities and colleges continue the training of teacher candidates within their preparatory programs, it is crucial that the data inform the framework, methodology, and decisions regarding what increases teacher effectiveness.

The findings and results from the research study indicate that overall, first-year teachers perceived themselves prepared in the areas of content knowledge and instruction, curriculum and assessment, and professionalism. However, first-year teachers felt less prepared in the area of classroom management. Furthermore, principals felt first-year teachers were just as prepared as first-year teachers reported preparedness

in the areas of content knowledge and instruction, curriculum and assessment, and professionalism. Concurrently, principals felt that first-year teachers were least prepared in the area of classroom management. These findings were based on self-reported data provided in the two surveys.

Table 5.1 provides findings of perceptions of preparedness from first-year teachers and their principals. The findings showed no statistically significant difference between principals’ and first-year teacher perceptions of preparedness in the categories of Content Knowledge and Instruction, Classroom Management, Curriculum and Assessment, and Professionalism.

Table 5.1

First-Year Teachers’ and Principals’ Mean Scores Comparison

First-Year Teachers and Principals Preparedness Response Categories	N	Mean	N	Mean
Content Knowledge and Instruction	138	3.1843	134	3.0885
Classroom Management.	143	2.8531	167	2.9741
Curriculum and Assessment	135	3.0778	154	3.1136
Professionalism	122	3.1270	152	3.1700

Conversely, both first-year teachers and their principals indicating below basic scores in classroom management has crucial implications for teacher preparatory programs and local school districts due to effective classroom management practices influence classroom dynamics, create positive teacher-student relationships, and support student learning (Marzano and Marzono, 2003). Marzono and Marzono (2003) stated, “the quality of teacher-student relationships is the keystone for all other aspects of

classroom management” (p. 6). Nonetheless, Wang, Haertel, and Walberg (1993) conducted a comprehensive literature review and found that classroom management had the largest effect on student learning. These findings support the need for teacher preparation programs to provide strategies for effective classroom management practices within their courses of study.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

A practice-focused curriculum is fundamental for teacher candidates to contextualize the tasks of teaching with professional knowledge and theory (Ball, 2011). This conception of teaching enacts instructional practices that skillful teachers must understand as novice educators. Many professions, outside of education, make practice a main focus of novice practitioners. Making practice centralized is an important direction for the improvement of teacher preparatory programs.

The findings from the research study provide evidence of the impact of a teacher preparation program on the perceptions of first-year teachers preparedness in the classroom. The findings also support the impact of a teacher preparation on first-year teachers, from the perception of their principals delivering effective classroom practices to contribute to student achievement. Therefore, it is imperative that teacher preparation programs teach both theory and practice in order to equip classroom teachers with effective practices, skills, and strategies that will enhance student learning.

This study served as a way to understand what practices first-year teachers need within their teacher preparation program in order to be successful classroom teachers. It cannot be stated enough the importance of an effective, quality teacher preparation program to develop successful and operative teacher candidates that can merge content

knowledge with pedagogy. As noted in the research findings presented in Chapter Four and summarized in Chapter Five, classroom management is a practice that must be addressed in teacher preparation programs, within all academic content areas, to provide conceptual coherence between coursework, field experiences and good teaching practices.

The research study findings showed classroom management to be an area of improvement from the self-reported data given by first-year teachers and their principals within a teacher preparation program. In assessing the aggregate data, there was no significant difference among the first-year teachers and their principals in their perceptions of preparation. However, when disaggregating the 20 items on the survey, first-year teachers showed a mean score of 2.85 and their principals showed a mean score of 2.97. Both scores fell below the proficient range. Overall, classroom management had a significant value of .141.

Conclusions can be made regarding higher mean scores from principals than first year teachers in the category of classroom management. This could partly be because first-year teachers are not sending discipline problems to the administration for fear of poor evaluation scores or being pink slipped at the end of the school year. Further research is needed to look within urban, suburban and rural schools to see if there was a significant difference among the school geographic categories.

Darling-Hammond (2010) stated that in order to become a great teacher, one must be given expert guidance by master teachers while learning to teach within practice. It is during this time that teacher candidates engage in hands-on experiences that allow them to implement the coursework with the instructional practice of working with teachers and

students within an authentic classroom setting to observe a more in-depth view, of how students learn. For that reason, it is imperative that teacher preparation programs are providing field experiences to provide the teacher candidates with effective classroom instructional and management strategies to meet the demands of twenty-first century classrooms and learners. Furthermore, teacher preparation programs must insert themselves in actual classrooms to enhance their current understanding of the continuous changes effecting schools so that they can better serve the teacher candidates in becoming more effective teachers.

By merging theory and practice and providing a balance between classroom lecture and clinical settings in applying the two, would offer a component in reducing teacher attrition.

### **Limitations**

Several limitations should be noted that are relative to the research study on perceptions of preparedness among first-year teachers and their principals.

First, the use of survey methodology poses limitations, as the presumption is that all answers were given honestly and with earnest intent. Although reliability statistics showed the data to be valid and the internal consistency analysis to have strength, it is assumed that the intentions of the participants were truthful and responsible. Further limitations of the survey assume first-year teachers who responded to the survey are not representative of all first-year teachers in other preparatory programs. The question design was correlated to practices deemed to be most important to teacher preparation and grouped into four major domains. By be selective in categories and questions, the analysis and findings may be limited.

The research study results were analyzed from a small sample of 144 first-year teachers and 167 principals at a teacher preparation program in northwest Indiana. Due to a small-scale study, findings are limited in their generalizability to other institutions and limit its statistical power.

Next, differences among the participants must be recognized. The research study results did not include demographic data such as gender, race, or geographical region (rural, suburban, or urban). Also, elementary, middle, secondary, or special education programming were not considered in answering the research question on preparation, but were grouped as a whole within the self-reported survey.

An additional limitation of this quantitative study is that the qualitative responses were not analyzed to include in the findings. Further analysis of the qualitative data would provide information for curriculum changes and further teacher preparatory program improvements.

Lastly, the number of first-year teacher respondents compared to their principal responses differed between and among administrations. Because identifiable information was not collected in all the completed surveys, it was not possible to match first-year teachers with their principals.

### **Implications for Practice**

The findings of this study have implications for school districts that hire first-year teachers from a northwest Indiana university teacher preparation program. Furthermore, and government policy makers, can begin to assemble a deeper understanding of what are the best practices in training first-year teachers to be effective classroom teachers.

District administrators, principals, and university faculty, within teacher

education, must work together to support the challenges faced by first-year teachers in the classroom. Providing mentoring programs, mentor teachers, and professional development to develop first-year teachers content and pedagogical practices while building capacity among faculty and staff to assist with student achievement. Being part of professional learning communities will give them opportunities to engage in academic and professional conversations to improve their instructional, assessment, and classroom management practices. By creating professional learning community infrastructures, schools are providing job-embedded professional development opportunities to build the content and pedagogical practices for first-year teachers. This also creates a shared leadership role that builds common goals around student learning and professional growth. DuFour (2004) states that the importance of professional learning communities is not just to teach students, but also to make sure they learn.

Although this research study did not look at all nineteen high-leverage instructional practices from the theoretical framework of Ball (2010a), these practices are instrumental in effectively training teacher candidates to do the work of teaching to improve student learning. A unified coalition needs to be established among teacher preparation programs to bring about a common curriculum that prepares teacher candidates for the work of classroom teaching based on research-based practices that keep with current trends effecting student achievement. Therefore, beyond just theoretical coursework, a reflective field experience must be provided to bring actual practice to the context of teaching within an authentic classroom setting.

If universities and colleges develop a common curriculum, that aligns theory and practice, teacher candidates will establish practices that will provide them with

professional competencies to work in actual classrooms. Until this time comes, it is imperative that teacher preparation programs be rigorous and evaluative in measuring high-leverage classroom practices that make for effective teaching that supports student learning.

The results of this study found that classroom management practices must be improved within teacher preparation programs. Marzano and Marzano (2003) stated that classroom management is one of the most influential practices of first-year teachers in the area of instruction and student achievement.

Although local school districts have a responsibility in providing professional development opportunities in classroom management, teacher preparation programs must also explore how they are supporting the foundational learning for teacher candidates in managing classrooms and students. A joint effort among school districts and teacher preparatory programs early in the formative semesters, would be advantageous in supporting the work of classroom management theories that work and those that fail in authentic classrooms. Therefore, learning various classroom management techniques, plans, and systems would be most beneficial prior to the first year of teaching.

Monroe, Blackwell, and Pepper (2010) stated, “it is often difficult for preservice teachers to practice the management strategies taught in their university courses when the structure of their field experience classroom, the style of their cooperating teacher, and/or the requirements and restrictions from K-12 school administrators limit the types of strategies they are able to implement and practice in the field (p. 2). Furthermore, Hong (2012) shared that classroom management issues contributes to increased stress levels and teacher attrition among new teachers. Overall, it is imperative that classroom

management be part of the training and preparation for teacher candidates in order to provide a conducive classroom where students are engaged, learning, and part of a positive, responsive classroom environment.

Lastly, Levine (2006) acknowledged that, “Rather than continue to try to fit into the arts and sciences mold, education schools need to embrace the reality that they are professional schools and refocus their work on the world of practice. Just as medical schools are rooted in hospitals and law schools focus on the courts, the work of education schools should be grounded in the schools” (p. 9).

### **Implications for Policy**

As further national and state levels look to increase the accountability on teacher preparation programs to better prepare teacher candidates, policy implications must focus on research-based best practices that have high impact on teacher effectiveness. The use of state policy study surveys and data have the capacity to influence what is known to improve teacher equity and quality among our nation.

Continued debates exist among policy makers, researchers, and various levels of educators about what variables have the greatest impact to improve and impact student achievement. Darling-Hammond (2000) states, “some evidence suggests that better qualified teachers may make a difference for student learning at the classroom, school, and district levels, there has been little inquiry into the effects on achievement that may be associated with large-scale policies and institutional practices that affect the overall level of teachers’ knowledge and skills in a state or region (p.2). This supports the growing amount of research that schools do influence student learning and can be attributed to effective teachers. Policy makers must debate this issue in order to improve

the quality of teacher preparation programs and bring consistency to effective practices in content and pedagogy.

There are variations between states on how to best prepare teachers. This has a significant effect on implications for policy development of standards to enforce upon teacher preparation programs. Additional variations exist within curriculum development, course requirements, field experience hours, and licensing from state to state. This difference is also evident in the funding allocations for higher education. “States also differ greatly in the levels of funding they allocate to preservice and in-service teacher education, in the standards they apply to teacher education institutions and to schools, in the types and extent of professional learning opportunities and the incentives for professional study they make available to educators, and the extent to which they require or fund induction supports for beginning teachers” (Darling-Hammond, 2000, p.11).

### **Implications for Future Research**

As identified in the literature review and in this study, first-year teachers who perceived themselves to be well-prepared for teaching, had higher self-efficacy and noted fewer issues in the classroom. Based on findings from this study, results showed perceptions of first-year teacher and their principals, at a northwest Indiana university, to be overall proficient in preparing first-year teachers for the classroom.

Continuing to revisit and revise the identified categories on teacher effectiveness, correlated to the nineteen high-leverage practices that support teacher preparation effectiveness, would provide additional research on areas to improve within teacher preparation programs. A qualitative research study addressing the same questions, but

providing a deeper reflection of what areas of their teacher preparation, specifically, content knowledge, instruction, classroom management, curriculum development, and professional praxis, best prepared them for their first-year of teaching.

With teacher preparation being linked to student achievement, continued research is needed on the specificity of what competencies teacher candidates must know and exhibit within practice is recommended. This instrumental research would bring about consistency in teacher preparation programs, align curriculum and assessments to measure competencies of teacher candidates, and possibly, reduce teacher attrition and stress for new teachers.

Future research may assist the development of how best to infuse classroom management strategies into authentic field experiences as opposed to primarily theory based instruction. Research and other studies contribute poor instruction to inconsistent classroom management practices. This finding could continue to explore the need for collaborative partnerships among school districts and university teacher preparation programs in putting theory to practice as it relates to classroom management. Additionally, working with local school districts could increase the relationship in discussing continued professional development for novice teachers and those mentoring new teachers.

Lastly, a continued study following first-year teachers into their third year of teaching would improve the research on how well prepared they perceived themselves as they integrate theory and practice in their more experienced years. This research would offer additional information in how to revise and bring about foundational and

fundamental changes to assist teacher candidates in the field and in their future classrooms.

### **Conclusion**

In particular, this dissertation has brought a deeper understanding of perceptions of preparedness from the perspective of first-year teachers and their principals regarding a northwest Indiana university teacher preparation program. The research is focused as it correlates to first-year teachers' preparation to be effective classroom teachers from their own perceptions and their principals.

Therefore, the importance to train first-year teachers to focus on student learning as the basis for their preparation is critical. The quantitative research study served as an important component in understanding what influences affect first-year teachers in developing their knowledge and skills to increase student achievement. Furthermore, this study provided what challenges and successes felt by teachers and their principals after the conclusion of their first year of teaching.

In conclusion, it must become the work of our nation to begin to build a bridge to consistency among teacher preparation programs in how teacher candidates are trained in becoming classroom teachers. The pieces of knowledge and skills needed by teachers to improve student learning must begin in their preparatory program and continued through professional development in their schools. The focus must be on building capacity for all teachers and leaders to provide an equitable and quality education for all students.

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## APPENDICES

Appendix A:  
IRB Approval Letter

## NOTICE OF IRB EXEMPTION STATUS

**Protocol Number: 000381**

Institutional Review Board IRB00002836, DHHS FWA00003332

Principal Investigator: **Christi Wright** Faculty Advisor: **Dr. Charles Hausman**

Project Title: **THE EFFECT OF A TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAM ON  
TEACHER PREPAREDNESS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF FIRST-  
YEAR TEACHERS AND THEIR PRINCIPALS**

Exemption Date: **10/27/16**

Approved by: **Dr. Jim Gleason, IRB Member**

This document confirms that the Institutional Review Board (IRB) has granted exempt status for the above referenced research project as outlined in the application submitted for IRB review with an immediate effective date. Exempt status means that your research is exempt from further review for a period of three years from the original notification date if no changes are made to the original protocol. If you plan to continue the project beyond three years, you are required to reapply for exemption.

**Principal Investigator Responsibilities:** It is the responsibility of the principal investigator to ensure that all investigators and staff associated with this study meet the training requirements for conducting research involving human subjects and follow the approved protocol.

**Adverse Events:** Any adverse or unexpected events that occur in conjunction with this study must be reported to the IRB within ten calendar days of the occurrence.

**Changes to Approved Research Protocol:** If changes to the approved research protocol become necessary, a description of those changes must be submitted for IRB review and approval prior to implementation. If the changes result in a change in your project's exempt status, you will be required to submit an application for expedited or full IRB review. Changes include, but are not limited to, those involving study personnel, subjects, and procedures.

**Other Provisions of Approval, if applicable:**

Please contact Sponsored Programs at 859-622-3636 or send email to [tiffany.hamblin@eku.edu](mailto:tiffany.hamblin@eku.edu) or [lisa.royalty@eku.edu](mailto:lisa.royalty@eku.edu) with questions.

Appendix B:  
Post-Graduation Survey of Principals

**Post-Graduation Survey of Principals**

Re: VU Graduate: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Principal: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please put a ✓ in the column that corresponds to your rating of the VU graduate's performance this year:*

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>N.O.</b>
This teacher.....	<b>1-Below Basic</b>	<b>2-Basic</b>	<b>3-Proficient</b>	<b>4-Exemplary</b>	<b>Not Observed</b>
1. Demonstrates knowledge of subject matter and content.	<b>1-Below Basic</b> <i>inadequate</i> for teaching misconceptions about content presents isolated facts few interconnections sporadic student learning	<b>2-Basic</b> <i>basic</i> for teaching few content misconceptions frequent interconnections to content and skills expected. student learning predictable	<b>3-Proficient</b> <i>consistent</i> interconnections to content & skills for student learning engages students in methods of inquiry used in the field	<b>4- Exemplary</b> anticipates & addresses student content misconceptions during instruction; creates high level of student learning and interest in subject	
2. Understands and addresses social, intellectual, and personal needs of students.	<b>1-Below Basic</b> learning activities <i>not developmentally appropriate</i> does not strengthen prior knowledge with new ideas lacks recognition of adequate learning/age differences.	<b>2-Basic</b> learning activities <i>clearly address</i> social, intellectual & personal needs of students uses learning theories to address child/adolescent development	<b>3-Proficient</b> learning activities <i>consistently focused</i> on social, intellectual, & personal needs of students strengthens student prior knowledge encourages student responsibility	<b>4- Exemplary</b> Highly effective use of knowledge of developmental characteristics of students, exceptions to patterns, & learning approaches, to plan & deliver instruction that result in high levels of student learning.	
3. Fosters critical thinking and problem-solving in students.	<b>1-Below Basic</b> little development of critical thinking, problem-solving or performance strategies for learners.	<b>2-Basic</b> <i>frequently engages</i> students in active learning to promote critical thinking & problem solving.	<b>3-Proficient</b> <i>consistently engages</i> students in active learning to promote critical thinking & problem solving.	<b>4- Exemplary</b> Highly effective use of knowledge of developmental characteristics of students, exceptions to patterns, & learning approaches, to plan & deliver instruction that result in high levels of student learning. Persists in seeking & utilizing differentiated learning options for students with varied learning needs	
4. Reflects on and revises instructional strategies to meet student needs.	<b>1-Below Basic</b> <i>limited</i> understanding of strategy impact or active engagement of students	<b>2-Basic</b> selects alternative teaching strategies, materials & technology to achieve multiple purposes	<b>3-Proficient</b> <i>purposefully</i> selects alternative teaching strategies, materials & technology to achieve multiple purposes	<b>4- Exemplary</b> persists in seeking & utilizing differentiated learning options for students with varied learning needs consistently adapts learning for all students	
5. Manages classroom	<b>1-Below Basic</b>	<b>2-Basic</b>	<b>3-Proficient</b>	<b>4- Exemplary</b>	

activities effectively.	limited use of time, space, transitions & learning activities.	manages time, space, transitions & activities effectively.	manages time, space, transitions, and activities effectively to enhance learning	seamless transitions and routines; monitors on a consistent basis to prevent problems	
6. Manages students behavior effectively.	<b>1-Below Basic</b> <i>inadequate</i> motivation & classroom management	<b>2-Basic</b> knows motivation & class management techniques	<b>3-Proficient</b> <i>consistently creates</i> learning environment achieving positive engagement in learning & student self-motivation	<b>4- Exemplary</b> high expectations for appropriate learning and behavior of all students responses to misbehaviors are effective & sensitive to student needs	
7. Motivates students effectively.	<b>1-Below Basic</b> <i>no effective implement</i> of positive social interaction	<b>2-Basic</b> <i>generally creates</i> learning environment encouraging positive engagement in learning & student self-motivation	<b>3-Proficient</b> involves students actively in decision making with responsibility for own actions	<b>4- Exemplary</b> exceptionally purposeful learning environment achieving positive engagement in learning & student self-motivation	
8. Uses effective verbal communication skills.	<b>1-Below Basic</b> uses <i>surface concepts</i> & factual recall in discussion	<b>2-Basic</b> <i>expands student expression</i> in speaking, writing, listening, and other media	<b>3-Proficient</b> <i>sensitive</i> to cultural, gender, intellectual, & physical ability differences in student	<b>4- Exemplary</b> consistently clear directions & procedures; candidate anticipates student misunderstandings choice of vocabulary enriches lessons	
9. Uses effective written communication skills.	<b>1-Below Basic</b> <i>limited</i> written skills	<b>2-Basic</b> <i>acceptable</i> written skills	<b>3-Proficient</b> <i>effective</i> written skills	<b>4- Exemplary</b> model of professional written communication	
10. Prepares and implements lessons and units aligned to student learning outcomes.	<b>1-Below Basic</b> superficial alignment to P-12 standards	<b>2-Basic</b> lesson and unit plans aligned to P-12 standards	<b>3-Proficient</b> <i>consistently prepares</i> plans aligned to P-12 standards	<b>4- Exemplary</b> lesson/unit structure is highly coherent & allows for meaningful reflection plans reflect best practices identified in current research	
11. Prepares and implements lessons and units relevant to student needs and interests.	<b>1-Below Basic</b> <i>inadequate</i> lesson or unit plans, limited relevance to student learning	<b>2-Basic</b> plans adjusted for student needs & to enhance learning	<b>3-Proficient</b> clear progression of skill & knowledge development	<b>4- Exemplary</b> pacing enhances learning for all students	
12. Uses	<b>1-Below Basic</b>	<b>2-Basic</b>	<b>3-Proficient</b>	<b>4- Exemplary</b>	

formative assessment results to adjust instruction and improve student learning.	<i>limited, low-level</i> testing practices; little feedback to students about their learning other than a score.	<i>uses assessment to modify</i> instruction for individual & whole class; gives <i>useful feedback</i> to students, parents, colleagues.	uses <i>variety</i> of assessments to modify instruction for whole class & individuals; <i>involves students</i> in self-assessment activities.	effectively uses a range of formative, summative, and performance-based assessments for learning uses a variety of assessments to enhance instruction & learning student involvement in self-assessment results in student responsibility for own learning	
13. Evaluates students fairly.	<b>1-Below Basic</b> keeps limited records	<b>2-Basic</b> keeps useful records	<b>3-Proficient</b> system of useful records seen	<b>4- Exemplary</b> keeps effective records known as a fair teacher	
14. Demonstrates professional behaviors and attitudes.	<b>1-Below Basic</b> <i>does not complete</i> written reflections after teaching <i>or does with limited insight</i> of what is happening during teaching; <i>does not use data</i> in reflection process.	<b>2-Basic</b> uses variety of problem solving strategies to reflect on practices, student growth & learning in writing after lesson; <i>uses some data</i> in reflection process <i>seeks input from others</i> & accepts advice in positive & collegial manner	<b>3-Proficient</b> <i>consistent</i> use of high level reflection for student growth in writing & verbal modes; seeks input from variety of resources while seeing effects of own choices and actions on others; <i>consistently and effectively uses data</i> in reflection process	<b>4- Exemplary</b> offers specific, alternate strategies to improve student learning based on data-analysis and reflection, noting probable success of these approaches at the forefront ethical legal responsibilities in all models an on-going pursuit for greater understanding of obligations & responsibilities as an educator interrogates the social, historical, philosophical underpinnings of American education	
15. Participates in professional development opportunities.	<b>1-Below Basic</b> does not participate in or mention professional development opportunities.	<b>2-Basic</b> Participates in professional development opportunities.	<b>3-Proficient</b> <i>takes initiative</i> for professional development	<b>4- Exemplary</b> initiates activities to contribute to the profession, including making presentations or conducting research in the room.	
16. Interact and collaborates effectively with other school professionals.	<b>1-Below Basic</b> <i>no or minimal</i> effort to access colleagues to support student learning.	<b>2-Basic</b> does <i>some</i> collegial activities to support student learning; accesses resources, but may not be appropriate ones.	<b>3-Proficient</b> <i>consistent</i> collegial activities to support student learning with colleagues	<b>4- Exemplary</b> volunteers/assumes leadership roles in school/district projects	
17. Interacts and collaborates effectively with parents and guardians of students.	<b>1-Below Basic</b> <i>no or minimal</i> effort to access students, parents, & community to support student learning.	<b>2-Basic</b> does <i>some</i> collegial activities to support student learning; accesses resources, but may not be appropriate ones.	<b>3-Proficient</b> <i>consistent</i> collegial activities to support student learning with students, parents, & community.	<b>4- Exemplary</b> effective partnerships with students, parents, colleagues & community support student learning	
18. Uses technology available at	<b>1-Below Basic</b> <i>little, if any</i> , use of technology to support & engage students to learn;	<b>2-Basic</b> <i>some use</i> of technology to plan, design, assess &	<b>3-Proficient</b> <i>consistent use</i> of technology to plan, design, assess & support	<b>4- Exemplary</b> extensive and effective integration of technology to enhance student learning	

your school to improve student learning.	<i>limited understanding</i> of social, ethical, legal, & human issues in use of technology in P-12 schools.	support students in learning; <i>adequate understanding</i> of social, ethical, legal, & human issues in use of technology in P-12 schools.	students in learning; <i>applies</i> social, ethical, legal, & human practices in use of technology in P-12 schools; uses technology to <i>enhance student learning</i> .	students use technology to create, collaborate, think critically, and/or conduct research	
19. Adapts teaching strategies and materials for special education students.	<b>1-Below Basic</b> <i>does not recognize</i> or accommodate diverse student learning needs; addresses learning needs in superficial manner or only when prompted.	<b>2-Basic</b> <i>supports</i> individual student learning needs; calls on prior experience, learning styles, family, culture & community as resources.	<b>3-Proficient</b> <i>consistent</i> attention to diverse student learning need; adaptations consistently considered; knows how to get & use special services when needed.	<b>4- Exemplary</b> consistently engages students to promote the understanding and value of the unique ways in which they learn	
20. Effectively addresses needs of students of diverse cultural and language backgrounds.	<b>1-Below Basic</b> <i>does not attempt</i> to help students understand and affirm their home and community cultures <b>does not attempt</b> to help students understand and value the unique ways in which they learn <b>does not communicate</b> the value of education in individual students' lives	<b>2-Basic</b> <i>minimal attempts</i> to help students understand and affirm their home and community cultures <b>inconsistent attempts</b> to help students understand and value the unique ways in which they learn <b>limited communication</b> about the value of education in individual students' lives	<b>3-Proficient</b> <i>consistently encourages</i> students to understand and affirm their home and community cultures <b>consistently engages</b> students to promote the understanding and value of the unique ways in which they learn <b>meaningful communication</b> about the value of education in individual students' lives	<b>4- Exemplary</b> <i>consistently interacts</i> with diverse students, parents, & school staff in a respectful and effective manner; <b>challenges negative attitudes</b> & helps insure that all students are respected in the school <b>consistently identifies and uses the resources of</b> students' home and community cultures <b>meaningful communication</b> of the value of education in individual students' lives	

Appendix C:  
Post-Graduation Survey of First-year Teachers

**Post-Graduation Survey of First-year Teachers**

VU Graduate: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please put a ✓ in the column that corresponds to your rating of your teaching performance this year:*

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
This	<b>1-Below Basic</b>	<b>2-Basic</b>	<b>3-Proficient</b>	<b>4-Exemplary</b>	<b>5- Not Observed</b>
1. Demonstrate knowledge of subject matter and content.	<b>1-Below Basic</b> <i>inadequate</i> for teaching misconceptions about content presents isolated facts few interconnections Sporadic student learning.	<b>2-Basic</b> basic for teaching few content misconceptions frequent interconnections to content and skills expected student learning predictable	<b>3-Proficient</b> <i>consistent</i> interconnections to content & skills for student learning engages students in methods of inquiry used in the field	<b>4- Exemplary</b> anticipates & addresses student content misconceptions during instruction; creates high level of student learning and interest in subject	
2. Understand and address social, intellectual, and personal needs of students.	<b>1-Below Basic</b> learning activities <i>not developmentally appropriate</i> does not strengthen prior knowledge with new ideas lacks recognition of adequate learning/age differences.	<b>2-Basic</b> learning activities <i>clearly address</i> social, intellectual & personal needs of students uses learning theories to address child/adolescent development	<b>3-Proficient</b> learning activities <i>consistently focused</i> on social, intellectual, & personal needs of students strengthens student prior knowledge encourages student responsibility	<b>4- Exemplary</b> highly effective use of knowledge of developmental characteristics of students, learning options to patterns, & learning approaches, to plan & deliver instruction that result in high levels of student learning.	
3. Foster critical thinking and problem-solving in students.	<b>1-Below Basic</b> little development of critical thinking, problem-solving or performance strategies for learners.	<b>2-Basic</b> <i>frequently engages</i> students in active learning to promote critical thinking & problem solving.	<b>3-Proficient</b> <i>consistently engages</i> students in active learning to promote critical thinking & problem solving.	<b>4- Exemplary</b> Highly effective use of knowledge of developmental characteristics of students, exceptions to patterns, & learning approaches, to plan & deliver instruction that result in high levels of student learning. Persists in seeking & utilizing differentiated learning options for students with varied learning needs	
4. Reflect on and revise instructional strategies to meet student needs.	<b>1-Below Basic</b> <i>limited</i> understanding of strategy impact or active engagement of students	<b>2-Basic</b> selects alternative teaching strategies, materials & technology to achieve multiple purposes	<b>3-Proficient</b> <i>purposefully</i> selects alternative teaching strategies, materials & technology to achieve multiple purposes	<b>4- Exemplary</b> persists in seeking & utilizing differentiated learning options for students with varied learning needs consistently adapts learning for all students actively seeks additional materials	

				and strategies from outside sources such as the Internet and the community to enhance learning experiences	
5. Manage classroom activities effectively.	<b>1-Below Basic</b> limited use of time, space, transitions & learning activities.	<b>2-Basic</b> manages time, space, transitions & activities effectively.	<b>3-Proficient</b> manages time, space, transitions, and activities effectively to enhance learning	<b>4- Exemplary</b> seamless transitions and routines; monitors on a consistent basis to prevent problems	
6. Manage student behavior effectively.	<b>1-Below Basic</b> <i>inadequate</i> motivation & classroom management	<b>2-Basic</b> knows motivation & class management techniques	<b>3-Proficient</b> <i>consistently creates</i> learning environment achieving positive engagement in learning & student self-motivation	<b>4- Exemplary</b> high expectations for appropriate learning and behavior of all students responses to misbehaviors are effective & sensitive to student needs	
7. Motivate students effectively.	<b>1-Below Basic</b> <i>no effective implement</i> of positive social interaction	<b>2-Basic</b> <i>generally creates</i> learning environment encouraging positive engagement in learning & student self-motivation	<b>3-Proficient</b> involves students actively in decision making with responsibility for own actions	<b>4- Exemplary</b> optionally purposeful learning environment encouraging positive engagement in learning & student self-motivation	
8. Use effective verbal communication skills.	<b>1-Below Basic</b> uses <i>surface concepts</i> & factual recall in discussion	<b>2-Basic</b> <i>expands student expression</i> in speaking, writing, listening, and other media	<b>3-Proficient</b> <i>sensitive</i> to cultural, gender, intellectual, & physical ability differences in student	<b>4- Exemplary</b> consistently clear directions & procedures; candidate anticipates student misunderstandings choice of vocabulary enriches lessons	
9. Use effective written communication skills.	<b>1-Below Basic</b> <i>limited</i> verbal, non-verbal &/or written skills	<b>2-Basic</b> <i>acceptable</i> verbal, non-verbal & written skills	<b>3-Proficient</b> <i>consistently correct</i> verbal, non-verbal & written skills	<b>4- Exemplary</b> level of professional communication	
10. Prepare and implement lessons and units aligned to student learning outcomes.	<b>1-Below Basic</b> superficial alignment to P-12 standards	<b>2-Basic</b> lesson and unit plans aligned to P-12 standards	<b>3-Proficient</b> <i>consistently prepares</i> plans aligned to P-12 standards	<b>4- Exemplary</b> lesson/unit structure is highly coherent & allows for meaningful reflection plans reflect best practices identified in current research	
11. Prepare and implement lessons and units relevant to student	<b>1-Below Basic</b> <i>inadequate</i> lesson or unit plans, limited relevance to student learning	<b>2-Basic</b> plans adjusted for student needs & to enhance learning	<b>3-Proficient</b> clear progression of skill & knowledge development	<b>4- Exemplary</b> enhances learning for all students	

needs and interests.					
12. Use formative assessment results to adjust instruction and improve student learning.	<b>1-Below Basic</b> <i>limited, low-level</i> testing practices; little feedback to students about their learning other than a score.	<b>2-Basic</b> <i>uses assessment to modify</i> instruction for individual & whole class; <i>gives useful feedback</i> to students, parents, colleagues.	<b>3-Proficient</b> uses <i>variety</i> of assessments to modify instruction for whole class & individuals; <i>involves students</i> in self-assessment activities.	<b>4- Exemplary</b> effectively uses a range of formative, summative, and performance-based assessments for learning uses a variety of assessments to enhance instruction & learning student involvement in self-assessment results in student responsibility for own learning	
13. Evaluate students fairly.	<b>1-Below Basic</b> keeps limited records	<b>2-Basic</b> keeps useful records	<b>3-Proficient</b> system of useful records seen	<b>4- Exemplary</b> keeps effective records known as a “fair” teacher	
14. Demonstrate professional behaviors and attitudes.	<b>1-Below Basic</b> <i>does not complete</i> written reflections after teaching <i>or does with limited insight</i> of what is happening during teaching; <i>does not use data</i> in reflection process.	<b>2-Basic</b> uses variety of problem solving strategies to reflect on practices, student growth & learning in writing after lesson; <i>uses some data</i> in reflection process <i>seeks input from others</i> & accepts advice in positive & collegial manner	<b>3-Proficient</b> <i>consistent</i> use of high level reflection for student growth in writing & verbal modes; seeks input from variety of resources while seeing effects of own choices and actions on others; <i>consistently and effectively uses data</i> in reflection process	<b>4- Exemplary</b> offers specific, alternate strategies to improve student learning based on data-analysis and reflection, noting probable success of these approaches as at the forefront al and legal responsibilities in all ns models an on-going pursuit for greater understanding of obligations & responsibilities as an educator interrogates the social, historical, philosophical underpinnings of American education	
15. Participate in professional development opportunities.	<b>1-Below Basic</b> does not participate in or mention professional development opportunities.	<b>2-Basic</b> Participates in professional development opportunities.	<b>3-Proficient</b> <i>takes initiative</i> for professional development	<b>4- Exemplary</b> ates activities to tribute to the profession, ding making entations or conducting n research in the room	
16. Interact and collaborate effectively with other school professionals.	<b>1-Below Basic</b> <i>no</i> or <i>minimal</i> effort to access colleagues to support student learning.	<b>2-Basic</b> does <i>some</i> collegial activities to support student learning; accesses resources, but may not be appropriate ones.	<b>3-Proficient</b> <i>consistent</i> collegial activities to support student learning with colleagues	<b>4- Exemplary</b> nteers/assumes rship roles in ol/district projects	
17. Interact and collaborate effectively	<b>1-Below Basic</b> <i>no</i> or <i>minimal</i> effort to access students, parents, &	<b>2-Basic</b> does <i>some</i> collegial activities to support student learning;	<b>3-Proficient</b> <i>consistent</i> collegial activities to support student	<b>4- Exemplary</b> effective partnerships with students, parents, colleagues &	

with parents and guardians of students.	community to support student learning.	accesses resources, but may not be appropriate ones.	learning with students, parents, & community.	community support student learning	
18. Use technology available at my school to improve student learning.	<b>1-Below Basic</b> <i>little, if any</i> , use of technology to support & engage students to learn; <b>limited understanding</b> of social, ethical, legal, & human issues in use of technology in P-12 schools.	<b>2-Basic</b> <i>some use</i> of technology to plan, design, assess & support students in learning; <b>adequate understanding</b> of social, ethical, legal, & human issues in use of technology in P-12 schools.	<b>3-Proficient</b> <b>consistent use</b> of technology to plan, design, assess & support students in learning; <b>applies</b> social, ethical, legal, & human practices in use of technology in P-12 schools; <b>uses technology to enhance student learning.</b>	<b>4- Exemplary</b> extensive and effective integration of technology to enhance student learning students use technology to create, collaborate, think critically, and/or conduct research	
19. Adapt teaching strategies and materials for special education students.	<b>1-Below Basic</b> <b>does not recognize</b> or accommodate diverse student learning needs; addresses learning needs in superficial manner or only when prompted.	<b>2-Basic</b> <b>supports</b> individual student learning needs; calls on prior experience, learning styles, family, culture & community as resources.	<b>3-Proficient</b> <b>consistent</b> attention to diverse student learning need; adaptations consistently considered; knows how to get & use special services when needed.	<b>4- Exemplary</b> consistently engages students to promote the understanding and value of the unique ways in which they learn	
20. Effectively address needs of students of diverse cultural and language backgrounds.	<b>1-Below Basic</b> <b>does not attempt</b> to help students understand and affirm their home and community cultures <b>does not attempt</b> to help students understand and value the unique ways in which they learn <b>does not communicate</b> the value of education in individual students' lives	<b>2-Basic</b> <b>minimal attempts</b> to help students understand and affirm their home and community cultures <b>inconsistent attempts</b> to help students understand and value the unique ways in which they learn <b>limited communication</b> about the value of education in individual students' lives	<b>3-Proficient</b> <b>consistently encourages</b> students to understand and affirm their home and community cultures <b>consistently engages</b> students to promote the understanding and value of the unique ways in which they learn <b>meaningful communication</b> about the value of education in individual students' lives	<b>4- Exemplary</b> <b>consistently interacts</b> with diverse students, parents, & school staff in a respectful and effective manner; <b>challenges negative attitudes</b> & helps insure that all students are respected in the school <b>consistently identifies and uses the resources of</b> students' home and community cultures <b>meaningful communication</b> of the value of education in individual students' lives	

VITA

# Christi D. Wright

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## EDUCATION

Eastern Kentucky University, Ed.D, Educational Leadership & Policy Studies (expected May 2017)

Eastern Kentucky University, Rank I, Instructional Supervisor & Superintendent

Eastern Kentucky University, Master of Arts, Instructional Leadership

Morehead State University, Bachelor of Arts, Elementary Education and Special Education

## WORK EXPERIENCE

August 2014 – Present

### **Director of Elementary Education/Visiting Instructor in Education, Valparaiso University**

Valparaiso, IN 46383

- Direct elementary education program
- Instruct elementary literacy and math methods courses

August 2012 – July 2014

### **Chief Academic Officer/Assist. Supt., Newport Independent Schools**

Newport, KY 41071

- Served as the District Assessment Coordinator
- Served as the Instructional Supervisor K-12
- Coordinated Title 1 programs
- Served as the CIITS coordinator

August 2009 – July 2012

### **Principal, Silver Creek Elementary School, Madison County Schools**

Berea, KY 40403

- Identified as a 2012 Proficient School
- Pilot School for Program Reviews
- Served as an instructional leader
- Served on the PrAC to the KY Commissioner of Education

August 2006 – June 2009

### **Assistant Principal, McBrayer Elementary School and Rodburn Elementary School, Rowan County Schools**

Morehead, KY 40351

- Organized, planned, and implemented professional development
- Conducted teacher evaluations

- June 2004 - July 2006

  - Lead PLC meetings around data analysis

**Instructional Support Teacher, Murfreesboro City Schools**  
Murfreesboro, TN 37129

  - Prepared meeting details and coordinated schedules with principals and staff members around professional growth and development
  - Conducted professional development in literacy and mathematics
  - Served as district liaison
  - Assisted in day-to-day operations as assigned by Director of Curriculum and Instruction
  - Served as the literacy specialist
  
- July 2002 - June 2004

**Kindergarten Teacher, Bradley Elementary School**  
Murfreesboro, TN 37129

  - Planned and implemented differentiated lessons
  - Analyzed data to guide daily instruction
  - Team leader for Kindergarten
  - Created assessments to assess for learning
  - Maintained school log to communicate to families
  
- July 2001 - June 2002

**Learning and Behavior Disorder Teacher, West Park Elementary School**  
Moscow, ID 37129

  - Developed and monitored IEP's
  - Provided differentiated learning activities
  - Administered assessments for re-evaluations
  - Collaborated in the general education setting
  
- August 1998 - June 2001

**Gifted and Talented Kindergarten Teacher, Greenville Elementary School**  
Baton Rouge, LA

  - Planned and implemented differentiated lessons
  - Analyzed data to guide daily instruction
  - Created assessments to assess for learning
  - Implemented and monitored IEP's

- August 1997 - June 1998      **Behavior Disorder Teacher, Prescott Middle School**  
Baton Rouge, LA
- Developed and monitored IEP's
  - Provided differentiated learning activities
  - Behavior management tracking
  - Collaborative teacher in the general education setting
- August 1996 - June 1997      **Behavior Disorder Teacher, Washington County Elementary School**  
Springfield, KY
- Developed and monitored IEP's
  - Provided differentiated learning activities
  - Behavior management tracking
  - Collaborative teacher in the general education setting
- August 1995 - June 1996      **Behavior Disorder Teacher, Feelhaver Elementary School**  
Fort Dodge, IA
- Developed and monitored IEP's
  - Provided differentiated learning activities
  - Behavior management tracking
  - K-3 Collaborative teacher

**Educational Achievements**

- Director of Elementary Education at Valparaiso University: 2015
- Valparaiso University Excellence in Teaching Award: 2015
- Valparaiso University Excellence in Teaching Award: 2014
- Principal Advisory Council to Kentucky Commissioner of Education: 2010-2012
- Silver Creek Elementary School: Proficient School: 2012
- Kentucky Education Television Pilot School Chosen to video for Program Reviews and Formative Assessment: 2011
- Murfreesboro City Schools: Teacher of the Year: 2004
- Bradley Elementary School: Teacher of the Year: 2003-2004
- Middle Tennessee State University Roundtable Facilitator for Literacy and Teacher Education Program in Tennessee (only public school teacher serving on the committee)
- East Baton Rouge Parish School District/Association of Gifted and Talented Students, Elementary Gifted and Talented Teacher of the Year: 2000-2001