

ArATE Electronic Journal
Volume 5, Number 1
March, 2014

Editor:

Nancy P. Gallavan, Ph.D.; University of Central Arkansas

Editorial Board Members and Manuscript Reviewers:

Karina Clemmons, Ed.D., University of Arkansas, Little Rock

Kevin C. Costley, Ph.D., Arkansas Tech University

Susan Grogan, Ed.S.; Harding University

Patricia E. Murphy, Ed.D., Arkansas State University

Stephanie P. Pepper, Ed.D., Arkansas Tech University

Patricia H. Phelps, Ed.D.; University of Central Arkansas

V. Carole Smith, Ph.D.; Arkansas Tech University

Angela Webster-Smith, Ph.D.; University of Central Arkansas

Lynn Walsh, Ph.D.; Arkansas Tech University

Articles and Authors:

Growth in Intern Pedagogical Skills

Stephanie Pepper, Ed.D.; Arkansas Tech University

Sid T. Womack, Ph.D.; Arkansas Tech University

Shellie L. Hanna, Ed.D.; Arkansas Tech University

David C. Bell, Ph.D.; Arkansas Tech University

Professional Dress Day

V. Carole Smith, Ph.D.; Arkansas Tech University

Growth in Intern Pedagogical Skills

Stephanie Pepper, Ed.D.; Arkansas Tech University

Sid T. Womack, Ph.D.; Arkansas Tech University

Shellie L. Hanna, Ed.D.; Arkansas Tech University

David C. Bell, Ph.D.; Arkansas Tech University

Abstract

Differences in performance were found between teacher candidates interns assessed across four scheduled observations of their teaching during one semester when evaluated by campus and cohort supervisors. The most significant improvements in their performances were achieved by the third observation, which usually occurred by the 10th week of the 16-week internship experience. The third observation often coincided with the teaching of the intern's own chosen "Best Lesson" that was a part of a unit of instruction planned and taught by the intern. A limited number of fifth and sixth observations were conducted for some candidates during the same semester; however, these observations did not reveal substantial increased performance beyond the third observation. Therefore, substantial modifications in the nature and format of the internship experience would be necessary to prove the efficacy or usefulness of extending the internship for longer amounts of time beyond one semester.

Introduction

Some teacher education faculty and administrators assume that "more is better" when applied to the duration of field experiences in teacher education. Yet, educators and legislators in Arkansas currently are considering lengthening the internship (aka student teaching) from a minimum of 12 weeks conducted during one semester to a yearlong experience extending across two semesters. This study examines data on intern pedagogical effectiveness to determine if the length of a field experience is linearly beneficial.

Like most teacher education units across the United States, our College of Education has used an observation form for assessing intern performance and providing feedback to candidates called the *Formative Observation and Intervention Form*. This observation form is used to collect data on 21 research-based areas of teacher competency and proficiency grouped into the following four domains aligned with Pathwise (Danielson, 1996): A. Organizing Content for Student Learning; B. Creating an Environment for Student Learning; C. Teaching for Student Learning; and D. Teacher Professionalism. Data obtained from the *Formative Observation and Intervention* form for one semester were used for this study to assess the efficacy of the intern experience.

Definitions

In our program and for this study, the following definitions (presented in alphabetical order) are used:

Best Lesson: The lesson, from a unit of study, planned, taught and chosen by the intern to best exemplify the quality of teaching performed in the internship experience.

Clinical Practice Instructors (CPIs): Teachers in P – 12 education who serve the dual role of hosting and evaluating teacher candidates.

Host Teacher: A classroom teacher in the school or center who is responsible for overseeing and advising the intern on a daily basis, often called a mentor teacher.

Intern (teacher candidate): A student enrolled in teacher education in the final phase of pre-licensure studies who is student teaching in a host classroom in a P – 12 public school.

Intern Effectiveness: The score obtained from an observation of a candidate's teaching using the *Formative Observation and Intervention Form*. Given the 21 areas assessed and possible scores of 1 to 3 on each area, the range of potential scores is 21 to 63. An adequate performance (or minimal acceptance score) is a 2 on each item, giving an intern performance score of 42 on any one observation.

Observer: A faculty member or a clinical practice instructor (CPI) trained and skilled in the use of the *Formative Observation and Intervention Form*.

Subscale: Any one of four designated collections of items on the *Formative Observation and Intervention Form* that were intended to measure a domain.

Purposes of the Study

Data were collected during one 16-week semester on 130 interns in order to: (a) discover if improvement occurred and the amount of improvement that occurred in intern performance over the course of the internship experience; (b) determine the trends of improvement in total intern performance as linear or non-linear in nature; and (c) determine if trends in subscale performance were different from the trends of intern performance as measured by the total instrument.

Related Literature

The internship experience has been noted as one of the most influential factors in the preparation of beginning teachers (Clark, Smith, Newby, & Cook, 1985; Koehler, 1988; Lemma, 1993; Wilson, 2006) and is vitally important for the integration of pedagogical skills. The traditional triad model (teaching intern, host teacher, campus supervisor) guides teacher education and supports the intern with positive guidance, support, and knowledge conducted within one semester (Lombardi, 2001). Some researchers have prophesied that the triad model would soon cease to exist in order for the intern to experience and, consequently, learn to prepare for a variety of young learners and classroom environments (Bowman, 1979; Patty, 1973); however, other researchers have called for a different type of internship experience, perhaps one that is longer than one semester.

Inadequate time for internship has been debated for many years with some prominent educators promoting longer experiences as an approach to better prepare teachers for the classroom (Darling-Hammond, 2010). Specifically, partnerships between professional development schools and colleges or universities have proved to be successful in conquering the logistical challenges for coordinating the yearlong internship (Darling-Hammond, 2010; NCATE, 2010). However, cooperating partnerships may not be as easily established for all teacher education preparation programs.

Spooner, Flowers, Lambert and Algozzine (2008) surveyed two groups of interns, one that had served a semester-long internship and the other that had served a yearlong internship. Prior to conducting their survey, the teachers candidates who were about to begin their internships were given the option to volunteer for a yearlong internship. The survey given to these candidates analyzed the following criteria: (a) Quality of relationship with the supervising teacher; (b) Knowledge of school policies and procedures; (c) Perception of teaching ability; and (d) Adequacy of time to prepare for profession.

Comparing interns' experiences in both yearlong internships and semester-long internships found that the participants' perceptions of their own teaching abilities were similar for both groups of interns. In their study, Spooner, Flowers, Lambert and Algozzine (2008) found that "adequacy of time to prepare for profession" spent in the classroom was the major difference between the two groups, with only small differences in "the quality of relationship with the supervising teacher" and "knowledge of policies and procedures of the host schools." Data were obtained through three questionnaires asking participants to rate items using a five point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

Diambra, Cole-Zakrzewski, and Booher (2004) also studied the length of teaching internships and report stages that interns pass through regardless of the length of the internship. Successful passage through the experience involves the seven stages of anticipation, adjustment, disappointment, doubt, challenge, accomplishment, and closure. Regardless of the length of time spent in an internship, interns usually pass through the stages of change that occur during this unique capstone experience during their teacher preparation programs.

Internship is the crowning experience in becoming a teacher; learning by doing is the goal of a quality internship. Interns grow from opportunities to transfer content and theory learned during their university courses into practice and to reflect upon their discoveries. Working in classrooms during internship allows for the development of the professional qualities needed for future employment. The primary goal of the internship is the comprehension and enhancement of teaching and learning, where interns work with K-12 students, classroom teachers, K-12 students' family members, school administrators, college or university supervisors, and other interns to continually improve their practices. The internship can be effective only when faculty members from colleges and universities share the responsibility of disseminating the necessary knowledge to candidates with school personnel (NCATE, 2008) so mentors can guide and support the candidates with their personal growth and professional development.

David Berliner (1988) studied the development of expertise in pedagogy through controlled exposure to videotaped classroom events. He discovered that there are five qualitatively distinct developmental levels of teachers: (1) *Novices*, who are usually student teachers or first year teachers. They have learned the "context-independent" rules of teaching as verbalizations but have yet to translate those verbalizations into actions in the classroom on appropriate occasions. (2) *Advanced beginners* are becoming aware of the role of context in applying the pedagogical rules that they have internalized. (3) *Competent* professionals make conscious choices with the rules that they are applying. They make significant discriminations about which classroom events to attend to and which ones can be ignored. They have become aware that some pedagogical rules are context-dependent; that is, they apply in some situations but not in other situations. They can verbalize the pedagogical rules that they are applying at any given moment; they have become analytical performers. Though this stage was not tied to a specific number of years of experience in the 1988 Berliner study, it is our experience that the onset of this level is around five to eight years for a steadily-improving, reflective teacher.

(4) *Proficient* teachers have fluidity about the pedagogical actions they take. They move from activity to activity seamlessly with the smoothness of a professional musician, athlete or actor. Subsequently, novice teachers may sometimes have difficulty following the modeling of proficient teachers. They may not see the "breaks" where the proficient teacher stops to remember a rule or thinks about how to apply it. Although the 1988 Berliner study does not mention an age range for proficiency, it is associated with 10 to 15 years of meaningful,

reflective experience. Quite a few teachers never make it to this level, even after careers of 30 or more years. (5) *Expert* teachers possess the full continuum of context-dependent and context-independent pedagogical rules. Most of the time, they follow those rules. But, like musical composers who sometimes think outside the box, they willfully break those rules to help get their students through unclear thinking or difficulties with pre-conceptions. When expert teachers break pedagogical rules, (a) they know which context-independent or context-dependent rule they are breaking; (b) they know what the possible contexts are of breaking the pedagogical rule (“Let’s skip the handout I have always used in the past to get this idea across; let’s do something different this time.”); (c) they can forecast when they will cease the rule-breaking and return to a more normal flow of pedagogical events. Expert teachers can be vexing for proficient and competent teachers to observe. The tangents that experts sometimes take may appear to competent and proficient teachers to likely be ineffective, and then they are surprised when the expert teacher is nevertheless able to produce the desired student learning. Broadly, this level of pedagogical development occurs after the 20th year of experience. However, many teachers never reach this level. These teachers tend to have developed careers where they experience year one 20 times rather than 20 years of continue professional development attesting that growth to this level of expertise is not automatic over time.

Berliner (1988) and his associates discovered an additional level of teachers referred to as *postulate* teachers. *Postulate* teachers are individuals who had been placed into teaching situations totally without the benefit of teacher education. Using the continuum of teacher development noted previously, *postulate* teachers ranked even below the level of *novice* teachers. *Novice* teachers experience some awareness of the context-independent rules of teaching while *postulate* teachers routinely break pedagogical rules. *Postulate* teachers do not break the rules in creative ways while verbalizing the rule being broken; they break the rules without any awareness that a rule even existed, context-specific or context-independent. *Postulate* teachers in a school may be compared to the proverbial “bull in a China shop,” as they often are unaware if or when they are doing something that may have negative cognitive, physical, professional, or legal consequences.

Berliner’s research (1988) demonstrated that, among career professionals in teaching, growth in pedagogical skills is not necessarily linear. Some teachers grow in effectiveness and pedagogical skills rapidly within the first several years, while other teachers tend to continue repeating their first year. This notion motivated faculty at one mid-south university to investigate if the growth in effectiveness and pedagogical skills was linear for the interns in our program, precipitating the question, “Does it necessarily follow that a lengthy internship is more effective than a briefer one?”

Method

Participants

Participants in this study included 63 early childhood, 9 middle level, and 58 secondary education interns totaling 130 interns. They were assigned to K-12 accredited public schools located in the western portion of the state and in academic content areas appropriate to the interns’ majors and anticipated licensure areas. Placement was conducted through the office of Teacher Education Student Services at the university. All K-12 public school and teacher education university faculty who participated in any direct way with evaluations of interns were made familiar with the evaluation system by completing the required three-day training.

Our university operates a cohort model of supervision as well as a traditional triad model. The cohort model uses school or field-based cohorts consisting of master teachers called Clinical Practice Instructors (CPIs). The interns report directly to the school or field-based CPIs instead of reporting directly to university supervisors. The intent is that the intern should receive continuous feedback from the CPIs who know the expectations for each item on the scoring form and possess the education and expertise for reliable scoring. The CPIs are, or should be, prepared to demonstrate successful performance on each of the 21 items of the form with interns as needed. For our university version of the cohort model, the CPIs evaluate the interns' performances and determine the grade, although access to the Registrar's ledger is administered through the Director of Teacher Education Student Services.

In the triad model, faculty from our university observe interns teaching four or more lessons. Faculty representing both the Department of Curriculum and Instruction and the departments of the interns' academic majors, complete a *Formative Observation and Intervention Form* (Appendix A) documenting specification for a performance-based assessment of teacher effectiveness while observing each lesson. Ultimately, the intern will be observed while teaching a total of at least four times either by a CPI or a university faculty member. In our data set of 630 observations from 130 early childhood, middle level, and secondary candidates, only 12 candidates were observed more than four times. The presence of fifth and sixth observations for a small number of interns was not expected when the investigation began.

Materials and Procedures

Before interns began their respective placements, they were briefed about the expectations for the internship field experience. Early childhood majors and middle level majors enrolled in a 16 week course for 15 and 12 semester hours, respectively; secondary majors enrolled in a 9-semester hour course encompassing a 12-week internship. Secondary majors completed an on-campus course in public school law, history and philosophy of education, and content area reading before beginning their 12-week internship.

Analysis of the Data

Data from 416 observations of 130 candidates were obtained. The observations were generated by university faculty or CPIs as they completed four evaluations conducted while observing interns in teaching situations. Four cycles of evaluations were expected; analysis and interpretation of the data set disclosed that 11 interns had received five evaluations and one intern had received six evaluations. This discovery prompted a disaggregation of the data and a second analysis following the initial one.

Artifact Reliability: The split-half reliability of the total instrument was 0.967, $p < .0001$, $N = 416$. Since the range of possible correlations is from -1.0 to 1.0, the obtained correlation is very near the maximum possible value of 1.0. This means that the observation instrument measured very consistently; consequently, the total score of any intern was not likely to vary much regardless of which faculty member observed a lesson.

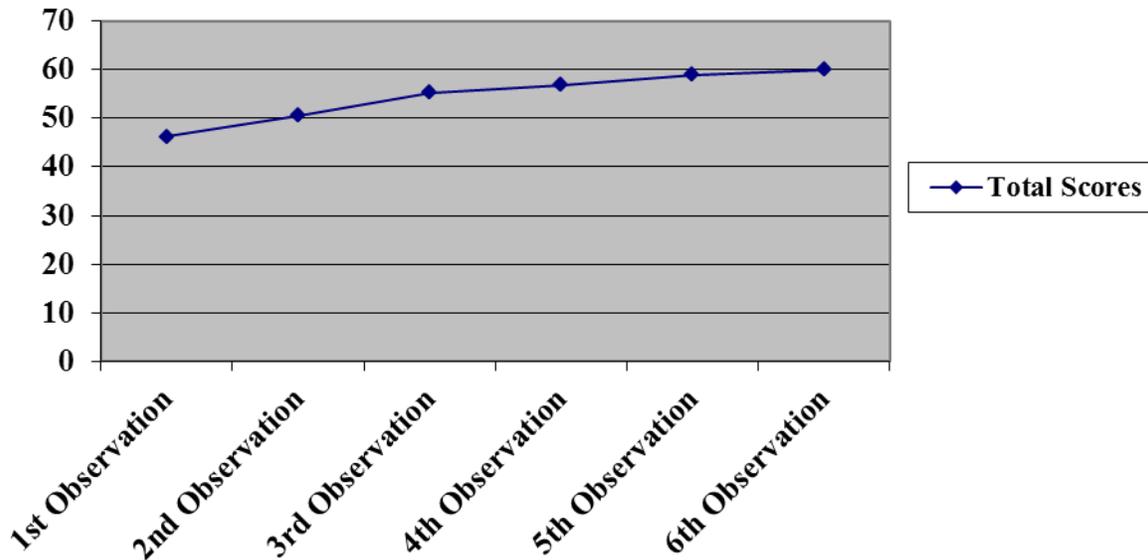
Artifact Validity: The validity of the instrument was enhanced by the use of language in the measuring instrument that was similar to the language of the standards that were being assessed. Therefore, all assessments were mapped to the state's licensing standards and to the Praxis III (Pathwise) assessments. These

mappings were recorded on several documents that became part of the teacher education unit's electronic exhibits.

Differences in intern performance between observation cycles.

Differences in full-scale scores between cycles of observations were explored. It had been anticipated that there would be no more than four observations for any given candidate, so the discovery of some candidates experiencing five or six observations was a major discovery. The resultant ANOVA, and the Duncan and Scheffe' mean separation procedures that followed the Analysis of Variance, created a conflict of findings that was difficult to interpret.

Figure 1. Full-scale Scores of Candidates Experiencing Six Cycles of Observations



$F=7.43$, $Pr>F<.0001$, $R\text{-Square}=0.083102$, $N=416$. In this study, the F ratio of 7.43 means there was 7.43 times as much variation in scores on candidates' teaching as there was due to measuring error. The odds of finding a ratio of that size (the probability of a greater F occurring) is less than one out of ten thousand. Although the F ratio suggested differences in teacher effectiveness scores between observational cycles, neither Duncan's nor Scheffe's procedures showed the existence and/or location of any significant differences. In this instance, with a calculated $R\text{-Square}=0.083102$, the differences in teaching effectiveness between the cycles of observation account for about eight percent of all of the variation. Thus, as the data plot suggested an improvement in intern effectiveness through all observation cycles, statistical significance could not be established.

Examination of the data set disclosed that 10 of the 12 interns who had experienced more than four lesson observations were from the same university academic department and were evaluated by the same faculty member. The other two interns who had experienced more than four observations were from separate university academic departments. All data from the atypical candidates were excluded from the data set, and the ANOVA was attempted again.

Table 1
Full Scale Scores between Cycles of Observations of Candidates Teaching with 5- and 6-Cycle
Candidates' Records Removed

Source	DF	SS	MS	F	Pr>F	
Evaluation cycle		3	6621.999	2207.333	9.95	<.0001
Error		361	80090.367	221.867		
Corrected Total		364	86712.367			

R-square=0.061518, N=364.

With the data from the 12 atypical candidates removed, the picture for the remaining 118 candidates seemed much clearer. The benefits of the observations and the feedback had been realized by the third cycle of observations, and there was no significant improvement reported on the fourth observations.

Data from subscales of the form.

Data from the four subscales of the form were input into ANOVAs and followed up with Duncan's procedures using SAS 9.2 (Hatcher & Stepanski, 1994). There were significant Fs on all four subscales. The Duncan's procedures all followed the trend observed in the analysis of the total scale scores: No significant improvement in intern effectiveness after the third observation.

Table 2

Duncan's Multiple Range Test

Duncan Grouping	Mean	N	Observation Number
A	56.895	57	4
B	55.055	84	3
C	50.515	103	2
D	45.837	121	1

Conclusions

The *Formative Observation and Intervention Form* was developed and validated for the purpose of assessing intern effectiveness in pedagogy. Once the data corresponding to the atypical 12 interns were removed from the original 130, the data on the 118 interns indicated that there had been no improvement in effectiveness beyond the third of the four observations. It should be noted that the third observation often coincided with the intern's teaching a self-selected "Best Lesson" that was a part of the unit planned and taught by the intern. In practice, their internships could ended after approximately 10 weeks.

If the internship had been administratively lengthened for some reason, no inference supported a continuation of this rate of improvement. Many factors, such as the host teacher, the host principal, responsibilities given to the intern and the classroom dynamics, contribute to the professional growth of the intern. The outcomes of this study should not discourage all attempts to lengthen the teaching internship field placement experience; however, if the internship were lengthened, major changes would need to be identified guiding the expectations of candidates

during the extended time. Thus, this study did not demonstrate that “more of the same” a benefit in terms of effectiveness and/or pedagogical skills.

References

- Berliner, D. (February 17, 1988). *The development of expertise in pedagogy*. Charles W. Hunt Memorial Lecture presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE), New Orleans, LA. Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED298122.pdf>
- Bowman, N. (1979). College supervisor of student teaching: A time to reconsider. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 30(3), 29–30.
- Clark, D. C., Smith, R. B., Newby, T. J., & Cook, V. A. (1985). Origins of teaching behaviors. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 36(6), 49-54.
- Danielson, C. (1996). *Enhancing professional practice: A framework for teaching*. Alexandria, VA: Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Diambra, J. F., Cole-Zakrzewski, K. G., & Booher, J. (2004). A comparison of internship stage models: Evidence from intern experiences. *Journal of Experiential Education*, 27(2), 191-212.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2010). *The flat world and education: How America’s commitment to equity will determine our future*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Hatcher, L., & Stepanski, E. J. (1994). A step-by-step approach to using the SAS System for univariate and multivariate statistics. Cary, NC: SAS Institute Inc.
- Koehler, V. R. (1988). Barriers to effective supervision of student teaching: A field study. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 39(2), 28-34.
- Lei, S., Goreleck, D., Short, D., Smallwood, L., & Wright-Porter, K. (2011). Academic cohorts: benefits and drawbacks of being a member of a community of learners. *Education*, 131(3), 497-504.
- Lemma, P. (1993). The cooperating teacher as supervisor: A case study. *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision*, 8(4), 329-342
- Lombardi, J. (2001). Supervision of student teachers: Emerging models and innovative approaches in the USA. *Teacher Development: An International Journal of Teachers’ Professional Development*, 5(3), 309-321.
- National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). (2008). *Professional standards for the accreditation of teacher preparation institutions*. Retrieved from <http://ncate.org/Portals/0/documents/Standards/NCATE%20Standards%202008.pdf>.
- National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) (2010). *Transforming teacher education through clinical practice: A national strategy to prepare effective teachers. Report to the blue ribbon panel on clinical preparation and partnerships for improved student learning*. Washington, DC. Retrieved from <http://ncate.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=zzeiB1OoqPk%3d&tabid=715>.
- Patty, A. H. (1973). Classroom teachers will replace college supervisors. *Contemporary Education*, 44(3), 179-183.
- Spooner, M., Flowers, C., Lambert, R., & Algonzine, B. (2008). Is more really better? Examining perceived benefits. *The Clearing House*, 81(6), 263-269.
- Wilson, E. K. (2006). The impact of an alternative model of student teacher supervision: Views of the participants. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 22(1), 22-31.

Professional Dress Day

V. Carole Smith, Ph.D.; Arkansas Tech University

Abstract

As teacher candidates prepare for their field experiences in P-12 schools, they need to be guided in their public and professional attire. Teachers are role models; their appearance immediately and visibly communicates respect and authority. However, contemporary dress in schools and society has become more casual posing challenges for school administrators and teacher candidates who are learning by observing and imitating their classroom teacher mentors. Today's teacher attire has captured the attention of parents, communities, and newspapers. To better understand teacher candidate expectations and behaviors across the U.S., survey research was conducted with teacher educators at six different institutions. Their responses indicate that faculty and supervisors share concerns about preparing their candidates for their field experiences; thus various approaches are incorporated throughout their teacher preparation programs, including Professional Dress Day, to ensure that candidates are career-ready.

Introduction

About ten years ago in the early-2000s, I received the first telephone call from a classroom teacher in a nearby public school who had agreed to mentor one of our university teacher candidates by letting her observe the classroom. The classroom teacher asked me bluntly, "Why don't the professors at the university talk to students going out to observe about their dress?" Of course, teacher education faculty and, especially, university supervisors of teacher candidates observing in the public schools and completing their internships discuss appropriate dress in the public schools. However, identifying appropriate dress throughout the last four decades has become increasingly difficult. Americans, in general, tend to display a preference and comfort with a much more informal society in their present-day wardrobe choices than the more formal patterns of the past, particularly in their public and professional attire. Blue jeans go to the opera, and flip flops go to the White House. The expectations associated with appropriate dress communicate a much different meaning for today's teacher candidates. In most states, even states identified as the "Bible Belt," the reference to "church dress" has lost its prior meaning.

Dress in the Public Schools

Realizing the number and frequency of conversations held in colleges of education regarding public and professional attire, it came as a surprise to our teacher education faculty when a school superintendent at a recent K-16 meeting (ten years after my first telephone call) again brought up the topic of appropriate dress of university students in their schools and classrooms. Later, when reflecting on the superintendent's remarks with other faculty, one university colleague suggested that our candidates may be confused since many classroom teachers who the candidates observe tend to dress rather casually. The colleague commented, "Perhaps the public schools need to 'dress' their own staff before they 'dress' our candidates." However, as I always respond to candidates who tell me that they are dressed more appropriately than their teachers, "The teacher already has a job."

Simmons (1996) found it ironic that after all of the writing and discussion regarding dress codes and uniforms for P-12 students, very little has been written about the clothing choices of

teachers. This same observation applies almost 20 years later. Even though the research on modeling (Good & Brophy, 1987) leads us to believe that the effects of modeling exist whenever learners observe a model, there tends to be an unequal discussion on dress codes and standards related to classroom teachers, and in particular, teacher candidates. Implementing dress codes for P-12 students focused the lens on classroom teachers but fell short in implementation with staff.

Teachers as Role Models

As role models, teacher attire is a public, professional, immediately visible form of communication that overtly provides information about acceptable dispositions and expected behaviors at school and work (Workman & Freeburg, 2009). Teachers need to be prepared and reminded that their attire is particularly important for establishing respect and maintaining authority (Aguilar, 2005).

The status of a teacher is that of a socially recognized position; almost everyone has attended school; therefore, everyone has established a particular image of a teacher. This image contributes to the teacher's understanding and the community's recognition of the teacher's identity, role, responsibility, and expectations. Most people who become teachers conform to their perceived images of teachers in order to be employed, to be accepted, and to maintain employment. A teacher's attire expresses if an individual embraces the role and responsibilities or if the individual seeks distance from the role and responsibilities (Freeburg, 2010). If a teacher's attire does not conform to the perceived image of teachers, then the individual experiences role strain, which frequently results as resistance to professional career expectations (Hughes, 2006). One author even attributes the decline in work collegiality and productivity as well as student discipline and achievement on standardized tests may be linked to the increase in the employees' casual appearance (Rasband, 2003).

P-12 School Administrators' Observations and Concerns

P-12 school administrators agree that teacher applicants' public and professional attire influences their hiring practices. Reflecting on her experiences, one elementary school principal noted that her concerns about staff dress began when the physical education teachers wore extremely short shorts and the young female classroom teachers wore see-through blouses with lace bras and tight leggings with short t-shirts. And some of the teachers' clothing was not even clean. A high school principal admitted to not hiring a female teacher because of numerous visible tattoos. The concern among school personnel was that at least 15 seniors would have tattoos as a result of the hiring. And yet another principal admitted that when a speech therapist who came to an interview with a tongue piercing could not talk properly and a young woman interviewed for a teaching position bearing a large tattoo and wearing shorts, the discussion of school attire for the entire staff was precipitated. Ultimately, due to complaints from the school and local community, and to establish a more formal learning environment, principals and school district personnel initiate dress codes. Although most administrators would prefer to avoid a discussion on public and professional dress, administrators often think that a dress code is needed to set a standard and an example for students (Education World, 2012). And, at times, the elimination of these items from the school staff wardrobe does not always foster a negative response from teachers and teacher unions.

However, there is a growing trend that the subject of appropriate dress and dress codes for teachers generates explosive conversations. Many teachers and teachers' unions feel that dress

codes for teachers pose an infringement on their civil rights. Dress codes are viewed as subjective, and dress is an important expression of freedom. The discussion results in an array of outcomes: there are schools and school districts where dress codes have become part of the union agreement, and there are schools and school districts where the school board made the decision to remove some of the more strict policies. Sternberg (2003) writes that administrators often try to find a way to regulate dress without ‘going to war’ with the union. Thus, current dress codes are often vague with a wide range of interpretations, guidelines, and policies.

Teacher Attire

The published literature and the school district teacher handbooks have established a fairly standard list of clothing that is inappropriate and unacceptable for wearing to work and school-related functions. The list includes tattoos, body-piercings, baggy or too large pants, too tight or too short skirts, jeans, sweat shirts, sweat pants, track suits, yoga pants, flip flops, Crocs, tennis shoes, fanny packs, scrunches, hats, sunglasses, an abundance of jewelry or make-up (Baxter, Hennings, & Handly, n.d.). However, at some schools, physical education staff members were allowed to wear athletic clothes only for gym classes but not for other academic classes taught in the main building. And casual Friday commonly allows staff to wear jeans and tee-shirts displaying the school motto or logo as a standard practice in many schools across the county.

Lewis (n.d.) approaches teacher dress not from a list of inappropriate criticized attire but from a list of appropriate recommended attire. Teachers are encouraged to choose comfortable clothing reflective of their educational professionalism and individual personality. More specific recommendations include loose fitting garments that are well tailored, stylish but not too extreme, and accessorized in moderation. Lewis (n.d.) acknowledges that geographical diversity, workplace conditions, and school cultures will prompt tailoring the dress code and may not be translated from community to community. Suburban attire, costal attire (east or west), and rural and southern area attire will not always include the same expectations. In most states, the weather must be considered a special circumstance as it relates to dress throughout the year. For example, wearing hosiery (i.e., panty hose) in the humidity of some southern states could be considered cruel and unusual punishment. In many schools and school district, teachers are willing to reach an agreement on their attire as long as they were not required to stop wearing jeans and tennis shoes.

The issue of teacher dress is not limited to schools and school districts in the United States. Ofsted, the Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills, is an evaluation organization that inspects teacher training in the United Kingdom. Ofsted decided to place a greater focus on “Professional Dress” in the classroom. However, the general secretary of the Association of Teachers and Lecturers felt that Ofsted needed to address more important issues than teacher dress stating, “This is a matter which should be left solely within the remit of the setting; there is no evidence that teachers’ dress adds to the effectiveness of pupil learning and this approach is very heavy-handed of Ofsted” (ATL, 2014).

P-12 School Administrators’ Approaches

Most principals would like to see their teachers dress to promote the business of school (Million, 2008). Multiple examples have been documented: One Texas town agreed that teachers could not wear anything that students could not wear. An Indiana principal clarified the dress code when hiring new teachers. At one school, incentive tickets were offered when there

were events where teachers wanted to wear jeans. A principal in Delaware established a dress code because the school was located in a high poverty area and felt that teachers should project an image that shows students that they are respected enough for the teachers to dress well. A principal in Nevada indicated that dress depended on the demographics of the school; parents and students in upper socioeconomic areas expect their teachers to dress in business attire. However, the principal in an at-risk inner-city school found that teacher dress was not a high priority; the parents at that school focused more on improving student achievement. In an Idaho school, the dress for teachers and support staff was flexible because of limited income. At this school, a list of acceptable and unacceptable attire was distributed, and fashion changes were added to the list. At one school in Alaska, there was no dress code. The principal did not feel that the union would endorse it. In an Oregon reservation school, teachers were expected to be neat and clean. The casualness eased the lines between school and community.

A Pittsburg principal felt that approaching teachers in the right tone went a long way to solving the problem. The principal had established a relationship that the principal valued highly. In general, school districts that have been most successful in establishing dress codes have been those districts where there have been lengthy community, teacher, and administrator discussions. In summary, Harry Wong, retired educator and teacher consultant, believes teachers have the right to make their own decisions about dress, but encourages teachers to consider the perceptions of their students (Sternberg, 2003).

Public Schools and the Interns

An informal survey administered with teacher interns from one university placed in four different school districts asked the interns if they were counseled in any way by their mentoring teacher about their dress, and if the interns they were shown a formal policy. Three of the school districts where the interns were placed are in small rural school districts, and the largest school district where two interns were placed is located in a small university town.

In one of the small school districts the intern was told, "Just wear what's comfortable." For the teacher, comfortable meant blue jeans and a nice top with some jewelry accessories. For casual Friday, the teacher wore the same blue jeans with the school tee-shirt. All of the teachers at this school wore similar clothing except for the two male teachers and the principal. One male, a first year math teacher, wore a tie every day. One intern at this school shared, "I was very nearly overdressed throughout my internship, but I was much more comfortable and I felt I was able to earn more respect from my students because I was dressed professionally."

In another equally small school district, no one specifically talked to the intern about dress. The mentor teacher just said, "Professional dress should be appropriate and casual. Jeans are worn on Thursdays." In another rural school district the mentor teacher told the intern that "the school likes for the teachers to look professional, which means no jeans and tee-shirts. This mentor teacher repeatedly accommodates the university's requests to place interns in her classroom. Even on unplanned visits to her classroom, the intern and the mentor teacher always looked very professional. The mentor teacher tends to wear comfortable dresses. It is a seventh grade social studies class, and she also graduated from our university's middle level program eight years ago. She has been an excellent role model for her students and the teacher candidates completing their field experiences.

The largest of the school districts in the area where two interns were placed is the district where teachers who expressed their concerns to the university are employed. In this district, teachers are provided an employee handbook with a short statement on a dress code. The mentor

teachers reviewed the dress code with the interns. Then the mentor teachers and interns discussed items that they were not allowed to wear, i.e., specific footwear and denim slacks during the week, yet jeans could be worn on Fridays.

Higher Education

A second survey was administered with six teacher educators across the United States seeking descriptions of their approaches to teacher candidate dress (see Appendix A). The questions asked: (1) Have you received any concerns from area P-12 school administrators about candidate's professional dress? (2) Are the faculty at your institution concerned about your candidates' professional dress? What are some of the faculty's concerns? (3) Why are you concerned about your candidates' professional dress? (4) Who is responsible for guiding your candidates with their professional dress? And (5) How are the candidates guided and supported?

Data from the survey verified that these six teacher educators value professional dress, but few of their institutions offer instructions specifying appropriate dress for university students and teacher candidates visiting P-12 schools and classrooms. As evident in the survey responses, the six teacher educators confirmed that their candidates frequently are informed about public and professional attire although few concerns had been raised in these six locations.

Perhaps issues related to teacher candidate attire is isolated to particular geographic locations, the size of the school districts and schools, and/or observations of occasional inappropriate dress that seem to supersede the typical dress displayed by teacher candidate.

It's Professional Dress Day!

Within the ten years from the time I received the first call from a classroom mentor teacher, and as a former principal and current teacher educator preparing candidates for their careers, I recognize that society continues to experience changes in expectations, mores, and both personal and professional expression of self-identity by and of teachers. The level of respect that teachers receive today compared with respect received in previous centuries has decreased. And with respect to the continuous debate about appropriate attire among teachers and teacher educators as well as within the community and across society, issues of dress reflect on the education profession and university programs. My recent experiences indicate that it has become more difficult to place students in field experiences as pressures increase on P-12 classroom teachers, so it is the responsibility of teacher preparation programs to address every area including candidates' appropriate dress. We want all candidates to be successful; the first impression is important.

To assist my middle level teacher candidates with this process, I invite a local superintendent as a guest speaker in one class. When the principal walks in and begins her talk about becoming a teacher, no special attention is directed to her appearance. Then she asks the teacher candidates to analyze her attire. As the candidates "pick apart her dress," the conversation generates inquiries and gives insight into expectations representative of the principal's school district and professional dispositions.

Throughout the teacher preparation courses that I teach, multiple opportunities for formal presentations are incorporated for candidates to demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and dispositions. From the introductory course to the last semester block of pedagogy and guided field experiences course, there are many chances to plant seeds of thought about developing a professional wardrobe. Since the rubrics used for assessing in-class activities and video-taped microteaching include items to reflect upon appropriate classroom teacher dress, this important

criterion was added to other classroom presentations. The assessment given for dress are few and do not constitute a grade changer. The three-point rubric simply states: 3= professional dress; interview ready; 2=professional casual; everyday appropriate; 1=point casual dress-casual Fridays (within limits); field days

In the early teacher education courses, candidates do not initiate much discussion about their attire when they receive their rubrics and feedback. Some students receive notes on the returned rubric with reminders about P-12 schools in our area that do not allow open-toe shoes and that shoes can change a professional casual outfit to a casual outfit. I may send a comment reflecting on their business suit as ideal for an interview. Or I may offer a note that their attire would be appropriate for the classroom with perhaps with a jacket, the look is just right for a school board presentation.

As candidates receive more feedback and become more aware of their attire, I share more guidelines to help them secure teaching positions in the local schools and school districts. For example, discussions about shoes generate concerns about balancing appearance, comfort, and purpose. I remind candidates that playground duty is not a safe place for open-toe shoes or sandals. I strongly encourage the candidates to notice the length of their skirts. Some school districts conduct panel interviews and the candidate sits in the center in front of the panel. At one school a principal objects to female candidates wearing pantsuits at teacher interviews. Some female teacher candidates have stated that professional dress expectations are sexist: most male teachers would not like being required to wear a tie every day. I assure the candidates that even without a tie, male teachers can wear a collared shirt with casual pants or jeans with a jacket to project a professional look in the classroom.

Suggestions for Candidates

MacIntyre (2008) with the National Education Association suggests that candidates and teachers understand the school dress code, avoid dressing like the students, select clothing that matches the teaching duties, maintain a budget by avoiding expensive clothing, and to dress for success actually works. Tarleton University (n.d.), suggests that candidates and teachers stay stylish without going over the top, wear age-appropriate clothing, leave the bling at home, never show undergarments, avoid cleavage, do not wear clothes with holes, wash and iron clothing, pay attention to shoes, and make sure that clothing fits properly.

As candidates progress through their courses, assessing dress on rubrics assessing in-class activities generates more conversations in safe environments. The closer the candidates get to the internship, the more frequent that appropriate and acceptable dress becomes part of the classroom discussions. One summer, as a candidate prepared for her fall semester internship, I received a telephone call asking about the purchase of a suit that included both skirt and slacks. After a short conversation reviewing the pros and cons, the candidate decided to purchase both items for versatility.

Today's young adults communicate quickly and openly through social media; therefore, the more information I can guide the candidates and the earlier in their programs that I can make a positive impression, the more likely the candidates will share the standards and expectations with one another. I have noticed that candidates share the names of local stores that carry inexpensive, but classic looking wearing apparel. And as candidates near and enter internship, I have noticed that they begin to comment and critique the dress of the newer candidates starting their field experience observations. At times, the advanced candidates remind me to mention appropriate and acceptable professional dress in the introductory course.

The rewards of this little addition of Professional Dress Day to my courses have been realized in interns who “dress better than their teachers, but feel more comfortable”...as one intern stated on the course evaluation form. Graduation day for Professional Dress is the University’s Education Career Fair where administrators from area schools and school districts are ready to receive applications, conduct interviews, and offer teaching positions. The Education Fair is student’s first opportunity to meet with potential employees in a venue that is much like “speed dating.” The impression can be swift and final. In recent years, monitors are posted at the doors to turn away candidates who are not dressed appropriately. Students who have been prepared are always welcome.

Recommendations

Preparing today’s teacher candidates for teaching positions in the P-12 schools includes guiding and supporting candidates in their public and professional attire with dress that allows them to balance their roles, responsibilities, expectations, and identities. Candidates look at the wardrobes of their teacher educators along with the wardrobes of P-12 classroom teachers. Incorporating professional dress criteria into teacher education course presentations and provide candidates with specific feedback generates conversations and prompts awareness as candidates begin their field experiences and internships. The goals are to be credible teachers who command respect and maintain authority. Culminating with the University Education Career Day, candidates transition from students to teachers in every way and become the next generation of role models for their own young learners and our teacher candidates.

References

- Aguilar, A. (2005, October 3). Teacher attire doesn't go unnoticed: More districts in U.S. are adopting dress codes for faculty members. *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, p. C4.
- Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL). (2014). *Ofsted consultation: Proposed revisions to the framework for inspecting initial teacher education*. Retrieved from <https://www.atl.org.uk/Images/Response-to-Ofsted-ITE-consultation.pdf>
- Baxter, K., Hennings, A., & Handly, A. (n.d.). *What teachers should never (ever) wear!* Retrieved from <http://teaching.monster.com/careers/articles/8431-what-teachers-should-never-ever-wear>
- Education World. (2012). Dressing (teachers for success). Retrieved from http://www.educationworld.com/a_admin/admin/admin422_a.shtml
- Freeburg, B. W. (2010). Teacher dress codes in employee handbooks: An analysis. *Journal of Family and Consumer Science*, 102(3), 9-15.
- Freeburg, B. W., & Workman, J. E. (2010). Media frames regarding teacher dress: Implications for career and technical education teacher preparation. *Career and Technical Education Research* 35(1), 29-45.
- Good, T., & Brophy, J. (1987). *Looking into classrooms* (4th ed.). New York, NY: Harper & Row.
- Hughes, K. (2006, September 15). District on teacher dress: Have some class: Some new codes address who, what, wear, when. *The Dallas Morning News*. Retrieved from <http://www.dallasnews.com/sharedcontent/dws/dn/latestnews/stories/0915dnmetteacherdress.325d576.html>
- Lewis, B. (n.d.). *The right threads=the right classroom atmosphere: How what you wear affects*

- what you accomplish as a teacher.* Retrieved from <http://k6educators.about.com/od/classroommanagement/a/attire.htm>
- Million, J. (2008). Dress codes for teachers? *Education Digest: Essential Readings Condensed for Quick Review*, 69(5), 102.
- MacIntyre, M. (2008). Dress to impress. *Classroom Connections National Education Association*. Retrieved from <http://www.nea.org/home/14896.htm>
- Rasband, J. (2003). America's going down the tube in a T-shirt! Decline in dress reflects decline in culture. *Conselle Institute of Image Management*. Retrieved from <http://www.conselle.com/image-advantage-article.php>
- Simmons, B. (1996). Teachers should dress for success. *The Clearing House*, 69(5), 297-298.
- Sternberg, R. E. (2003). Attending to teacher attire. *School Administrator*, 60(2), 38-42, 44, 46.
- Tarleton University. (n.d.) Dress for success: Field experiences dress code. Retrieved from <http://www.tarleton.edu/eps/field/DressCode.html>
- Workman, J. E., & Freeburg, B. W. (2009). *Dress and society*. New York, NY: Fairchild.

Appendix A. Survey Questions and Responses

Questions

-
1. What is the name of your institution? (Names of institutions were replaced with geographic location on responses.)
 2. Have you received any concerns from area P-12 school administrators about candidate's professional dress?
 3. Are the faculty at your institution concerned about your candidates' professional dress? What are some of the faculty's concerns?
 4. Why are you concerned about your candidates' professional dress?
 5. Who is responsible for guiding your candidates with their professional dress?
 6. How are the candidates guided and supported?
-

Responses

-
- Q 1 Mid-south U.S. university
- Q 2 *Not really. We work closely with the schools so if there is a concern they let us know.*
- Q 3 *Don't think there is any major concern. Most candidates are from the area so they are fairly familiar with the dress expectations/requirements. Inappropriateness and excessive body mutilation (for lack of a better word) – tattooing, piercing etc. The other concern was sometimes the interns would note how their supervising teacher would dressed and if it was casual they, they felt they could do likewise...not.*
- Q 4 *It affects their chances of being hired. It is important for the children to see them as professionals and know they are excited and prepared to be with them as their educators.*
- Q 5 *College faculty who supervise them. If public school faculty have a concern, they usually contact the college faculty who supervise the candidates to address their concerns.*
- Q 6 *It begins in the foundational courses and continues during the internship. We encourage the interns to follow the dress code of the school, which often times had restrictions for how low the shorts tops, and skirts could be.*
-

- Q 1 Southern U.S. university

- Q 2 *Not administrators. Field experience supervisor may rate dress the dress. Some students have received a 2 for “weak, need improvement.”*
- Q 3 *Yes. There have been discussions on professional dress.*
- Q 4 *On professional dress, image is everything, and sometimes first look might deter success/and respect by students. We want students, especially student teachers, to rise to another level of professionalism.*
- Q 5 *It is assumed that every professor/faculty is responsible. Before professional student meetings off campus, students are reminded and told what professional dress looks like.*
- Q 6 *Faculty review professional dress before the field experience each semester. It begins in foundation classes. The discussion relates to professionalism in the Conceptual Framework. Ideas are given on what makes a professional look. There is a section in the syllabus that addresses professional dress.*
-

- Q 1 *Southwestern U.S. university*
- Q 2 *This is not a big problem for us. We’ve had no complaints. Actually, some student raised the opposite issues. They shared that teachers asked why they were “dressing up” and students felt almost chided.*
- Q 3 *No.*
- Q 4 *Students are “guests in the schools, and they represent their program and the institution. They are training for a profession, and they have only one opportunity to make a good, first impression. They may want to student teach in their practicum site three semesters later, and principals and administrators will remember how they look when they come on campus.*
- Q 5 *College faculty talk about professional dress from the first practicum class ...shirts tucked in, no T shirts, no shorts, no flip flops, no tank tops, no jeans or pants with holes.*
- Q 6 *Talked about at orientation and repeated over and over throughout the year. On occasion students are spoken to individually about their attire if it is deemed less than professional. That is a rare occurrence. Professional clothing doesn’t need to cost much and encourage khaki slacks with a nice shirt.*
-

- Q 1 *Northwestern U.S. university*
- Q 2 *Every now and then.*
- Q 3 *No specific discussion on this in years.*
- Q 4 *It is usually too short of a skirt or too low of a shirt (females) or pants (males).*
- Q 5 *Field supervisor.*
- Q 6 *Prior to student teaching they hear about a dress code. It is discussed in class.*
-

- Q 1 *Northeastern U.S. university*
- Q 2 *Yes.*
- Q 3 *Yes. Exposure of tattoos, inappropriate heels, clothes not ironed, dress shirts that reveal the lettering of the tee-shirt under the shirt.*
- Q 4 *If reflects the faculty at our institution.*
- Q 5 *Faculty makes a concerted effort within each department.*
- Q 6 *There are many ways: advising, peer mentoring, test, writing, workshops, work with cooperative teacher.*
-

- Q 1 *Midwestern university*
- Q 2 *Not aware of concerns. This concern would probably be addressed to the placement coordinator.*
- Q 3 *Don't think so. Some faculty appear to come dressed in the outfit they slept in.*
- Q 4 *N/A*
- Q 5 *Per individual faculty member.*
- Q 6 *It is addressed with student's teachers during their orientation. For the other teacher candidates, it is probably left up to the individual faculty member who is teaching the class that has a clinical experience.*
-