

PRESERVICE TEACHER BELIEFS ABOUT EDUCATION FROM THEIR
EXPERIENCES AS K-12 STUDENTS AND MEMBERS OF AN ADOLESCENT
SUBCULTURE

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Doctor of Education

by
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The undersigned, appointed by the dean of the Graduate School, have examined the dissertation entitled

PRESERVICE TEACHER BELIEFS ABOUT EDUCATION FROM THEIR
EXPERIENCES AS K-12 STUDENTS AND MEMBERS OF AN
ADOLESCENT SUBCULTURE

Presented by John S. Lacy

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ABSTRACT

Results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress test over the past 35 years have not shown significant improvement of 17 year olds in math or reading. Four decades of unsuccessful reform effort suggest cultural barriers and/or institutional structures that prevent change. The purpose of the study was to describe beliefs preservice teachers bring to teacher preparation programs that arise from their K-12 experience and as members of an adolescent or youth subculture. The conceptual underpinnings of this study were rooted in the cultural context of public education, institutional theory, and the non-foundational nature of learning. Methods of phenomenology with an ontological philosophical approach were used to address the research questions. From a sample of 162 preservice teachers, 11 themes were identified depicting preservice teacher beliefs about education. The influence of an adolescent or youth subculture in the 11 identified themes seems obvious in four, related in four, and having no apparent connection to three of the themes. A mechanism of recycling beliefs about education through preservice teachers back to K-12 students is presented that illustrates how emerging adolescent beliefs may enter and how older, outdated beliefs are maintained within the culture of education.

Implications for practice include the development of preservice teacher screening procedures that are able to identify the range of beliefs preservice teachers have about education. Once identified, teacher preparation programs must develop curriculum that will address those preservice teacher beliefs that run counter to program goals through guided reflection and increased exposure to desired behavior. Implications for future research include the need to better characterize boundaries between other culturally definable subunits of public education; longitudinal studies to better capture the essence of the teaching experience from preservice teachers to veteran teachers; and research that will help define an individual's immersion into and out of youth culture. Data from such studies will be useful to teacher preparation programs and K-12 education as they screen applicants, modify programs, improve teacher retention, and improve professional development.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Background

Significant long term results showing academic improvement of 17 year olds in American public education occurring over the past 35 years is unclear (Donahue & Dion, 2007; Greene, 2006; Perie, Moran, & Lutkus, 2005; & Rampey, Dion, & Donahue, 2009). Why, is the obvious question. Why is it, the most powerful and technologically advanced nation in the world is unable to improve the level of education for its youth as measured by achievement tests? Since 1969 the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) has been collecting education data to assess, report, and compare education in the United States and other nations. The NCES is probably best known for publishing its National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) report or The Nation's Report Card™. Its purpose is to provide policy makers at all levels an objective view of the condition of education in the United States. In its most recent publication of the Nation's Report Card: *NAPE 2008 Trends in Academic Progress*, the NCES reported that the average reading and math scores for 17 year old students taking the assessment was not significantly different from the average scores of 17 year olds taking the assessment in 1971 and 1973 respectively (Rampey, Dion, & Donahue, 2009). Using a scale of 0-500 for reporting average scores, 17 year olds taking achievement tests in reading and mathematics averaged 286 and 306 respectively for the 2008 assessment. For the reading assessment, a score of 286 was one point higher than the average score of 285 in 1971. During the 37 year history of the reading assessment, the range of average scores has been seven points with the low average score of 283 in 2004 to the high average score of

290 in 1988, 1990, and 1992. For the mathematics assessment, an average score of 306 in 2008 was two points higher than the average score of 304 reported in 1973. During the 35 year history of the mathematics assessment, the range of average scores has been ten points with the low average score of 298 reported in 1982 to the high average score of 308 in 1999 (Rampey, Dion, & Donahue, 2009). These results are consistent with the *NAEP 2004 Trends in Academic Progress*, published in 2005, which reported that the average reading and math scores of students tested at age 17 resulted in no measurable improvement since these assessments began in 1971 and 1973 respectively (Perie et al., 2005). An analysis by Donahue and Dion (2007) compared NAEP reading scores from assessments given to 12th graders in 1992, 1994, 1998, 2002, and 2005. Their findings with regard to student achievement in reading include:

The percentage of students performing at or above *Basic* decreased from 80% in 1992 to 73% in 2005, and the percentage of students performing at or above the *Proficient* level decreased from 40 to 35%. White and Black students were the only racial/ethnic groups to show a statistically significant change in reading performance, scoring lower in 2005 than in 1992...Both male and female students' scores declined in comparison to 1992, and the performance gap between genders widened with female students outscoring male students. (p. 1)

Reported results from the 2008 NAEP for nine and 13 year olds, and certain minority groups were more positive with significant increases in some areas of measurement. For example, average reading and mathematic scores for 2008 were significantly ($p<.05$) higher for both age groups compared to their 2004 scores and their initial scores in 1971 and 1973 respectively. While there were no significant changes in

the gaps in reading and mathematics scores between White and Black students from 2004 to 2008, the gaps at all three ages were significantly narrower in 2008 than in 1971 and 1973 respectively (Rampey, Dion, & Donahue, 2009).

While the 2008 NAEP results show significant improvement in average scores for nine and 13 year olds and a narrowing of achievement gaps between White and Black and White and Hispanic students (Rampey, Dion, & Donahue, 2009), it also begs the question as to why are the improved scores achieved by nine and 13 year olds not reflected as improved scores by 17 year olds eight and four years later? Academic progress as measured by NAEP has been slow at best and with some groups statistically non-existent. Explanations and reform strategies needed to address this slow pace of improvement and in some cases stagnant levels of achievement by American students compared to their international peers continues to be a focus of debate at all levels of public education and political arenas.

Simplistic views and solutions of this complex problem have proven to be elusive or have resulted in unintended results. Over the years, different reform efforts have seemed to come and go into and out of the national and state agendas for public education. Ever since Coleman first published his seminal study *Equality of Educational Opportunity* (EEO) in 1966, more commonly known as the first Coleman Report, in which he linked student achievement to the social characteristics of students and schools, policy makers have been trying to reform public education to increase student success for all students. Reform movements from the past four decades have subjected K-12 public education to desegregation (busing), increased federal involvement through title programs, unprecedented increases in financial support, consolidation, loss of local

control, research based learning, revised curriculum and teaching strategies, greater accountability, Goals 2000, and No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Yet with all of this activity, measurable sustained improvement in the reading and mathematic achievement test scores for 17 year olds has for the most part remained unchanged for 35 years. A reform effort that continues to be championed by school districts and teacher unions and resisted at many levels from tax payer to legislator is the belief that more money is the solution for poor student achievement. However, using a framework of relationships between primary inputs of resources and outputs of public education the debate over the effect of additional dollars on student achievement has provided inconclusive results. While school spending per student has increased significantly over the past three decades, student achievement has not (Hanushek, 1997). The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) is a national reform effort that includes components of accountability, charter schools, and choice that is tied to federal funding of district Title I programs. The premise of NCLB is that all children, regardless of race, household income, and disability can learn; and that all children must be performing at levels of proficiency set by each state. Districts have until 2014 to reach this goal and must meet annual benchmark levels of student performance on state achievement tests or suffer consequences contained within the act. Funding private education using public money is another reform effort championed by various elected officials and special interest groups throughout the country. Commonly know as vouchers, or recently disguised as education tax credits, the stated purpose of this reform effort is to increase competition between public and private schools for public money and thereby motivate public schools to do a better job of educating their students.

A more difficult but ultimately more realistic approach may be to view the challenge of improving student achievement, graduation rates, attendance, climate, etc. not as independent or even related problems that can be addressed in isolation with simplistic solutions like increasing funding, raising levels of expectation, giving parents a choice or increasing the length of the school day and year, but as symptoms of a larger and more inclusive cultural phenomenon. As an institution, public education in the United States is massive, and a certain level of inertia is expected. However, as a nation, the United States has been measuring and trying to improve academic achievement in public education for over three decades without acknowledging the effects of its culture on reform efforts, and without significant success. Throughout the evolution of public education during the last century, influences of certain cultural forces have grown, some have diminished, and some are just now being recognized. For example, the influence of district administrators on education policy has diminished while the influence of teacher unions and legislators on policy decisions has greatly increased (Moe, 2003). The societal roles education has been expected to fill have not changed over time, they have accumulated over time. Since the late 19th century the expectations of high school's role in society have morphed at least five times (Graham, 2003; Moe, 2003; Peterson, 2007). As American society matures and changes from pre-industrial to post industrial the emergence of the adolescent and the effects of an adolescence culture on youth and education has become a more powerful influence (Coleman, 1961).

From a cultural perspective, increasing academic achievement involves much more than the application of some kind of superficial reform effort. Improvements in academic achievement will require a better understanding of the cultural relationships

and social structures inherent in the institutions of public and higher education that affect academic achievement (Hanson, 2001; Schein, 1996). Further investigations that examine the cultural relationships between students, student subcultures, teachers, administration, parents, etc. and the resulting beliefs about teaching and academic achievement arising from those relationships are needed. For example, the cultural dynamics between preservice teachers, teacher preparation programs and the K-12 experience of preservice teachers must be considered to better understand the beliefs about teaching and learning teachers bring to the classroom and what affect those beliefs have on their students (Pajares, 1992). While much more difficult to accomplish, only those reform efforts that include the cultural dynamics of public education have any chance of success (Schein, 1996).

Conceptual Underpinnings

The conceptual underpinnings for this study are rooted in the cultural context of education and the value of a phenomenological, ontological approach to understanding individual beliefs derived from membership within subcultures and the conflicts that occur as individuals attempt to move from one sub-group to another. At all levels of public education, from institutions, to their component sub-groups, to the social justification of knowledge and the influence of individually held beliefs on the behavior of stakeholders, education is a cultural phenomenon (Bruffee, 1999; Coleman, 1961; Hanson, 2001; Pajares, 1992). As an institution, public education must exist within the larger society and is dependent upon society for its existence or social legitimacy (Bolman & Deal, 1997; Scott, 2001). Teachers, administrators, formal and informal regulating groups as described by Hanson (2001), and students constitute subcultures that

affect public education. In 1961, James S. Coleman's book *The Adolescent Society: The Social Life of the Teenager and its Impact on Education* described a subculture of students within the public school setting. According to Bruffee (1999), the act of learning is a social activity that requires some form of linguistic interaction between people and social justification of individually held beliefs. Pajares (1992) argued that individually held beliefs of preservice teachers developed as students during their K-12 experience can have a greater effect on their behavior as teachers than teacher education programs. The conceptual underpinnings for this study consist of a frame of reference that incorporates components of culture, institutional theory and non-foundational nature of learning viewed from a perspective of phenomenology.

The Importance of Culture

Traditional studies of organizations occurring before 1965 and even more recent have, for the most part, been viewed from the frame of the individual and individual needs within an organization, while ignoring the dynamic interactions within and between groups of people that populate an organization and the other social structures existing in an organization's external environment (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991a; Schein, 1996; Scott, 2001). Cook and Yanow (1993) characterized this point of view as the cognitive perspective where researchers "typically base their account of the nature of organizational learning...on an understanding of what it means for an *individual* to learn" (p. 431). Morgan (1997) pointed out that the anthropological or social definitions of the term "culture" did not exist in English dictionaries until the 1920s. Schein (1996) noted that psychology and organizational psychology were among the first disciplines to study organizations and he contended that one reason for the perpetuation of this predisposition

and the general neglect of organizational culture in organizational studies is rooted in the methodology favored by these fields of study. He warned that personal research bias and preferred methodologies often do not lend themselves to discovering the history from which shared group assumptions originate. Schein (1996) stated:

...psychologists have not paid enough attention to the sociologists and anthropologists whose traditions have been to go out into the field and observe a phenomenon at length before trying to understand it. And, for their part, the sociologists have not paid enough attention to the impact of individual differences on the social phenomena that they observed. (p. 231)

Schein (1996) defined culture as “a set of shared, taken for granted implicit assumptions that a group holds and that determines how it perceives, thinks about, and reacts to its various environments” (p. 236). While the influence of culture and social interaction may seem obvious when considering various groups of individuals, Schein (1996) would argue that the effects of culture on organizational studies are often overlooked and that “members of a culture are not even aware of their own culture until they encounter a different one” (p. 236). According to Schein (1996), the “inattention to social systems in organizations has led researchers to underestimate the importance of culture –shared norms, values and assumptions – in how organizations function” (p. 229).

Institutional Theory

Bolman and Deal (1997) characterized institutions by their ambiguous nature. Their function in society, the resources and technology required to achieve their goals are often difficult to define and measure. Applied to public education, its function continues to evolve and the desired outcomes are difficult to define. For example, what does it

mean to educate a child; prepare a child for adulthood; or to be a contributing member of society? Resources in the form of dollars spent per student vary as much as two fold in Missouri public schools with no clear correlation to student achievement. Perceived methodologies for teaching run the continuum from an art to a science (Levine, 2006) and measurements of student success and teacher quality differ from state to state (Petrilli & Finn, 2006). Scott (2001) defined institutions as “multifaceted, durable social structures, made up of symbolic elements, social activities, and material resources. They are relatively resistant to change...They tend to be transmitted across generations, to be maintained and reproduced” (p. 49).

Institutional theory, according to Hanson (2001), attempts to address the constraints within institutions and their operating environment that inhibit an institution’s ability to change. One of the significant contributions of institutional theory to understanding organizations is the recognition of the organizational field in which organizations must exist and its effects on an organization’s operational choices (DiMaggio & Powell; 1991b, Scott, 2001).

Non-foundational Nature of Learning

In Kenneth A. Bruffee’s book (1999) *Collaborative Learning: Higher Education, Interdependence, and the Authority of Knowledge*, he described two opposing perspectives of the authority of knowledge: foundational and non-foundational. The foundational view of the authority of knowledge has dominated man’s understanding of the origin of knowledge since ancient times and continues its dominance today. To have a foundational view of the authority of knowledge is to view the origin of knowledge in one place. In early history that place was in the mind of God and those who were the

closest to God. Today secular equivalents for the location of the authority of knowledge include “one or another of the acknowledged referents of value and truth from which we believe the authority of knowledge derives” (pp. 151-152) such as the natural sciences or mathematics. A second location exists when the authority of knowledge is derived from a closeness or “intimacy with the greatest minds.” (p. 152) and a third location in which professors place their authority of knowledge is “in being in direct touch with one or the other of the grounding entities of foundational thought: the essential object or the essential self” (p. 152). For example those whose knowledge includes experimental laboratory research would be considered a greater authority than those who merely read and synthesize laboratory studies. A fourth location of authority of knowledge occurs when those whose knowledge includes first hand, direct contact with artifacts are considered a greater authority than those whose knowledge includes experience with replicas of artifacts.

Bruffee’s (1999) vision of knowledge is from a nonfoundational social constructionist point of view. Instead of being lodged in one place, Bruffee contended that knowledge resides

...in the conversation that goes on among the members of a community of knowledgeable peers and in the “conversation of mankind”...nonfoundational social construction understands knowledge, in Richard Rorty’s terms, as socially justified belief. It assumes that each authoritative community, each community of interdependent knowledge peers, each academic and professional discipline, constructs knowledge, in the distinctive, local language or paralinguistic symbolic system that constitutes the community. It assumes that what Karen Knorr-Cetina

[p.13] says of scientific knowledge is the case for all knowledge: it is a “social occurrence” that emerges from “interaction and negotiation with others.” (p. 153)

Membership into a knowledgeable community of peers is defined by one’s ability to speak fluently the language of that community. Not being able to speak the language of a community identifies nonmembers. We value professors of education because they represent an authoritative community whose expertise is education. Bruffee (1999) defined a college education as “a process of renegotiating membership in one set of knowledge communities and negotiating membership in another” (p. 180). As instructors, professors have the responsibility to bring nonmembers (students) into their community. “That is, students learn more than disciplinary jargon. Their education is reacculturation involving intense, flexible linguistic engagement with members of communities they already belong to and communities to which they do not yet belong” (Bruffee, 1999, p. 154).

Phenomenology

Of the various traditions of qualitative research design described by Creswell (1998), the view provided by a phenomenological approach seems most relevant to this study. Phenomenology as a research method is a good fit for the human sciences, particularly sociology in that it “is interested in how ordinary members of society constitute the world of everyday life, especially how individuals consciously develop meaning out of social interactions” (Creswell, 1998, p. 53). According to Scott (2001), phenomenology began as a form of philosophy which was applied to social science by scholars to examine meanings given to symbols. In line with Bruffee’s (1999) non-foundational social constructivist origin of knowledge described above, the philosophical

assumptions underlying the study will be ontological as described by Creswell (1998). Ontology addresses the nature of reality and assumes the reality created through the individual experiences of the participants in the study (Creswell, 1998).

Culture and the social nature of institutions and knowledge creation provide the context and lens from which this study was viewed. Phenomenology provides the methodology to explore the reality that individuals bring to public education through their personal beliefs and experience.

Statement of the Problem

The resistance to change by public education despite four decades of intense reform effort suggests a cultural phenomenon of barriers and institutional structures that prevent or naturally oppose change. Public education as an institution has contributed as much as any other since industrialization to the social development of the United States. Similar to not being able to see the forest for the trees, as a subculture of American society, the magnitude of public education and its pervasiveness can be difficult to appreciate. Policy and reform efforts that do not consider the cultural context of public education, such as the ill-conceived effort to desegregate inner-city schools or the current NCLB movement, are destined to fail. For the purpose of this study the absence of significant improvement in student achievement in the past 35 years is only a symptom of the problem. The problem is an apparent lack of appreciation for the cultural nature of public education and the need to better understand public education as a cultural phenomenon. While the plethora of quantitative data generated by the NCES over the past 35 years have been useful in describing and tracking the academic achievement of groups and sub-groups of students, its efficacy in facilitating significant educational

reform has not been realized. To better construct a more comprehensive theory regarding public education as a cultural phenomenon, more qualitative research is needed to enhance our understanding of the individual experience and shared beliefs of those involved. Twenty-five years after Coleman published EEO, Coleman (1996) admitted that its focus on

...the administrative perspective of the school as delivering services individually to students, may have missed the most important differences between the school environments in which black and white children found themselves.

One could imagine a combined perspective, in which the administrative goal that is outcomes for children, remained the ultimate focus, but the social system of the school and its impact on children's investments of effort were not ignored. To take this combined perspective would involve a more indirect route: first, to use information from students (based on interviews, questionnaires, or observation) to reconstruct conceptually the functioning of the social system of the school, by determining the norms, the bases of popularity, the positive or negative status conferred by various activities, and the social location of each child in this system. (p. 20)

Within the larger cultural context of public education are various subcultures that come together and form boundaries of beliefs that in essence define each subculture. Examples of these subcultures would include teachers, teacher unions, administration, preservice teachers, higher education, teacher preparation programs, business, parents, tax payers, policy makers, departments of education, and professional organizations. Each of these subcultures come together to form a three dimensional asymmetric

structural matrix known as public education. Schein (2000) contended that it is at these boundaries of belief that communication breaks down between subcultures and prevents an environment for change. Schein (2000) stated that:

...part of the reason we have difficulty reaching consensus on major global problems...is that we cannot communicate very well across cultural boundaries...We have excellent data that show how differently various groups perceive their environments based on different shared tacit assumptions, but we have very few tools for helping people to improve communication across those boundaries. (p. xxix)

According to Schein (2000), each individual has a set of beliefs from which they operate their daily lives. These beliefs act as filters through which they view their experiences. When personal beliefs are shared with members of a group as well as common experiences, they become motivated to retain those beliefs as an expression of their membership. Schein's (2000) assertion that an inability of cultures and subcultures to communicate across respective cultural boundaries contributes to the status-quo must be considered when explaining the lack of significant progress in education reform in the past 35 years.

Purpose of the Study

Teacher socialization describes a body of research seeking to understand the development of individuals into "participating members of the society of teachers" (Zeichner & Gore, 1990, p. 329). In this context, an individual's attitudes and beliefs provide an opportunity of understanding preservice teachers' thought processes; how they might behave in the classroom; and their willingness to embrace change (Doyle, 1997;

Pajares, 1992; Richardson, 1996; Zeichner & Gore, 1990). One significant finding from this body of research is that preservice teachers hold on to their beliefs regarding education and teaching that were formed as part of their K-12 experience as students and these are the beliefs that tend to prevail and reemerge after they leave a teacher preparation program and begin teaching on their own. An application of these findings to the beliefs preservice teachers bring to teacher preparation programs from their membership in an expanding adolescent subculture has not been well defined.

In Coleman's book *The Adolescent Society* (1961) he described the emergence of a youth culture that was a direct consequence of and paralleled the industrialization of present day society. As the role of public education changed to meet the demands of industrialization its influence on the development and maintenance of a youth culture grew as well. The net effect was that children were gradually set aside from the influence of their parents into a culture characterized by impersonal institutions raising children. These youths or adolescents being unable to interact with adult culture created their own subculture with its own set of norms and values (Coleman, 1961; Husen, 1996).

According to Husen (1996):

...adolescence and youth as a distinctive period of development is a product of complex and differentiated industrial society, where a long period of schooling and preparation has to precede co-option into adult society, and where a wide range of options and the lack of consistency between preparatory functions of various institutions – family, school, workplace- make the establishment of an adult identity both difficult and complex. (p. 25)

Given the acceptance of a youth subculture whose sphere of influence is not limited to, but includes public education, it must also be recognized that its cultural boundaries are defined by its member beliefs and assumptions.

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to better describe, from the individual points of view of each participant, beliefs preservice teachers bring to teacher preparation programs arising from their experiences as K-12 students and as members of an adolescent subculture.

Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed in this study:

1. What individually held beliefs about education do preservice teachers bring to their teacher preparation program from their K-12 experience?
2. What individually held beliefs about education do preservice teachers bring to their teacher preparation program from their membership in an adolescent subculture?

Definition of Key Terms

An understanding of the following key terms is essential to this study. They are defined in this section:

Adolescence. Adolescence is a period of human development occurring between childhood and adulthood.

The lower age limit of the adolescent period of transition from child to adult is defined by physiological characteristics of puberty and rapid changes in height and weight. The upper limit of the adolescent period is defined as a social condition of being able to take on adult responsibilities such being able to

financially support oneself through work, and marriage. (Coleman, 1961; Husen, 1996)

For the purpose of this study the upper limit of the adolescent period will be set at 25 years of age.

Adolescent Society or Youth Culture. According to Coleman (1961), adolescence in a modern industrialized society is a formal separation of youth from parents and adult society. Garner, Bootcheck, Lorr, and Rauch (2006) suggested that instead of a formal separation of youth from adults, youth with the help of adults, exaggerate the prevailing dominate adult culture. For the purpose of this study, the concept of a youth culture embraces elements of both interpretations.

Beliefs. “Beliefs are thought of as psychologically held understandings, premises, or propositions about the world that are felt to be true” (Richardson, 1996, p. 103).

Culture. Culture is a term used to describe “a set of shared, taken for granted implicit assumptions that a group holds and that determines how it perceives, thinks about, and reacts to its various environments” (Schein, 1996, p. 236).

K-12. K-12 is an abbreviation for kindergarten through twelfth grade.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB). The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) is a national reform effort that includes components of accountability, charter schools, and choice that is tied to federal funding of district Title I programs. Its goal is that 100% of all students will be scoring at a proficient level or above on state achievement tests.

Phenomenological Study. A research methodology used in the human sciences, particularly sociology. Phenomenology was applicable for this study in that it “is interested in how ordinary members of society constitute the world of everyday life,

especially how individuals consciously develop meaning out of social interactions” (Creswell, 1998, p. 53).

Preservice Teachers. Preservice teachers are undergraduate students who are considering a career in K-12 teaching and are enrolled in teacher preparation course work.

Teacher Preparation Program. A defined undergraduate degree program that will lead to state certification of graduates and allow them to teach in K-12 public schools when completed.

Limitations

1. This study is limited geographically because participants were selected from only one university in a Midwestern state.
2. This study is limited due to the methodology used, the quality of the data instruments and skill of the investigator’s collection and interpretation of data.
3. This study is limited by the researcher’s bias regarding public education and the existence of a distinguishable adolescent or youth culture.

Summary

Despite four decades of regular reform effort at the state and federal levels of public education, there has been little or no significant progress towards improving high school student achievement as measured by national and international achievement tests. One possible explanation for public education’s resistance to change is the cultural dynamics of public education as an institution; the various subcultures within education and other institutions and organizations existing within education’s operational environment; and the barriers that naturally exist at the boundaries of interaction between

these various groups. The purpose of this study is to investigate the beliefs preservice teachers bring to teacher education programs from their K-12 experience and as members of an adolescent subculture as they try to move across those boundaries into the culture of professional teacher.

Chapter two will present a relevant literature review of the evolution of education policy in the United States as an institution at the national level. Recent findings regarding teacher socialization studies and teacher education programs are discussed and a limited treatment of institutional theory and the development of an adolescent subculture are included as well. Chapter Three includes a discussion of research methodology used and its justification. A discussion of study participants, data collection, instruments, interview protocol, and analysis are provided. Chapter Four will provide an analysis of data collected through an in class survey, in-depth interviews, and a focus group discussion. Themes emerging from the various sources of data will be intergraded in an effort to capture the essence of preservice teacher's beliefs about learning and teaching in the context of the research questions poised. Chapter Five will provide a summary of findings and discussion. Implications for practice and future research in light of the findings will be provided as well.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

Since the early 1970s when the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) began collecting test data, reform efforts in American public education leading to significant academic improvement as a nation has yet to deliver the desired results of increasing national test scores (Donahue & Dion, 2007; Perie et al., 2005; & Rampey, Dion, & Donahue, 2009). A frame often missing from research and one that addresses resistance to change is a cultural perspective (Schein, 1996; Hanson, 2001). Organizationally, public education in America is a massive institution (Bolman & Deal, 1997; Hanson, 2001) and, according to Bruffee (1999), learning is a social phenomenon. By examining the cultural context of public education, including its history, a more complete perspective is provided in understanding the barriers to change and the failure of reform efforts (Hanson, 2001; Schein, 2000).

Within the institution of public education and between its external environments, there are numerous social dynamic interactions occurring between groups of individuals with divergent cultural characteristics (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991b, Hanson, 2001; Scott, 2001). Schein (2000) argued it is at the boundaries between these groups that communication breaks down and change becomes difficult. One example is a process of teacher socialization. Teacher socialization occurs when preservice teachers are assimilated into the culture of teachers through teacher preparation programs and experience in the classroom (Zeichner & Gore, 1990). A second example occurs between what Coleman (1961) described as an adolescent subculture and the expressed culture of

school itself. No specific studies have been located that address the effects of an adolescent culture on teacher socialization.

This chapter includes a review of research and literature relevant to an examination of individually held beliefs of preservice teachers arising from their K-12 experience and membership in an adolescent subculture. The first section presents a brief discussion of institutional theory to provide a cultural frame for the proceeding sections and chapters. The second section provides a historical overview of public education's cultural role in America's evolution from a pre-industrial society of the late 19th century to the post-industrial society of today. The third section is a review of literature regarding teacher socialization research and programs of teacher preparation. The final section is a discussion of an adolescent subculture existing within American society. Chapter Two concludes with a summary that ties this study to the presented literature review.

Institutional Theory

Early developments in institutional theory were largely based upon the assumption that members of an organization behaved as rational individuals in order to efficiently achieve the desired goals of the organization (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991a). In 1977, Meyer and Rowan reported observations which exposed a gap or disconnect between rational and formal structures of control within organizations and their activities and outcomes. They proposed that:

structural elements [of institutions] are only loosely linked to each other and to activities, rules are often violated, decisions are often unimplemented, or if implemented have uncertain consequences, technologies are of problematic

efficiency, and evaluation and inspection systems are subverted or rendered so vague as to provide little coordination. (p. 343)

DiMaggio and Powell (1991a) credit Meyer and Rowan (1977) with the development of a cultural view of institutional theory in organizational analysis which tends to focus on commonalities or homogeneity of organizational structures and processes characteristic of institutions of similar function. DiMaggio and Powell (1991b) argued that homogenization of organizations is not due to the rational efforts of individuals toward efficiency, but rather “out of the structuration...of organizational fields” (p. 64). Meyer and Rowan (1977) proposed that:

In modern societies, the elements of rationalized formal structures [of organizations] are deeply ingrained in, and reflect, widespread understandings of social reality. Many of the positions, policies, programs, and procedures of modern organizations are enforced by public opinion, by the views of important constituents, by knowledge legitimated through the educational system, by social prestige, by the laws, and by the definitions of negligence and prudence used by the courts. Such elements of formal structure are manifestations of powerful institutional rules which function as highly rationalized myths that are binding on particular organizations. (p. 343)

Scott (2001) characterized institutions as:

Social structures that have attained a high degree of resilience... are transmitted by various types of carriers, including symbolic systems, relational systems, routines, and artifacts. Institutions operate at multiple levels of jurisdiction, from the world system to localized interpersonal relationships. (p. 48)

Hanson (2001) defined modern institutional theory as a:

Body of thought that identified, emphasizes, and explores the forces that constrain organizations from changing. For the field of education, the outcome is a greater understanding of why educational systems are so isomorphic (homogeneous) and commonly give the appearance of change without the reality of change. (p. 653)

Scott (2001) suggested that the source of inherent stability characteristic of institutions arise from three elements or pillars common to institutions. They are the regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive pillars.

The regulative pillar is a stabilizing force that defines actions of institutions through laws, formal and/or informal rules, monitoring and sanctioning activities, rewards and punishment (Hanson, 2001; Scott, 2001). Applied to public education, examples of regulative pillars include state and federal regulatory agencies, laws, court decisions, professional organizations, agencies of accreditation and certification, and formal and informal school policies (Hanson, 2001). Components of the regulatory pillar are legitimized as legally sanctioned and are therefore enforced through threats of punishment or coercion (Scott, 2001). Regulatory pillars were the primary focus of early institutional theory (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991a; Scott, 2001).

The normative pillar “emphasizes values and norms about how [members]...should pursue valued ends through legitimate means” (Hanson, 2001, p. 646). According to Scott (2001), there are values and norms common to all members of an organization and there are values and norms applicable to only certain members or positions. It is the difference between the two that define roles of individuals and the “normative expectations-of how the specified actors are supposed to behave” (p. 55). The

normative pillar is legitimized through moral beliefs and expectations of individuals within the institution and those held in its external environment. It functions through the various normative behaviors or roles of individuals within the organization (Scott, 2001). Applied to public education, high levels of student achievement are valued by its members and society in general. The normative systems within education and society define the roles of the students, teachers, and administrators in pursuing this goal.

The concept of a cultural-cognitive pillar originated with anthropologists who stressed “the centrality of cultural-cognitive elements of institutions: the shared conceptions that constitute the nature of social reality and the frames through which meaning is made” (Scott, 2001, p. 57). The cultural-cognitive pillar recognizes that individual reality is shaped by the culture in which one exists. Culture “provides the filter through which people view reality and gives meaning to them as they interpret their world” (Hanson, 2001, p. 646). Noncompliance of culturally supported behaviors is often unimaginable because of how certain activities have always been taken for granted and done. Cultural-cognitive structures result in mimicry between institutions with similar goals existing within the same culture (Scott, 2001).

Each of the three pillars contributes to a “legitimacy” that institutions must possess if they are to survive in their social environment (Scott, 2001, p. 58). According to Scott, institutions are provided legitimacy when they are perceived to be necessary and fitting within the beliefs, values, and norms of the social setting in which they exist. Legitimacy is a “condition reflecting perceived consonance with relevant rules and laws, normative support, or alignment with cultural-cognitive frameworks... [it] is not an input to be combined or transformed...but a symbolic value to be displayed” (Scott, 2001, p. 59).

Legitimacy derived from the cultural-cognitive pillar represents the level of support an organization has from its outside environment (Scott, 2001). According to DiMaggio and Powell (1991b), “organizations compete not just for resources and customers, but for political power and institutional legitimacy, for social as well as economic fitness” (p. 66). Hanson (2001) noted that organizations will selectively adopt external goals and processes held by outside stakeholders in order to increase their legitimacy within society which in turn increases their justification for resources and provides insulation from attacks on its processes.

Despite having a degree of social legitimacy, institutions are not insulated from the effects of other organizations with which they coexist. DiMaggio and Powell (1991b) coined the term “organizational field” (p. 64) to describe the cultural environment in which institutions occupy and must function as a part of society. An organizational field contains the external organizational components that comprise the three structural pillars of an institution as well as organizations with which an institution must interact and compete with for its legitimacy. Applied to K-12 education, regulatory components of its organizational field include: laws, regulatory agencies, legislatures, courts, formal and informal rules and policies. Normative components include professional organizations, unions, agencies of certification and accreditation, higher education, vendors of curriculum and professional development, and special interest groups. Cultural-cognitive components include commonly held beliefs and assumed philosophies that define the purpose, processes, and outcomes of public education within society (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991b; Hanson, 2001; Scott, 2001).

Institutions, such as public education, which occupy the same organizational field, are subject to the same regulatory, normative, and cultural-cognitive structural frameworks. An institution's degree of alignment to the cultural-cognitive components of an organizational field defines its social legitimacy. Those which stray too far from the commonly held beliefs of an organizational field run the risk of decreasing their social legitimacy and the resources it provides. As a result, institutions occupying the same organizational field become homogeneous (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991b). According to DiMaggio and Powell (1991b):

Once disparate organizations in the same line of business are structured into an actual field (as we argue, by competition, the state, or the professions), powerful forces emerge that lead them to become more similar to one another.

Organizations may change their goals or develop new practices, and new organizations may enter the field. But in the long run, organizational actors making rational decisions construct around themselves an environment that constrains their ability to change further in later years. (p. 65)

Isomorphism is the term used in institutional theory to describe the processes of homogenization of organizations occupying the same organizational field (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991b; Hansen, 2001). DiMaggio and Powell (1991b) identified three types of isomorphic pressure that influence the homogenization process of institutions.

Coercive isomorphism occurs when formal and informal demands are brought to bear on institutions from regulative and nominative organizations within an institution's organizational field and the cultural expectations of the society in which an institution exists. These demands may be expressed as legal requirements, government mandates, or

as cultural expectations. Institutions occupying the same organizational field are subject to the same coercive pressures found within the field. As a result they create compliance structures that are homogeneous to each other (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991b). Applied to public education, all schools found within a state must comply with the same state and federal laws that define their organizational structures, methods of operation and expected outcomes (Hansen, 2001). Coercive processes originating from political environments of the organizational field “have two characteristic features: political decision makers often do not experience directly the consequences of their actions; and political decisions are applied across the board to entire classes of organizations, thus making such decisions less adaptive and less flexible” (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991b, p. 68).

Resources within an organizational field are limited and require institutions to establish and maintain a level of social legitimacy or risk losing access to those resources (Scott, 2001). As competition for resources increase, and uncertainty in process, outcome, or legitimacy grows, institutions may model their structures on other, more successful organizations. DiMaggio and Powell (1991b) used the term mimetic process to describe this modeling phenomenon. They asserted that this modeling behavior has the advantage of reacting to uncertainties in process, outcomes, or legitimacy efficiently and without much effort. Hanson (2001) noted that mimetic isomorphism within public education is promoted by educational consultants wanting to sell the latest new ideas in education, “academic conferences that function as supermarkets for new ideas, and ...the rapid movement by administrators between schools or districts near and far” (p. 649).

Normative pressures toward isomorphism of an institution arise from the professionalization of its members. Professionalization, according to DiMaggio and Powell (1991b), is a collective effort by members to define the conditions and processes of their work, delineate who may or may not become a member, and provide a cognitive/cultural authority for their self determination as an occupational group.

According to Hanson (2001), institutions are structured like an onion with layers of organization. At the core of the organization are individual members. Moving away from the center are informal groups within the organization, formal groups, components of the organizational field, and the social context in which the institution exists. The better the fit between layers the more stable the organization becomes. Constraining and stabilizing forces from the organizational field flow in a top down direction through each layer of formal and informal structure until it reaches individual members. As a result, Hanson (2001) stated, “administrators and teachers as individuals engage in an institutional world that knowingly and unknowingly shape not only their patterns of work but also their thinking about work” (p. 652).

Much of the focus of institutional theory is on describing the stabilizing mechanisms of the organizational field and how it functions to homogenize organizations that perform similar functions within society and thus obstruct significant change. However, as Kondra and Hinings (1998) noted, “organizations do deviate from institutional norms ...although the stronger the institutional pressures the less frequently will deviation be observed” (p. 750). When institutional change does occur, according to DiMaggio and Powell (1991a), “it is likely to be episodic and dramatic, responding to institutional change at the macrolevel, rather than incremental and smooth” (p. 11). For

Hanson (2001) institutional change occurs when “the ‘fit’ between what the environment expects and requires and what the organization is doing and producing gets out of alignment (when a gap exists), something takes place in the environment or the organization to reestablish the fit” (p. 659). Kondra and Hinings (1998) described institutional fit “as the degree of compliance by an organization with the organizational form of structures, routines and systems prescribed by institutional norms” (p. 750).

Applying institutional change to public education Hanson (2001) identified three external forces capable of causing change. Environmental shifts occur when the expectations of schools change from within other organizations occupying the organizational field. One example was the court decision leading to the Title IX regulations which all schools must now enforce through its practices. A second environmental force is environmental regression. Environmental regression occurs when a school becomes too different from the others and begins to forfeit its social legitimacy. Without support and resources from the environment it is forced to make changes in the direction of the other schools. Hanson (2001) used the term organizational homogenization to describe this process. Environmental shock is the third force described by Hanson (2001). It is “a condition in which changes in an educational system’s external environment gets seriously ahead of any incremental adaptations the schools can make” (p. 655). The more institutionalized and inflexible an organization becomes the greater the effects of environmental shock. Environmental shocks can occur through environmental changes in technology, changes in law, and changes in public awareness. Examples of environmental shocks applied to schools include the development of the internet, new laws concerning civil rights, and published reports like the *A Nation at*

Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform published in 1983. Environmental shocks that change the organizational field can alter those institutionalizing forces that support the status quo and cause change to happen (Hanson, 2001).

To summarize, the structure and functioning of an institution such as public education is not defined internally by the rational thoughts and motives of closely involved individuals. Instead, institutions are defined and controlled by the overall cultural expectations of society which is the ultimate source of resources needed for survival; similar institutions competing for those limited resources; as well as regulatory structures and related institutions, all of which occupy the same external operating environment. Internally, operations are based upon the beliefs, values, and norms of the various formal and informal groups within the institution. In concert, each of these competing forces hold public education in check, making it difficult to change and causing those institutions with common purpose and function to look and behave the same.

Paradigm Shifts in Education Policy

Education reform in the United States dating back to the late 1800s has been a matter of “reform by commission” (Ravitch, 2003, p. 25). Whenever the perceived need for action by the public, or from within the profession, reached critical mass, a commission would be assembled to investigate and make recommendations. Education policy resulting from commission findings depended upon who the committee members were and what organization(s) sponsored the study. According to Graham (2003), there have been at least four paradigm shifts in education policy from the elitist perspective that existed during most of the 1800s; specifically, assimilation, adjustment, access, and

achievement. Graham's description of assimilation and adjustment paradigm shifts in policy parallel what is also known as progressivism or the progressive movement in education (Bohan, 2003; Evers & Clopton, 2003; Ravitch, 2003). Following Graham's fourth paradigm shift focusing on achievement should be a fifth paradigm shift to accountability which describes the current focus of education policy (Moe, 2003; Peterson, 2007).

Elitism to Progressivism (Assimilation and Adjustment)

The transition in education policy from one of an elitist perspective to one of progressivism occurred sometime during the late 19th century to early 20th century. From the 1840s through the 1870s, high schools in America were mostly private academies which served less than 5% of high school aged youth and were primarily intended to prepare youth for college. Because these high schools were private, only the elite of society were able to attend. By the 1870s and 1880s public high schools began to appear across the country causing a certain amount of concern among leaders of higher education with regard to the varied curriculum these schools were teaching. By the 1930s the percentage of youth attending high school in the United States increased almost 15 fold to 70%. One of the major factors in the rapid growth of public education was the progressive movement (Bohan, 2003; Evers & Clopton, 2003; Mirel, 2006; Ravitch, 2003). According to Bohan (2003):

...progressivism was largely conceived as a response by the democratic reform movement to the problems and paradoxes evident in the...post-Civil War era...Progressives, although not a uniform group, sought to correct these

pernicious evils through increased democracy, regulation of big business, social justice, conservation, and public service. (pp. 74-75)

Evers and Clopton (2003) noted that progressive ideology applied to public education:

...combines an anti-intellectualism and devotion to naturalness inherited from the romantic era; the rhetoric, jargon, and sometimes the methods of the social and behavioral sciences; and often-secularized religiosity committed to transforming the world through schooling. Indeed, one of the features of Progressive education brought over from Protestantism backgrounds as an intellectual tendency to unify things that were logically disparate. (p. 257)

The thrust of the progressive movement was a humanistic effort to improve the lives of all individuals through public education. Progressive educators resisted academic rigor in favor of curriculum that would address the needs of the whole child and society. As noted by Evers and Clopton (2003), “Sociologist Edward A. Ross...explicitly connected schooling and social control and wrote that education can ‘help in breaking in the colt to the harness’” (p. 261). Relevant to the progressive era were policy documents promoted by the Committee of Ten in 1893 and the Cardinal Principals of Secondary Education in 1918.

In 1893 the National Education Association (NEA) commissioned a committee consisting of ten members known as the Committee of Ten with the responsibility of defining how high schools should prepare its students for college. Its chairman and author was Charles Eliot, president of Harvard. At the time only a small percentage of youth were attending high school and even fewer were attending college. Mirel (2006) and Ravitch (2003) interpreted Eliot’s recommendations as the last attempt in pre-progressive

American education policy to preserve the value of traditional academic content.

According to Mirel (2006), Eliot argued that:

...every subject which is taught at all in a secondary school should be taught in the same way and to the same extent to every pupil so long as he pursues it, no matter what the probable destination of the pupil may be, or at what point his education is to cease. (p. 15)

The Committee of Ten from their perspective “fulfilled the promise of equal opportunity for education by insisting that all students take the same types of rigorous academic courses” (Mirel, 2006, p. 15).

Bohan (2003) argued that the recommendations of the Committee of Ten were the actual roots from which the progressive era in education grew. Specifically, the committee recommended that history be taught as an academic discipline beginning in the fifth grade and expand its content beyond politics and war. Prior to the Committee of Ten report history was not taught within its own curriculum. The committee also stated the value of teaching history was to prepare all students for life by improving citizenship and moral character, not college. They also noted the value of learning beyond the traditional practice of rote memorization and encouraged changes in teaching methodology.

Critics of the Committee of Ten recommendations argued that their report was elitist and did not address the needs or capabilities of the growing population of youth immigrating into the country. Indeed, the number of high school aged youth attending high school increased from less than 5% in 1890 to over 70% by the 1930s. G. Stanley Hall, a noted psychologist and president of Clark University, denounced the Committee

of Ten curriculum recommendations because he said most high school students were part of a “great army of incapables...who should be in schools for dullards or subnormal children” (Mirel, 2006, p. 15).

In 1918 the NEA sponsored another group, the Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education. The commission issued its final report titled the *Cardinal Principals of Secondary Education* which amounted to a 180 degree turn around from the findings of the Committee of Ten. Known as the Cardinal Principals, the report was based upon two assumptions. First, it assumed that most high school students of the period were less capable than those in the late 19th century. Second, it assumed that since these students were less intelligent, it would be a wasted effort to insist they follow a rigorous college preparation curriculum. Given these assumptions, it was argued that forcing less capable students to follow the rigorous academic curriculum suggested by the Committee of Ten, would actually increase educational inequality because these students would be left behind and end up quitting school (Mirel, 2006).

The progressive movement in education was beginning to flourish by 1918 when the *Cardinal Principals of Secondary Education* was published. The Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education placed instruction in “health, vocation, ‘worthy home-membership,’ citizenship, character, and ‘worthy use of leisure’” (Ravitch, 2003, p. 26) on equal status with academic studies. Evers and Clopton (2003) used the term “Life-adjustment progressives” to describe the authors and content of the progressive era curriculum. They quoted Herbert Kleibard’s reaction to the Cardinal Principals report which:

...gave secondary schools license to expand the curriculum almost indefinitely...Almost no activity that human beings engage in could not be subsumed under one of those [aims]. Thus, almost anything that the human imagination could conceive of became fodder for the secondary-school curriculum. (p. 264)

Acceptance of this curricular focus effectively completed the paradigm shift from elitism where high school was academic by design and intended for the very few preparing for college to one of assimilation and adjustment (progressivism) of the masses for the purpose of creating a better society (Evers & Clopton, 2003).

During the same time period of shift to progressive education, the views society held for its youth were changing as well. Educators as well as child advocates began to insist that children should be held off the labor market. They argued adolescents should be allowed an extended period of youth before assuming adult responsibilities. They argued adolescents deserved professional training before they enter into full time employment rather than on-the-job training after the fact. Competition for jobs, particularly during the Great Depression, reinforced these concerns, as well as the notion that keeping adolescents in school rather than in the work force helped to keep wages high and therefore increased the standard of living for workers (Evers & Clopton, 2003; Mirel, 2006). The transition away from a large youth labor pool required government to develop a mechanism(s) to control this growing group of individuals. An institution was required that would be able to accommodate, train, and provide a bureaucratic platform able to supply services as well as exercise some level of control. Evers and Clopton (2003) claimed that by the 1940s public education had asserted its dominance in

providing this service to society. The number of youth attending high school during the progressive era grew at an unprecedented rate that has not been equaled since. Coleman (1961) would later cite that this was the beginning of a new cultural phenomenon he called the adolescent society.

According to Moe (2003), the political transition of control of public education spanned the first half of the twentieth century. As control of education was wrestled away from political machines characteristic of the period by a coalition of community leaders, progressive politicians, and educational administrators, education administrators simultaneously positioned themselves as the true power in public education through their expertise. Moe (2003) noted that education administrators, being highly organized through the NEA,

...were the ones (to hear them tell it) who knew how to design, organize, and operate complex systems of schools; they were the ones who understood the mysteries of curriculum, testing, and teacher training; and they were the ones, as a result, that public officials and citizens should rely upon in all matters of public education. (p. 179)

According to Mirel (2006), the number of students enrolled in high school more than doubled from the 1950s through the 1970s. The number of teachers grew as well. During this same time frame states across the nation began changing laws that allowed collective bargaining for public employees, including school teachers. Up until this era teachers as a group were politically powerless (Moe, 2003). Once the NEA became successful in organizing teachers it quickly changed from a professional organization consisting of school administrators to one of a trade union representing teachers. By 1980 practically

all large school districts not residing in a right-to-work state became affiliated with a teacher's union. Any political power administrators and leaders of public education had in the 1950s was effectively lost to the voting block the new teacher unions represented. Today, over three million teachers belong to the NEA or the American Federation of Teachers and constitute the largest, most powerful interest group in the country (Moe, 2003). Moe (2003) argued their "fundamental interests have to do with protecting and extending their collective bargaining arrangements, protecting member jobs, promoting member pay and working conditions, promoting member rights in the workplace, and increasing the demand for teachers" (p. 181). While these unions use their power to promote policies they favor, the nature of the American legislative system with its checks and balances intensifies their ability to effectively block or water down reform efforts counter to their interests, therefore sustaining the status quo (Moe, 2003). As Greene (2006) noted, reform efforts supported by these unions in the name of education improvement also strengthened union membership. Examples include more money for education, more teachers for reducing class size, expanded professional development, and retention of experienced teachers.

Soon after World War II, the Life Adjustment Movement was thrust upon American high schools. It was a federally sponsored curriculum that, according to Mierl (2006), furthered the dilution of academic curriculum in high school. Charles Prosser, the movement's founder, believed that only 20% of America's youth could master academic content; another 20% could be placed in a vocational tract; "and the remaining 60% needed courses in subjects like health and PE, effective use of leisure time, driver training, and knowledge of such 'problems of American democracy' as dating, buying on

credit, and renting an apartment” (Mierl, 2006, p. 18). Nonacademic courses taken by high school students increased from 33% in 1928 to 43% by 1961 (Mierl, 2006).

According to Evers and Clopton (2003), even academic course work was made less rigorous while maintaining course titles. Improvements in dropout and graduation rates in the 1950s and 1960s resulted more from the watered down academic curricula of the era than any influence leaders of education or policy might have had (Evers & Clopton, 2003; Mierl, 2006).

Access. During the 1960s and 1970s the civil rights movement added a new layer of responsibility on public education in America. According to Graham (2003), the mandated shift in focus to equal access of all students to a quality education prolonged public education’s distraction from academic achievement. Graham (2003) argued that:

Federal mandates to desegregate schools, to provide extra help to disadvantaged children, and to include disabled children in regular classrooms, while all clearly necessary, placed the focus on contentious politics rather than on student learning. These were policies that many teachers and administrators either didn’t know how to implement or, in many cases, didn’t want to impalement in their communities.

(p. 22)

These mandates began with President Johnson’s Civil Rights Act of 1964 which created the Office of Economic Opportunity that funded Head Start, the Job Corps as well as Coleman’s first report titled *Equality of Educational Opportunity* (Moynihan, 1993). The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 was the next federal mandate. It created the Title I program which, according to Moynihan (1993), was President Johnson’s attempt to end the effects of poverty on youth identified in successive annual

reports on the Selective Service System. These reports noted that “Once again half – 49.8 percent- of young men called up had been rejected, having failed the mental tests (the Armed Forces Qualification Test), the physical test, or both” (Moynihan, 1993, p. 110). Additional Title programs would follow including Title IX in 1973 which prohibited gender based discrimination (Felder, 1999).

Coleman’s Equality of Educational Opportunity was the first of three reports that provided ammunition for policy change. According to Moynihan (1993), in the context of the Civil Rights movement, it provided the fodder needed to convince the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights to endorse a federal bussing mandate to require all schools to have less than 50% black students. Despite its controversy, voluntary and involuntary desegregation of school districts continued for decades (Ravitch, 1993). In 1969 the first National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) test was administered, thus beginning an additional layer of federal oversight and a new shift in education focus (Hess & Finn, 2007).

Achievement. In 1983 the National Commission on Excellence in Education published the *Nation at Risk* which drew national attention to student achievement. According to Peterson (2003),

It effectively recast many people’s thinking about education, from the focus on resources, services, and mindless innovation that had absorbed us during the sixties and seventies to the emphasis on achievement, performance, and excellence...it laid bare the truths that equity without excellence is an empty achievement and quantity with quality is an unkept promise. (p. 5)

In the area of content, the National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983) found that:

Secondary school curricula have been homogenized, diluted, and diffused to the point that they no longer have a central purpose. In effect, we have a cafeteria style curriculum in which the appetizers and desserts can easily be mistaken for the main courses. Students have migrated from vocational and college preparatory programs to “general track” courses in large numbers. (p. 1)

The report noted that academic expectations for students decreased as well as student achievement, while grades had risen. Compared to other industrialized nations, U. S. high school students were required to take fewer courses in science and math; spent fewer hours per week in class; and attended school fewer days per year than their international counterparts. The report also noted that “too many teachers are being drawn from the bottom quarter of graduating high school and college students” (p. 3). Teacher preparation programs placed too much emphasis on education methods courses at the expense of subject matter content. “Half of the newly employed mathematics, science, and English teachers are not qualified to teach these subjects” (p. 3).

The National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983) recommended that high school curricula be strengthened by requiring more course work in English, math, science, social studies, and computer science, and a foreign language requirement for college bound students. They recommended “that schools, colleges, and universities adopt more rigorous and measurable standards, and higher expectations, for academic performance and student conduct, and that 4-year colleges and universities raise their requirements for admission” (p. 14). Other recommendations included increasing the

length of the school day and year for students and the contract year for teachers, developing career ladder, alternative teacher certification for those with content knowledge in math and science, and a system of standardized tests developed at the state and local level to identify academic strengths, weaknesses, and readiness for college. It is significant to note, according to Evers and Clopton (2003), that the Excellence Commission's report was in effect an assault on the consequences of seventy to eighty years of progressive education which championed the idea that American high schools should function as multi-service social agencies addressing the needs of the whole child into adult life while at the same time deemphasizing academic rigor and intellectual stimulation. In 1988 Federal legislation was enacted that required schools receiving Title I money to be assessed through standardized testing. At the same time, congress created the National Assessment Governing Board whose function was to set NAEP policy (Hess & Finn, 2007).

While the Excellence Commission's report did inspire some changes within public education, the net effect on student achievement as measured by standardized testing after 20 year has been negligible (Peterson, 2003). Peterson (2003) provided three "forces of inertia" that neutralized the recommendations of the report (p. 9). First, the authors were naive in predicting the resistance that would occur from teacher unions, administrators, higher education, state bureaucracies, and school boards. Second, "*Nation at Risk* underestimated the tenacity of the 'thought-world' of the nation's colleges of education, which see themselves as owners of the nation's schools and the minds of educators" (p. 10). Third, the Excellence Commission underestimated the large number

of middle class citizens who believed that their local schools were “basically sound and academically successful” (p. 10).

Accountability. In 1994 the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act included a requirement that states receiving federal education dollars must develop state standards of achievement and aligned assessments for all students. An accountability component, with the threat of sanctions, was added when President Bush signed the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) act in 2002 (Hess & Finn, 2007). While few would argue against the stated intentions of the act’s name, the reality of having all students attaining proficiency in math and communication arts by 2014 is unrealistic. As districts approach the 100% proficiency goal in 2014 the annual benchmarks continue to increase. As a result, the number of schools failing to meet the annual yearly progress (AYP) benchmark continues to increase. According to Ravitch (2008), 25,000 out of the 90,000 American schools failed to meet AYP in 2007-2008 and she predicts that by 2014 nearly all elementary schools in California will fall short of 100% proficiency. There is little wonder that school practitioners have reacted with pessimism and states are more concerned with compliance than improving achievement (Hess & Finn, 2007; Ravitch, 2008). The threat of impending sanctions arising from NCLB as 2014 approaches has caused some states to actually lower their state standards that determine student proficiency (Petrilli & Finn, 2006; Ravitch, 2008). Petrilli and Finn (2006) noted that “Missouri...recently backed away from its high standards specifically because NCLB was fingering so many of its schools as subpar” (p. 49). They suggested that increasing gaps between student performances on state tests compared to their performance on national tests indicate a manipulation of practices by states to meet annual requirements

of NCLB. One of the inherent weaknesses of NCLB is that each state sets its own standards of achievement and its own level of proficiency making comparisons between states “grossly misleading” (Peterson, 2007, p. 49). Petrilli and Finn (2006) argued that instead of trying to control how each state meets its own standards, Washington would serve the nation’s students better if it would develop national standards and tests and allow the states flexibility in process in meeting those standards.

When the cultural role of a high school education in America evolved from the elitist perspective which existed for the few and curriculum was controlled by colleges and universities, to a much larger and inclusive mission subject to a broader cultural influence from multiple sources as characterized by the progressive movement, the status of public education as an institution described in the previous section was solidified. Since the progressive movement, public education as an institution has taken on additional societal roles and associated control structures making the possibility of significant change even more remote. According to institutional theory, public education will change only if the cultural control structures that define it and hold it in place change first.

Teacher Socialization

Teacher socialization describes a body of research seeking to understand the development of individuals into “participating members of the society of teachers” (Zeichner & Gore, 1990, p. 329). The term socialization used in this context first appeared in the literature in the late 1930s. In this milieu an individual’s attitudes and beliefs provide a window to understanding a teacher’s thought processes, how they behave in the classroom, their willingness to embrace change, and their development as a

teacher (Doyle, 1997; Nespor, 1987; Pajares, 1992; Richardson, 1996; Zeichner & Gore, 1990). Richardson (1996) wrote:

Teacher attitudes and beliefs, therefore, are important considerations in understanding classroom practices and conducting teacher education designed to help prospective and in-service teachers develop their thinking and practices. In such change programs, beliefs and attitudes of incoming preservice students and in-service teachers strongly affect what and how they learn and are also targets of change within the process. (p. 102)

Much of the research in teacher socialization since the 1980s has been focused on understanding the preservice teacher, their belief structure, and how teacher preparation programs must consider and address preservice teacher beliefs with regard to program goals and desired outcomes. Richardson (1996) stated that:

...an examination of the goals of teacher education as well as national standards programs...reveals a considerable de-emphasis of skills and behaviors in favor of an emphasis on the formation or transformation of teacher thinking and reflective processes, dispositions, knowledge, and beliefs. (p. 110)

The effect of in-service teacher beliefs on the process of change has been studied as well, but to a lesser extent (Pajares, 1992).

Beliefs

Within the disciplines of anthropology, social psychology, and philosophy there seems to be a similar view regarding the effect of individual beliefs on the actions of individuals. In her chapter written for the *Handbook of Research on Teacher Education*, Richardson (1996) argued that, in the context of these three disciplines, “beliefs are

thought of as psychologically held understandings, premises, or propositions about the world that are felt to be true” (p. 103). Pajares (1992) noted that defining belief is difficult and therefore many researchers feel it is not applicable to empirical research. He observed that a review of the literature will reveal several synonyms for the concept of belief which in turn contribute to difficulties with meaning. However, as researchers gain more and more experience about specific types of beliefs, understanding increases and research becomes more applicable. For example, he cited the significant contribution of self-esteem, self-concept, and self-efficacy research. Subject specific research investigating student beliefs regarding math, reading, and the nature of science has proven extremely valuable in understanding how students learn (Pajares, 1992).

For Richardson (1996), a belief “describes a proposition that is accepted as true by the individual holding the belief. It is a psychological concept and differs from knowledge, which implies epistemic warrant” (p. 104). The distinction between belief and knowledge becomes critical in attempting to understand teacher behavior and resistance to change. Knowledge implies an element of truth that is shared by a community of knowledgeable peers. Elements of truth through community consensus are not required to form a belief (Bruffee, 1999; Richardson, 1996).

Nespor (1987) proposed that there are four characteristics common to beliefs that distinguish them from knowledge. One feature, existential presumption, is a belief attribute that contains “propositions or assumptions about the existence or nonexistence of entities” (p. 318). Applied to teaching, she used an example of math teachers who had strong beliefs regarding student abilities. For these teachers laziness or maturity was more than labels characterizing a student, “they were labels for entities thought to be

embodied by the students” (p. 318). Existential presumptions package “transitory, ambiguous, conditional or abstract characteristics into stable, well defined, absolute and concrete entities” (p. 318), which by nature are assumed to be beyond the control of a teacher. Alternativity describes a feature of beliefs that represent alternative realities to which a teacher has no direct experience or knowledge. It “refers to conceptualizations of ideal situations differing significantly from present realities” (p. 319). These beliefs cannot be challenged and when the alternative reality cannot be achieved, their value is still maintained. A third feature of beliefs that distinguish them from knowledge is the affective and evaluative aspects of beliefs. Nespor (1987) noted that “feelings, moods, and subjective evaluations based on personal preferences seem to operate more or less independently of other forms of cognition typically associated with knowledge systems” (p. 319). For example, affective and evaluative aspects of teacher beliefs regarding subject specific curriculum will often influence how its content is taught irrespective of teacher knowledge in the content area. Episodic storage is a fourth feature of beliefs that distinguish them from knowledge. Nespor (1987) noted that

...information in knowledge systems is stored primarily in semantic networks, while belief systems are composed mainly of ‘episodically’- stored material derived from personal experience or from cultural or institutional sources of knowledge transmission (e.g., folklore)...beliefs often derive their subjective power, authority and legitimacy from particular episodes or events. These critical episodes then continue to colour or frame the comprehension of events later in time. (p. 320)

Teacher beliefs about teaching are formed early as students through episodic storage of personal experience with school, teachers, and teaching (Nespor, 1987).

Nespor (1987) used the terms non-consensuality and unboundedness to distinguish belief systems from knowledge systems. Belief systems do not require and are not subject to external evaluation and consensus. They are therefore not susceptible to change as are knowledge systems which require group consensus. According to Nespor (1987), “when beliefs change, it is more likely to be a matter of a conversion or gestalt shift than the result of argumentation or marshaling of evidence” (p. 321). By unboundedness, Nespor means that belief systems are “loosely-bounded systems with highly variable and uncertain linkages to events, situation, and knowledge systems” (p. 321). No discernable rules exist to determine application of beliefs to reality. Knowledge systems require consensus in their application to real world events. As a result, “people read belief-based meaning into situations where others would not see their relevance” (Nespor, 1987, p. 321).

Individual beliefs, as conceptualized by Green (1971), are held in clusters of beliefs that make up belief systems. Beliefs held within a cluster are insulated from other beliefs in other clusters. Green argued that nonconforming beliefs exist within individuals when they are held within different clusters of beliefs, and it is only when clusters of beliefs are examined side by side that the inconsistency of held beliefs can be discovered (Richardson, 1996).

Rokeach (1968) compared a belief system to the structure of an atom. In this analogy, all beliefs exist and vary within a central-peripheral dimension. Those beliefs that are more functionally connected to other beliefs are more central to the belief system

and make up the nucleus of the atom. Those beliefs that are more independent of others make up the outer shells of the atom. In his model, it is those centrally held beliefs that are the most important and the most resistant to change (Pajares, 1992).

Having knowledge does not automatically result in action derived from knowledge. Pajares suggested that an individual's beliefs are like a system default that automatically overrides knowledge when individuals are confronted with unknown or poorly defined circumstances or a reality in which the individual has no applicable knowledge or may have applicable knowledge but no experience. Nespor (1987) used the terms ill-structured problems and entangled domains to describe these circumstances. According to Nespor (1987), "When people encounter entangled domains or ill-structured problems, many standard cognitive processing strategies ...are no longer viable" (p. 325). In this context, the teaching experience, the constant interaction with students, administrators, and parents, and added stress derived from social and political pressures would seem to be fertile ground for individual beliefs and belief structures to dominate the actions of teachers (Nespor, 1987; Pajares, 1992). Mahlios, Engstrom, Soroka, and Shaw (2008) noted that:

A number of studies have shown the resilience of preservice teachers' beliefs; that is, their strongly held ideas significantly affect how and how much they internalize the content of the teacher education program... The preservice experiences appear to provide a veneer-type layer that for the most part evaporates during in-school work. (p. 66)

In his synthesis of research on beliefs, Pajares (1992) noted the following findings: Individual beliefs develop early in life and are often immune to change caused

by reason, time, experience, or schooling. Belief systems contain all beliefs derived from cultural transmission and are used to help individuals understand, define, and adapt themselves to the world in which they exist. Beliefs play a key role in defining a task and how the task should be addressed; in doing so, beliefs effect behavior. Beliefs, rather than knowledge, act as a filter through which experience is interpreted. Beliefs filter, screen, reconfigure, or distort thought processes and information processing. Beliefs are favored according to their connectedness with other beliefs. The existence of beliefs that are inconsistent may be a function of their connection to other beliefs that are central to a belief system. The sooner a belief is incorporated into a belief system the more difficult it becomes to modify; those which are recently acquired are the most susceptible to change. It is relatively rare for changes in beliefs to occur in an adult. Beliefs based on faulty knowledge are not easily changed even in the face of scientific knowledge (Pajares, 1992).

Teacher Beliefs (Preservice and Established)

As the body of knowledge increases in the study of pre-existing beliefs and their effect on teacher learning, teacher behavior, and resistance to change, significant data support the assertion that it is the personal characteristics a preservice teacher brings to the profession that affects the act of teaching more than most pre-service teacher programs (Doyle, 1997; Hart, 2004; Minor, Onwuegbuzie, Witcher, & James, 2002; Nespor, 1987; Pajares, 1992; Richardson, 1996; White-Clark, 2005). Pajares (1992) suggested that:

...beliefs about teaching are well established by the time students get to college...They are developed during what Lortie (1975) called the apprenticeship

of observation that takes place during the many years students spend at school.

They include ideas about what it takes to be an effective teacher and how students ought to behave, and...they are brought into teacher preparation programs. (p. 322)

Pre-service students enter teacher preparation programs with 13 years of personal school experience. They have developed lasting beliefs about schooling, learning, teaching, and teachers. These beliefs have a powerful effect in how they view, interpret, and assimilate new materials presented as part of their program of studies and are difficult to change (Doyle, 1997; Hart, 2002; Richardson, 1996). As noted by Decker and Rimm-Kaufman (2008):

This situation creates a challenge to teacher educators striving to improve the practices of future educators. This challenge occurs because, in human learning, it is clear that it is more difficult to unlearn existing beliefs than it is to learn new beliefs. (p. 46)

The reality of this phenomenon and its effect on the institution of education, student learning, and professional development is enormous. As suggested by Pajares (1992), these “unexplored entering beliefs may be responsible for the perpetuation of antiquated and ineffectual teaching practices” (p. 328). Helterbran (2008) suggested that:

What is not typically recognized is the actualization of the axiom that teachers often teach as they are taught. Teacher educators replicate teaching strategies from their own past and in doing so pass this legacy on to their preservice students. Classroom teachers, too, tend to replicate the teaching style they have

experienced...ostensibly perpetuated for generations to come through the children in our students' classrooms. (p. 126)

In addition to the institutional structures (Hanson, 2001) that preserve the status quo of public education, individual beliefs acquired before preservice teachers are introduced to pedagogy interfere with pedagogical assimilation and professional development. In a survey designed to determine how preservice teachers characterize effective teachers, Minor et al. (2002) found seven common themes preservice teachers associated with effective teachers. The characteristics selected in order of endorsement were “student centered (55.2%); effective classroom and behavior manager (33.6%); competent instructor (33.6%); ethical (29.9%); enthusiastic about teaching (23.9%); knowledgeable about subject (19.4%) and professional (15.7%)” (p. 116). Minor et al. (2002) cite a similar study conducted by Witcher, Onwuegbuzie, and Minor (2001) that revealed similar results: “student centeredness (79.5%), enthusiasm to teaching (40.2%), ethicalness (38.8%), classroom and behavior management (33.3%), teaching methodology (33.4%), and knowledge of subject (31.5%)” (p. 117). In both studies those themes closely associated with pedagogy (methodology, subject knowledge, and professional) were ranked lowest as characteristics of effective teachers by preservice students and those themes more closely related to the student experience (student centeredness, classroom management, and enthusiasm) were ranked highest as themes of effective teachers. Alazzi's (2007) study of female student attitudes toward social studies confirmed the value students place on student centeredness and teacher enthusiasm.

Minor et al. (2002) also noted that male preservice teachers selected subject knowledge as being more important in effective teaching than female preservice teachers.

Minority preservice teacher selected enthusiasm over subject knowledge as more important to effective teaching. In a study conducted by Decker and Rimm-Kaufman (2008), they noted that secondary pre-service teachers, compared to elementary preservice teachers, were more likely to prefer teacher-directed instruction. Secondary preservice teachers were more likely to use “drill and recitation and choose to work on the students’ ‘weak’ areas rather than provide activity choice” (p. 59). Decker and Rimm-Kaufman (2008) noted “these findings parallel a critique of traditional teacher education programs... [where] elementary preparation is weak in subject matter while secondary preparation is weak in knowledge about learners” (p. 59). A second “finding was that preservice teachers who were younger and/or planning to teach middle/high school held more negative beliefs about students” (Decker & Rimm-Kaufman, 2008, p. 51). Decker and Rimm-Kaufman (2008) suggested that these negative beliefs about students may be a reflection of preservice teachers’ own adolescent experiences in middle/high school when motivation in education typically declines.

Among the many challenges that confront academic achievement among students with diverse cultural backgrounds are the cultural beliefs that teachers bring into classroom. Research confirms that cultural differences between teachers and students can have a negative effect on student achievement in the form of low teacher expectations and classroom practices (White-Clark, 2005).

Due to the lack of culturally responsive pedagogy and practice in their preparation programs, teachers have resorted to less effective measures in attempts to meet the needs of their diverse students. Often, their efforts consist of minimal,

fragmented content, such as discussing holidays, reading multicultural literature, or having international food fairs. (White-Clark, 2005, p. 24)

How a teacher relates to students in terms of his or her attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions can greatly effect student achievement. When the fact that teachers in diverse settings are more likely to be less qualified in subject content knowledge (White-Clark, 2005) is added to a cultural mismatch between teacher and students of diversity, student achievement suffers. Minor et al. (2002) contention that negative teacher/student relationships resulting from a cultural mismatch effects teacher motivation which in turn effects student motivation is supported by Gewertz (2006). In a survey of high school dropouts, Gewertz found that lack of motivation and challenge were cited more often than academic difficulties as reasons for dropping out of school.

As the connection between personally held beliefs of teachers and their ability to develop pedagogically beyond those beliefs becomes more and more clear, the need for teacher preparation programs to expose, examine, and challenge those beliefs becomes essential. Faculty of teacher preparation programs must first examine the desired beliefs they want their students to assimilate. Second, they must help their students discover and examine individually held beliefs about teaching and then provide opportunities for reflection and change when program and individual beliefs do not match (Doyle, 1997; Hart, 2004; Minor et al., 2002; Pajares, 1992; Richardson, 1996; White-Clark, 2005). According to Decker and Rimm-Kaufman (2008):

The majority of work on teacher beliefs is based on in-service, not preservice teachers which pose a problem. The National Council for Accreditation of

Teacher Education recommends that teacher educators increase their awareness of beliefs of their pre-service teachers. (p. 46)

Many scholars of teacher change research contend that changing individually held beliefs of preservice teachers is at best difficult and that for the most part teacher preparation programs are unsuccessful. When changes in beliefs about teaching do occur, they occur primarily through experience in the field and through extensive reflective practices and analysis (Doyle, 1997; Minor et al., 2002; Pajares, 1992; Richardson, 1996). However, Richardson (1996) made the point that for many, any changes in beliefs about teaching may only be temporary when she stated:

Although [students] may express humanistic views in their formal pedagogical classes at the university, when the student teachers move into the classroom, their preexisting beliefs prevail. Thus, the formal teacher education program does little to affect the beliefs that [students] bring to the program. (p. 110)

As Pajares (1992) stated:

...the earlier a belief is incorporated into the belief structure, the more difficult it is to alter, for these beliefs subsequently affect perception and strongly influence the processing of new information. It is for this reason that newly acquired beliefs are most vulnerable. (p. 317)

Hart (2004) suggested that as new teachers enter the classroom they lose their connection to the support structures of their preservice program. They react to the pressures of school by reverting to more firmly held belief structures that are not in conflict with the local culture and the status quo. In light of these theories, the relatively new initiatives designed to increase classroom teachers through nontraditional certification programs are

by their structure reinforcing the status quo. By circumventing formal teacher preparation programs, there is even less opportunity for teacher candidates to examine their educational beliefs in the light of established pedagogy (Hart, 2004).

Teacher Preparation

Few would argue the assumption that the interaction between a classroom teacher and his or her students is at the heart of the learning process and that improvements in student achievement will require improvements in the quality of that interaction.

Research has shown that teacher skills and knowledge are the key components of teacher quality. If student achievement is to improve, the quality of teacher skill and knowledge must also improve (Humphrey, Adelman, Esch, Richl, Shields, & Tiffany, 2000; Levine, 2006). According to Levine (2006), nearly 200,000 teaching vacancies occur each year in America due to teacher retirement, high rates of new teacher attrition, immigration and changes in population demographics. To fill these vacancies with new teachers there are approximately 1300 private and public institutions of higher learning that provide degrees in teaching. The majority of teaching degrees earned in the United States come from “master’s-degree-granting, state-sponsored colleges and universities serving a particular region of a state” (Humphrey et al., 2000, p. 6). Levine (2006) declared that the term *typical* does not apply schools of education in the United States.

It is clear that there is no such thing as a typical education school. Their diversity is extraordinary. They are both free-standing institutions and subunits within larger colleges and universities. They are for-profit and not-for-profit, public and private, sectarian and non-sectarian. They are large and they are small; undergraduate, graduate, and combinations of both...Some model themselves

after professional schools; other favor the graduate school or arts and sciences model; and most try to blend both. (p. 7)

According to Humphrey et al. (2000), “our system of preparing teachers is broken and in need of serious overhaul...However,... there are major roadblocks to overcome – some of them within institutions of higher education and some in the policy environment” (p. 5). Federal reform of public K-12 education has been extensive since the mid 1960s (Hess & Finn, 2007). As states have provided more and more financial support to public schools, state legislatures have circumvented the school district’s local control through increased regulations (Humphrey et al., 2000). Humphrey et al. (2000) asserted that teacher education programs and higher education in general has for the most part avoided state and federal reform and that when new practices and policies were implemented by individual campuses they “did not require an entire school, college, or department of education to leave the comfort zone of established operations and relationships” (p. 31). As a result, “teacher education-and higher education in general- is still in the pre-1980 era in most states” (Humphrey et al., 2000, p. 31). Levine (2006) made the point that while America has evolved from an industrialized society to an information society the focus of teacher education programs have been slow to change.

The focus of schooling has shifted from teaching to learning – to the skills and knowledge students must master, rather than the skills and knowledge teachers must teach... It turns education on its head as the focus shifts from assuring common processes for all schools (e.g. 12 grades, 180 – day school years, and five major subjects a semester) to assuring common outcomes for all students. (p. 12)

It is notable that public higher education occupies an organizational field with components common to K-12 public education and is susceptible to comparable institutional structural and cultural rigidities that work to preserve its status quo (Hanson, 2001; Humphrey et al., 2000; Levine, 2006).

In their publication for the U.S. Department of Education titled *Preparing and Supporting New Teachers: A Literature Review*, Humphrey et al. (2000) noted that “research on teacher education is not particularly robust. Many studies have used small cohorts to investigate particular strategies for teacher preparation or to examine particular variables that are hypothesized to influence the practice of teacher candidates” (p. 17). While most researchers do not dispute the value of the mostly qualitative research that dominates the teacher education body of knowledge, Humphrey et al. (2000) noted that “the research questions asked and the lessons that have been learned through this body of research are not assessment or accountability driven and do not provide ‘hard’ data about the quality or competence of new teachers” (p. 18).

In research conducted by Levine (2006), he lists four teacher education programs as examples of institutions that have demonstrated “that the history of teacher education is surmountable” (p. 81). These exemplary teacher education programs were located at Alverno College, Emporia State University, Stanford University, and the University of Virginia (Levine, 2006). Each of these programs met all nine of the criteria for excellence Levine (2006) has suggested is characteristic of exemplary teacher education programs. These criteria and brief descriptors for each are provided in Table 1. Humphrey et al. (2000) cites Darling-Hammond (1999) who examined teacher education programs at Alverno College, Bank Street College, Trinity University, University of California at

Table 1

Criteria for Excellence Applied to Exemplary Teacher Education Programs

Criterion	Descriptor(s)
Purpose	Purpose is explicit, focusing on the education of practicing school teachers. Goals reflect needs of today's schools and children. Success tied to student learning.
Curricular Coherence	Curriculum is rigorous, coherent and organized to teach the skills and knowledge needed by teachers at specific types of schools and at the various stages of their careers.
Curricular Balance	Curriculum integrates the theory and practice of teaching.
Faculty Composition	Faculty composed of scholars and practitioners, expert in teacher education school leadership, up to date in their fields, intellectually productive, and having their feet planted simultaneously in the academy and the schools. Total faculty numbers and fields of expertise aligned with curriculum and student enrollment.
Admissions	Admissions criteria designed to recruit students with the capacity and motivation to become successful school teachers
Graduation and Degree	Graduation standards are high and the degrees earned are appropriate to the profession.

Table 1 (*continued*)

Criteria for Excellence Applied to Exemplary Teacher Education Programs

Criterion	Descriptor(s)
Research	Research high quality, driven by practice, and useful to practitioners and/or policy makers
Finances	Resources adequate to support the program
Assessment	Continuing self-assessment and performance improvement.

Note. From “*Educating School Teachers*” by Arthur Levine, 2006, Washington, D.C.: The Education Schools Project, p. 100-101, Copyright 2006. Adapted with permission of the author.

Berkeley, University of Southern Maine, University of Virginia, and Wheelock College. Common characteristics of these programs revealed in the study support Levine’s (2006) criteria of exemplary teacher education programs. According to Humphrey et al. (2000), the common characteristics of these “programs allow them to prepare teachers to meet the needs of diverse learners while also teaching for understanding thereby continually producing high quality teachers” (p. 19).

Based upon the results of a four year study of teacher education programs across the nation that included case studies of 28 individual institutions, Levine (2006) provides five recommendations to strengthen teacher preparation in America. First, “Transform

education schools from Ivory towers into professional schools focused on classroom practice” (p. 104). Similar to the structure of medical and law schools, teacher preparation needs to focus on the practice of teaching and practitioners. Just as medical schools are grounded in hospitals, education schools must become grounded in K-12 schools. Second, student achievement must become the “primary measure of teacher education program success” (p. 105). According to Levine (2006) and Helterbran (2008), the primary role of education is rapidly changing from one of teaching knowledge and process to a facilitator of learning and outcomes. In this new paradigm, a school’s success is measured by its student’s achievement and teacher effectiveness is measured by student learning. This will soon be possible as states develop data systems that will track individual students through their K-12 experience. Third, “Rebuild teacher education programs around the skills and knowledge that promote classroom learning; make five-year teacher education programs the norm” (p. 106). According to Levine (2006), “there is an immediate need to counter the relativism and anything goes mentality that dominate teacher education today, leading to a multiplicity of disjointed and conflicting programs” (p. 106). Levine recommended an enriched or advanced major for teacher preparation similar to the University of Virginia and Stanford. In these programs the preservice teacher completes four years of undergraduate work including general education courses and major and one year to 15 additional months of study in pedagogy and teaching the major subject. Fourth, establish an effective mechanism for teacher preparation quality assurance. Similar to the paradigm shift discussed in the second recommendation, states need to shift from standards that measure the process of teacher preparation to standards that effectively measure how teachers affect student learning and achievement. Fifth,

failing teacher preparations must be closed. Promising programs must be strengthened and those which excel must be expanded through incentives that will attract the best and brightest to doctoral universities.

Adolescence

According to Coleman and Husen (1985), it was G. Stanley Hall, an American psychologist, who first described adolescence as a separate stage of development occurring between childhood and adulthood. In 1904 Stanley Hall defined adolescence as the period of time between the onset of puberty and the middle to late teens, which as Coleman and Husen pointed out was also the end of schooling for most during that period in the United States. It was not until the 1940s that anthropological studies of primitive cultures began to show a relationship between the duration of adolescence within a culture and the level of its industrialization (Coleman, 1961; Husen, 1996). Husen noted studies of primitive societies where the transition from childhood to adulthood is almost instantaneous. In these cultures when children enter into puberty they obtain the status of adult after a brief period of training and/or initiation ritual. Once given adult status these members are expected to take on adult responsibilities, establish a family, and participate in religious activities. Husen (1996) described adolescence in modern cultures as a distinguishing period of development which is:

a product of complex and differentiated industrial society, where a long period of schooling and preparation has to precede co-option into adult society, and where a wide range of options and the lack of consistency between the preparatory functions of various institutions – family, school, workplace-make the establishment of an adult identity both difficult and complex. (p. 25)

There is general consensus that an adolescent subculture emerged in America after the Second World War (Coleman, 1961; Garner et al., 2006; Maira & Soep, 2004). Maira and Soep (2004) suggested that modern conceptions of adolescence in industrialized societies are connected to the development of “leisure industries ...that targeted a generation of young people who had new levels of disposable income and were between childhood compulsory education and the adult labor force in a way that had not existed before” (p. 258). As an organized field of study, adolescence is considered a stage of development in a young person’s life when he or she “is trying to come to grips with him or herself and thereby comes into conflict with adult authorities and institutions” (Husen, 1996, p. 26). The lower age limit of the adolescent period of transition from child to adult is defined by physiological characteristics of puberty and rapid changes in height and weight. The upper limit of the adolescent period is defined as a social condition of being able to take on adult responsibilities such being able to financially support oneself through work, and marriage (Coleman, 1961; Husen, 1996). According to Coleman (1961), adolescence in a modern industrialized society is a formal separation of youth from parents and adult society. He uses the term corporate actors to identify those institutions given the responsibility of caring for and socializing youth that was once the responsibility of parents and community in more primitive and pre-industrialized cultures. Husen (1996) noted, “[t]he most basic and undisputed evidence which supports age segregation is prolonged formal schooling” (p. 28). Garner et al. (2006) continued to support the connection between age segregation and a period of adolescence when they noted that “in schools, children and adolescents first encounter an institution that is socially and spatially separated from the family. In many cases, they experience

confinement, regimentation, batch-treatment, and rules that appear to be non-negotiable” (p. 1023). They suggested that in the early phases of industrialization the congruence between family structure and function and the role of school was much greater than it is today. As industrialization of America moved forward, the need for and the duration of formal education has increased, by definition the duration of adolescence has increased as well. In the 1890s only 5% of America’s youth were attending high school as preparation for college; by 1930 70% were attending high school, 94% by 1970, and 96% by 2006 (Mirel, 2006; U.S. Department of Education, 2007). The number of students in post-secondary education continued to increase as well. In 1970, 37.3% of 18 and 19 year olds were enrolled in post secondary education. In 2005 49.3% of 18 and 19 year olds were enrolled in post secondary education. During the same time span, enrollment of 22-24 year olds increased from 14.9% to 27.3% (U. S. Department of Education, 2007). The average age at marriage has also increased. In 1950 the average age at marriage for males and females was 22.9 and 20.4 years of age respectively. In 2003 the average of marriage for males and females was 27.1 and 25.3 years of age respectively (U. S. Census Bureau, 2003). Using the defining upper and lower age limits of adolescence provided by Husen (1996), not only is adolescence a result of industrialization as argued by Colman (1961), the duration of adolescence in America has increased as levels of industrialization increases.

One of the defining cultural characteristics of adolescence is a transition from reliance on parents and family as a primary social support structure to a reliance on peers. Coleman (1961), in his study of adolescent cultures in high schools, observed that half of

those students surveyed valued the approval of their peers as much or more than they valued the approval of their parents.

Garner et al. (2006) noted a body of literature that suggests a connection between the magnitude of influence of peers on adolescents and the advancement of industrialization in society. The influence peers exert upon members occurs through an “additional set of values, and norms, using ostracism and ridicule, rather than formal punishments, as a major form of sanction” (p. 1023). Regarding the culture of America’s mainstream youth, Garner et al. (2006) noted that youth:

values and norms emphasize a combination of athletic success, physical attractiveness, ownership of material status markers, and social skills... [It] could be said to be anti-intellectual, but not anti-school: social aspects of schooling, a prominent feature of American education, are essential to formation of adolescent society. (p. 1024)

In 1961 Coleman suggested that youth culture was set apart from adult culture. More recent perceptions view youth culture as having norms and values that, while exaggerated, are similar to dominant white middle-class adult communities of America. It is the adults in schools, parents, and community that “validate and encourage conformity to these themes of athletic success, name-brand consumerism, and social poise. The adolescent society’s indifference and even hostility to academic achievement reflects the general anti-intellectualism of American society” (Garner et al., 2006, p. 1024).

Garner et al. (2006) noted ethnographic research of status structures found in grades three through six in white middle-class schools. In this study it was the socially poised youth that dominated the status structure and was “supported and encouraged by

parents eager to spend money on sports training, and name-brand goods in order to enhance their children's social success" (p. 1025). Moving down through the status structure of these third through sixth graders in this relatively homogeneous community were the wannabees, intermediate groups, and social isolates.

Garner et al. (2006) used the term "prep culture" to describe a set of norms and values that are most closely aligned to the values and norms of middle to upper-middle class cultures in America which emphasize "athletic success, physical attractiveness by mainstream criteria, ownership of conservative, expensive name-brand consumer goods, and sufficient academic success to qualify for college admission" (p. 1027). This description of prep culture is similar to the school-oriented crowd Coleman (1961) used to describe the dominant sub culture of adolescents in his research. The prep culture also appears in post secondary settings such as college, fraternities, sororities, and corporate cultures. It "provides anticipatory socialization for the values and norms of many adult institutions and communities" (Garner et al., 2006, p. 1027).

Coleman and Husen (1985) used the phrase "socially induced irresponsibility" (p. 59) to describe a phase of adolescence in which youth have control of their actions but are not held responsible for those actions. This phase of adolescence is characteristic of early post-secondary education and invites irresponsibility. It is a departure from the expectations and regulations of pre-college education and a reprieve from the expectations of life in the adult world. Misbehavior is often expected and dismissed as sophomoric or prankish. Coleman and Husen (1985) questioned the effects of this period of socially induced irresponsibility, particularly on those youth who have yet to develop acceptable work habits and adult standards of performance. For these youth, this period

of socially induced irresponsibility will be harmful to their future assimilation into the adult world (Coleman & Husen, 1985).

Three conditions of social and economic development of the family and its subsequent effect on children and youth beyond primitive society were depicted by Coleman and Husen (1985). They labeled these conditions as “bare subsistence or poverty, economic respectability, and affluence” These three conditions describing family social and economic development correspond to three phases of a society’s social and economic development beyond a primitive society. Coleman and Husen labeled the three phases of a society’s social and economic development as subsistence or pre-industrial economy, industrial economy, and post industrial affluent economy respectively.

Bare Subsistence or Pre-industrial Economy

In a subsistence or pre-industrial economy most households live at a slightly higher level than subsistence. Subsistence farming is the most common economic activity, however “village based or societies in very early period of industrialization” (Coleman & Husen, 1985, p. 44) would be included in a subsistence economy. Households at this level of economic development consume most of what they produce. Division of labor is minimal and markets undeveloped. In this economy children are valued for their labor because jobs were unskilled, there was always work available that children could do, and additional family productivity was needed. Coleman and Husen (1985) suggested that families in a subsistence economy “have many children, and exploit their capacity for labor, often with little regard for the impact of this upon children’s opportunities” (p. 44). Parents viewed children as an economic asset and as

security in old age. Schools, where they existed, were often at odds with families who required their children to work. In subsistence economy resources for schools beyond the local level were scarce. As a result, educational resources and opportunity were unequally distributed between rich and poor regions of an area. This condition of social and economic development described by Coleman and Husen (1985) is characteristic of family and educational conditions in the United States through the late 1800s when a high school education was available to less than 5% of the America's youth. These conditions correspond to the elitist era of education described above. Using the definition of adolescent, the period of adolescence in the phase of societal development for all but a few children was relatively short.

Economic Respectability or Industrial Economy

In this phase of economic development, society is largely a “post-agricultural, urban, industrial society, engaged largely in manufacturing and some commerce” (Coleman & Husen, 1985, p. 44). Most commerce occurred through an exchange of wages for goods and services. Employees worked away from home in jobs that were full time. Parents no longer trained their children in their occupation. Division of labor increased with the complexities of available jobs. Children were purposely excluded from the labor force to keep wages high, as income increased children as wage earners were not as critical to the family's economic well being (Coleman, 1961). According to Coleman and Husen (1985), families could now view their children as an investment in the future rather than an immediate source of income. Families began to view their children as a vehicle to improve their future position in society in the next generation.

This change in the family's interest in children has many implications. One is a decline in the birth rate. Another is an increase demand for universal prolonged formal education and for equal educational opportunity. Still another is that great attention is paid by the family to the process or transition of its youth to adulthood. (Coleman & Husen, 1985, p. 45)

The transition from a subsistence economy to an industrial economy in America occurred over several decades from the late 1800s to the mid 1900s. This same time period of industrialization corresponds to the progressive era of education where the goal was assimilation and adjustment of America's youth through the first half of the twentieth century and the era of equal access through education occurring during 1960s and 1970s.

Affluence or Post Industrial Affluent Economy

The third phase of economic development described by Coleman and Husen (1985) is a post industrial affluent economy, "a welfare state with a high degree of affluence" (p. 45), where children are considered irrelevant. In this economy most of the roles of the family have been replaced by large corporate or governmental institutions. The family as an institution "has been reduced to that of childrearing, and providing an emotional anchor-ground" (p. 45). Economically the family functions to consume more than it produces. Instead of spanning multiple generations the family regenerates with each new generation. As a result, children are not seen as an investment in the family's future, schools are not held in as high regard as in the industrialized society, and families become less supportive in a child's transition into adulthood. Coleman and Husen (1985) noted that the Western developed countries including the United States were in the industrial phase of development and the economic respectable family was the norm.

However, the most affluent...countries are approaching Phase 3, and in those societies a large number of families are already in Phase 3. In addition, the welfare processes of the State move families more quickly toward the psychological conditions of Phase 3 than their own affluences would dictate.

(Coleman & Husen, 1985, p. 45)

According to Coleman and Husen (1985), as America moves closer to a post-industrial economy the setting apart of children from their parents will increase as families rely more and more upon other institutions or corporate actors to assume the roles once held by parents and extended families.

Summary

This study, which seeks a better understanding of individual beliefs preservice teachers bring to teacher education programs from their experiences in K-12 education and as adolescents, recognizes the pervasive influence of culture on public education, its practitioners and participants. A brief literature review of institutional theory illustrated the inherent inertia and processes of homogenization characteristic of institutions that depend upon and compete for their social legitimacy from their external operating environment. Institutional theory provided a useful frame to view the evolution of public education in America. As American public education changed from an institution designed to prepare the elite for college, as recent as the late 1800s, to an institution charged with educating all children today, the expectations of American society for public education continued to increase adding layer upon layer of external control mechanisms. These external control mechanisms favor the status quo and tend to work against significant change.

The connection between the evolution of public education and the change in American society from pre-industrial to post-industrial was made. Also significant to this study is the parallel development of an adolescent or youth sub culture as industrialization in America moved forward. As industrialization progresses, the period of socially induced adolescence increased as well. A brief review of teacher socialization literature made the point that the beliefs preservice teachers bring to teacher preparation programs about teaching and education from their K-12 experience are at the least difficult to change and interfere with the teacher socialization process. The effect of an increasing period of adolescence on the beliefs preservice teachers bring to teacher preparation programs does not seem to be well known.

Chapter three provides the research design and methodology used to conduct this study. Sections describing the purpose and overview of the study; research methodology; participants; data collection and instrumentation; data analysis; validity; and researcher biases and assumptions are included. Chapter Four will present an analysis of the data collected. Chapter Five will provide a summary of findings with discussion and will address implications for future practice and research.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METODOLOGY

Introduction

In 1969 the first National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) test was administered, thus beginning a period of achievement in American public education (Hess & Finn, 2007). It was not until fourteen years later in 1983 when the National Commission on Excellence in Education published the *Nation at Risk*, that the issue of student achievement gained traction as a national concern worthy of reform (Peterson, 2003). In 1994 a layer of accountability was added to national reform efforts which required states receiving federal education dollars to develop state standards of achievement and aligned assessments for all students. In 2002 the threat of sanctions at the district level was added to America's national school reform strategy through the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) act of 2002 (Hess & Finn, 2007). While the *Nation at Risk* report did inspire some changes within public education and the stated intentions of NCLB were praiseworthy, the actual success of national reform to improve student achievement since the early 1970s has been ineffective (Donahue & Dion, 2007; Greene, 2006; Perie et al., 2003; Peterson, 2003; & Rampey, Dion, & Donahue, 2009).

The inability of American public education to significantly improve national achievement test scores after 35 years of reform de jour implies a cultural phenomenon of barriers and institutional structures that prevent or naturally oppose change. The absence of significant improvement in student achievement since the 1970s is a symptom of a fundamental problem in understanding public education. The problem suggests an apparent lack of appreciation or recognition of the social interactions that exist at all

levels within the institution of public education and the influence culture brings to those interactions. To better construct a more comprehensive theory regarding public education as a cultural phenomenon, more qualitative research is needed to enhance our understanding of the individual experience and shared beliefs of those involved (Coleman, 1996; Pajares, 1992; Schein, 2000).

This chapter provides a discussion of the purpose and overview of the study, the research questions, and a rationale of the research strategy and methodology used. A description of the sample population, data collection and instrumentation, and data analysis is included. Validity and researcher biases are addressed as well.

Purpose and Overview of the Study

The focus of this study is to examine the individually held beliefs preservice teachers have about teaching and public education as they begin their assimilation into the teaching profession. In the context of teacher socialization as described by Zeichner and Gore (1990), an individual's attitudes and beliefs about teaching provide an opportunity of understanding preservice teachers' thought processes; how they might behave in the classroom; and their willingness to embrace change (Doyle, 1997; Pajares, 1992; Richardson, 1996; Zeichner & Gore, 1990). One significant finding from this body of research suggests that preservice teachers hold on to their beliefs regarding education and teaching that were formed as part of their K-12 experience as students and that these are the beliefs that prevail and reemerge after they leave teacher preparation programs. Less defined are the effects of those beliefs of preservice teachers acquired through membership in an expanding adolescent subculture on the process of teacher socialization. The purpose of this study is to better understand from the individual points

of view of each participant the beliefs preservice teachers bring to teacher preparation programs arising from their experiences as K-12 students and as members of an adolescent subculture.

Research Questions

The following questions were addressed in this study:

1. What individually held beliefs about education do preservice teachers bring to their teacher preparation program from their K-12 experience?
2. What individually held beliefs about education do preservice teachers bring to their teacher preparation program from their membership in an adolescent subculture?

Rationale for Research Strategy

To better understand the individually held beliefs of preservice teacher and their role in the teacher socialization process, a phenomenological method of inquiry utilizing an ontological philosophical approach was utilized for this study. The phenomenologist, according to Bogdan and Taylor (1975),

views human behavior – what people say and do – as a product of how people interpret their world. The task...is to capture this *process* of interpretation. To do this requires...empathic understanding or an ability to reproduce in one's own mind the feelings, motives, and thoughts behind the actions of others. In order to grasp the meanings of a person's behavior, *the phenomenologist attempts to see things from that person's point of view.* (pp. 13-14)

Phenomenology is a focus of the lived experience which is “considered to be an individual's perceptions of his or her experience in the world at the moment when things,

truths, or values are constituted” (Morse & Richards, 2002, p. 44). The experience of individuals which constitutes their reality include the dimensions of lived time, lived space, lived relationships with others, and lived body (Hesse-Biber & Leary, 2006; Morse & Richards, 2002).

By subscribing to an ontological philosophical approach to the study, the researcher assumes the process and ultimate outcome of teacher socialization is subject to the individual reality preservice teachers bring to the program. The researcher assumes that individual realities of preservice teachers will be subjective and varied and best understood from their point of view (Creswell, 1998).

Research Methodology

Three methods of qualitative data collection were used to explore the beliefs preservice teachers bring to teacher preparation programs from their experiences in K-12 education and as members of an adolescent subculture. Each of the three research methods utilized, surveys, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions, bring unique advantages and disadvantages to the data creation process. A brief discussion of the methods employed is provided below in order of their utilization.

Surveys

The use of surveys or questionnaires is a relatively efficient method of gathering data quickly from a large number of participants. Advantages to survey methodology include convenience to the participants and a greater sense of privacy, improved validity and representation through large sample size, standardization of the questions posed, and a diminished interviewer effect (Miller & Salkind, 2002; Morgan, 1996). While there is a convenience factor for the participant, surveys compete for a participant’s time in an

already busy schedule. Disadvantages of this type data collection include high rates of non-return creating a possible bias between those who choose to respond and those who do not and the possibility of responses that are not well thought out. A survey tends to produce data that are broader and has less depth compared to an interview or focus group where the interviewer is able to ask follow-up questions and probe for deeper understanding (Creswell, 1998; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006; Miller & Salkind, 2002; Morgan, 1996).

For this study a survey consisting of descriptive and open ended questions was presented to preservice teachers during the first two weeks of their entry level class of their teacher preparation program. The purpose of these questions was to draw out participant responses, based on their personal experience with K-12 education and participation in an adolescent subculture that would provide insight to their individual beliefs about education and their future career as teachers.

Interviews

Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006) utilize the term issueoriented to describe in-depth interviews utilized by researchers to gain information from individuals regarding a particular focus.

In-depth interview uses individuals as the point of departure for the research process and assumes that individuals have unique and important knowledge about the social world that is ascertainable through verbal communication...Typically researchers who conduct in-depth interviews are looking for patterns that emerge from the “thick descriptions” of social life recounted by their participants. (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006, p. 119)

According to Johnson (2002), “A researcher who uses in-depth interviewing commonly seeks ‘deep’ information and knowledge—usually deeper information and knowledge than is sought in surveys, informal interviewing, or focus groups” (p. 104).

Semi structured interviews, according to Morse and Richards (2002), are appropriate when the researcher “knows enough about the phenomenon or the domain of inquiry to develop questions about the topic in advance...but not enough to be able to anticipate the answers” (p. 94). Semi structured interviews consist of open-ended questions prepared in advance as well as prepared probes. The use of unplanned questions and probes is appropriate as participant information is revealed (Morse & Richards, 2002). Interviewer bias must be considered when designing questions and conducting an interview. Interviewers should become active listeners and avoid interaction with interviewees that would guide or limit their responses (More & Richards, 2002).

In this study, in-depth interviews were conducted with preservice teachers in an effort to understand, from their point of view, their beliefs about education and teaching arising from their K-12 experience and membership in an adolescent subculture. Open-ended interview questions were developed for use in the in-depth interviews. Follow up questions as well as probes were employed to elicit richer and more meaningful responses from participants.

Focus Groups

According to Morgan (1996), the use of focus group interviews was not widely utilized as a qualitative research method until the mid 1980s. Morgan (1996) noted that “a content analysis of the materials from *Sociological Abstracts* revealed that over 60%

of the empirical research using focus groups during the past decade combined them with other research methods” (p. 130). He found that individual interviews were the most common qualitative methodology used with focus groups. Morgan (1996) provided three components essential to a focus group. First, the purpose of a focus group is to collect data. Second, the source of data is located in the interaction of discussion between participants of the focus group. Third, the researcher plays an active role in creating group discussion for the purpose of collecting data.

The number of participants utilized in a focus group should vary depending upon the sensitivity of the topic to be discussed. Larger groups of six to ten can be used when the data generated would not be considered intimate to the participants. Members asked to reveal sensitive data about themselves are more likely participate when focus groups consist of four to six members. When considering focus group participants, Morgan (1996) suggested that the more homogenous the group, the greater the depth of data revealed through group interactions. He used the term *segmented* to describe the division of participants into focus groups based on gender, age, race, sexual preference, and other distinguishing characteristics.

Facilitators of focus groups are responsible for introducing questions and maintaining balanced participation within the group (Morse & Richards, 2002). The uniqueness of data derived from focus groups reside in the interactions between group participants as they respond to each other and the group dynamic. According to Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006), focus group methodology is a useful technique in providing conversations about topics “that are unlikely to occur in an in-depth interview (and remain almost exclusively untapped by survey research)” (p. 198).

Unique data develops as participants disagree, explain themselves, and query each other, often negotiating their original ideas with new thoughts resulting from the conversation. This form of data often helps to both elucidate *and* challenge taken-for-granted assumptions that, like water to a fish, are difficult to discern. (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006, p. 200)

Focus groups are useful in identifying the “language, definitions, and concepts that the research participants find meaningful as they navigate through their daily life experiences” (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006, p. 199). As a result, data from focus group interviews are often considered in the development of questions used in surveys and in-depth interviews (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006; Morgan, 1996; Morse & Richards, 2002).

In this study, a focus group interview was conducted using open-ended interview questions to guide the initial discussions. Follow up questions and probes were utilized to discover deeper and richer data and maintain balanced group interaction and focus.

Participants

Participants of a phenomenological study must, according to Creswell (1998), “be individuals who have experienced the phenomenon being explored and can articulate their conscious experiences” (p. 113). He used the term *criterion* to describe a type of purposeful sampling strategy used to select participants for this type of study. The criteria for participant selection for this study were based upon the research questions posed and included:

1. Participants who were preservice teachers enrolled in a teacher education program at the *Foundations* level of the teacher education program and were attending the entry level course.

2. Participants who would be considered traditional students, i.e., those who recently completed high school and could still be considered adolescent by ages 18 through 25.

Data Collection and Instrumentation

Phenomenology as a research method attempts to “describe the meaning of the lived experience for several individuals about a concept or the phenomenon” (Creswell, 1998, p. 51). Two key assumptions of phenomenology, according to Morse and Richards (2002), are that participant:

Perceptions present us with evidence of the world – not as it is thought to be, but as it is lived. The lived world, or the *lived experience*, is critical to phenomenology. The second...is that human existence is meaningful and of interest in the sense that we are always conscious of something... people are in their worlds and are understandable only in their contexts. (p. 45)

The final outcome of a successful phenomenological investigation is a more complete understanding of the phenomenon through discovery of unifying meaning of the experience from the shared reality of the participants. The term essence is used to describe the discovered meanings of the shared experience or phenomenon (Creswell, 1998; Morse & Richards, 2002).

An essential component of any phenomenological study is the creation of data through the process of interviewing participants who have lived the phenomenon.

According to Tierney and Dilley (2002):

Education has utilized the interview as a central tool in its research efforts for more than a century and has experienced a quantum leap in the use of its

qualitative versions in the past few decades... educational researchers have been remarkably diverse in the ways they have applied the interview process. (p. 454)

For this study surveys, in-depth, and focus group interviews were utilized to create data through the lived experience of preservice teachers. Surveys were employed to create data that was broader in its meaning than it was deep and rich, but from a greater number of participants than would be possible with in-depth interviews. In an effort to create data deeper and richer in its meaning in-depth and focus group techniques of interviewing were used. The following section presents the steps utilized in the data collection process of this study.

Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval

Prior to data collection, research protocols addressing participant contact, participant assurances, participant consent, data collection, and instrumentation were submitted for IRB approval. IRB approval was granted from the Midwestern university where data was to be collected and then by the degree sponsoring university.

Participant Contact

An approved in-class recruitment and survey protocol and script was submitted to the Chair of the Department of Educational Foundations and Literacy of a Midwestern four-year public university (see Appendix A). Once departmental approval to proceed was given, five instructors teaching a total of seven sections of the *Foundations* level class were contacted to seek permission to access their students for recruitment during one of their class periods.

With departmental and instructor permission, initial contact of prospective participants was made during the last 15 minutes of class. All attending students were

invited to participate in the project. Students were asked to read and complete the informed consent form (see Appendix B) before they completed the in-class survey (see Appendix C). Students willing to participate in a one-on-one and/or focus group interview were asked to complete the form requesting contact information (see Appendix B).

One hundred eighty one students completed the in-class survey. One hundred sixty two met the age criteria described above for participants. Twenty nine preservice teachers that met the age criteria completed the contact information form indicating their willingness to participate in an interview. The selection of participants for in-depth and focus group interviews was based upon their continued willingness to participate and scheduling.

Surveys

The role of the survey was to provide data regarding the lived experiences of preservice teachers that would provide a broad or more general insight to their beliefs about teaching from a larger group of participants than would possible through in-depth and focus group interviews. In this context, data generated from surveys were analyzed in concert with data generated from the in-depth and focus group interviews, thus adding to the overall validity of the study.

The survey (see Appendix C) consisted of nine questions in total. Seven descriptive questions required minimal reply while two open-ended questions asked for information requiring a more deep and thoughtful response. The purpose of the descriptive questions was to provide information useful in determining the cultural context of the participants' high school experience and their connectedness with the

prevailing culture of the school. The open ended questions were designed to expose the participant's beliefs about education through their experiences as a student and member of a youth culture. The open ended questions were developed using Nespor's (1987) four characteristics of beliefs, discussed in chapter two, that are not found in knowledge. One question asked students to rank characteristics of an effective teacher based upon research conducted by Minor et al. (2002), which is presented in chapter two.

In Depth Interviews

Using the same line of questions from the in-class survey with the addition of probes and follow-up questions of similar meaning, in-depth interviews were conducted with ten participants. The purpose of the in-depth interviews was to reach a deeper and richer understanding of individual participants' beliefs about teaching and education than was possible through the written survey.

Focus Group Interview

Using the same line of questions from the in depth interview with the addition of probes and follow-up questions of similar meaning, a focus group interview was conducted with seven participants. The purpose of the focus group interview was to provide an alternate context of expression of meaning through the interactions of group members. As with the in-depth survey, data from the focus groups interviews provided a deeper and richer layer of expression to the lived experience of the participants.

Data Analysis

Analysis and interpretation of data generated in this study was a continuous and cyclical process beginning with data preparation, progressing to data exploration, to data reduction, and finally resulting in interpretation as described by Hesse-Biber and Leavy

(2006). The analysis was continuous in that data were analyzed as it was created rather than waiting until all the data were collected before analysis began. Litoselliti (2003) argued that continuous analysis of data allows the researcher to know if the data being generated will be applicable to the purpose of the study and provides opportunity to modify or improve upon the data collection methodology. Cyclical means that data analysis was not a one-way progression from start to finish but rather a two-way progression of analysis providing internal feedback from one step back to the previous step. For example, the development of codes and emerging patterns or themes developing from the process of data reduction should upon reflection change how existing and emerging data are explored (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006). The following sections provide a brief description of the four steps used in the analysis of data generated in this study.

Data Preparation

Data created for this study utilizing the three instruments described above required manipulation from its original form to a form suitable for analysis. Morse and Richards (2002) used the term transforming data to describe this process. They noted that data used in the analysis phase of a study are several steps removed from the data creation process and that context and meaning can be lost in the transformation.

The researcher must always remember to interpret data in this context. For example, interviews of participants about their experiences or perceptions of an event should be judged not in terms of the accuracy of the participants' recall of the actual event but in terms of the accuracy of their recall of *how they felt or experienced or perceived the event at the time*. (Morse & Richards, 2002, p. 99)

Creswell (1998) used the phrase Data Management to describe this phase of analysis in which data are organized and transformed into files for comparison.

Data from the in-class surveys were received in a written format organized by the survey questions presented to each participant. Student data from descriptive survey questions were disaggregated by question and stored electronically as an Excel document for descriptive analysis. Survey data from the two open-ended questions were disaggregated by question and transcribed to a Word document for further analysis. Data created during the in-depth interviews and focus groups were tape recorded and transcribed into a Word document that could be further disaggregated by question, theme, meaning, or code as required in the exploration and reduction of data phases of analysis.

Data Exploration

In the data exploration phase of analysis the researcher begins the process of becoming familiar with the data. As the data were transformed into a usable form a cyclical process of reading and reflection was initiated. With increased experience with the data the researcher would highlight passages with meaning and make notes or as Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006) recommended:

Write down these ideas in the form of a memo. We want to emphasize the importance of *description* during this phase... begin by summarizing what data you have collected thus far. Write down (memo) any ideas that come to you as you are reading your notes, interviews, etc. What things fit together? What things are problematic? ... What are the most telling quotes...and give some examples of what you mean. (p. 347)

These techniques are consistent with what Creswell (1998) designated as the “reading and memoing” phases of analysis where researchers “read through text, make margin notes, [and], form initial codes” (p. 148). Coding, commonly used in qualitative research analysis, was used in this study to locate chunks or segments of textual data that contained key ideas, themes, concepts or patterns (Creswell, 1990; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006).

Data Reduction

Data reduction was a continuation of the data exploration process as initial coded text, emerging themes and key ideas were refined into statements and patterns of meaning for individuals and groups experiencing the phenomena. As meaning was recognized through data reduction, additional data exploration became necessary to reexamine transcripts in the context of the emerging meaning. Data reduction and data exploration continued to cycle from one to the other until the essence of the experience materialized (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006). Creswell (1998) used the term classifying to describe this part of the analysis process. Finding and listing statements of meaning for individuals and groups are the key activities in the classifying process. Morse and Richards (2002) noted that “the process of writing and rewriting cannot be overestimated. Insight is developed through reflection, and researchers have found that discussing their texts with others is helpful” (p. 147).

Interpretation

In the process of data analysis, there is no clear boundary between the interpretative phase and the phases of data preparation, exploration, and reduction. While

data analysis concludes with interpretation, the interpretative process begins as data are collected (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006).

Creswell (1998) provided three components of analysis used in a phenomenological study. He used the term “*textural description*” (p. 150) to describe an interpretative presentation of an individual’s experience of the phenomena through statements of meaning derived from data and statements from participant surveys and in-depth and focus group interviews. Using his or her own experience with the phenomena and seeking out all possible meanings and frames of reference the researcher then provides an “*imaginative variation or structural description*” (p. 150) of how the phenomena was experienced. From the structural and textural descriptions provided, an overall description or meaning of the essence of the phenomenon is developed.

Using Creswell’s (1998) guide to interpretation of data, the researcher provided a textural and structural description of the lived experience of the participants relevant to the research questions asked in Chapter One of this study. Interpretation of the data analysis concluded with an attempt to understand the overall meaning or essence of the lived experience of the participants.

Validity

Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006) cited three criteria of validation of a qualitative study. They were craftsmanship, communication, and pragmatic. Validity as craftsmanship looks to the researcher and his or her methodology. It is a perception of the researcher’s credibility and integrity through his or her actions. Examples of validation through craftsmanship include:

1. Looking for and investigation of negative cases found in the data.

2. Being able to convincingly fit the data into a theoretical framework.
3. Making the effort to provide alternative theories to the findings.
4. Referring back to participants when data are unclear.
5. Alignment of sampling procedures with research questions.
6. Expert review of instruments used to collect data and review of findings
7. Triangulation of data sources within the same study (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006).

To gain validity through communication is to engage with those who have acknowledged expertise in dialogue about the findings of the study. “The idea here is that each interpretation of a given finding is open to discussion and refutation by the wider community of researchers, and sometimes this extends to the community in which the research itself was conducted” (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006, p. 64). Pragmatic validity is a measure of how those who were studied were affected by the research findings and resulting changes that may have occurred to those existing in a similar, but broader social context (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006).

In this study, protection of validity through craftsmanship included components of each of the seven examples listed above. To create validity through communication, review and approval of the proposed study followed by a review of findings was conducted by a committee with legitimate knowledge of qualitative research. Due to the scope and purpose of this study, pragmatic validity as described by Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006) was not addressed.

Researcher Biases and Assumptions

One of the distinguishing characteristics of qualitative research compared to quantitative research is recognition of the researcher's potential effect on research methodology and interpretation of findings. The assumptions and personal biases a researcher brings to the process can potentially misdirect the methods used and mask the meaning of data generated (Krueger & Casey, 2000; Seidman, 1991). Studies that seek meaning of the lived experience of participants are particularly susceptible to researcher bias and assumptions (Creswell, 1998; Krueger & Casey, 2000; Seidman, 1991).

According to Seidman (1991),

The fact is that interviewers are a part of the interviewing picture. They ask questions, respond to the participant, and at times even share their own experiences. Moreover, interviewers work with the material, select from it, interpret, describe, and analyze it. Though they may be disciplined and dedicated to keeping the interviews as the participant's meaning-making process, interviewers are also a part of that process. (p. 16)

According to Creswell (1998), "phenomenology's approach is to suspend all judgments about what is real-the 'natural attitude'- until they are founded on a more certain basis" (p. 52). He uses the term bracketing to describe the process of setting aside a researcher's prejudgments and experience, and instead relying on "intuition, imagination, and universal structures to obtain a picture of the experience" (p. 52).

In this study, effect of researcher assumption and bias was minimized through the researcher's position of neutrality and standardization of methodology. Methodologies

utilized to improve validity through craftsmanship and communication as described above, were critical to reducing the effects of researcher assumptions and biases.

Summary

In Chapter Three, a discussion of the research design and methodology used for this study was presented. The purpose and overview of the study as well as the research questions were reviewed. An explanation of the research strategy, methodology, data collection and instrumentation was provided as well as sections addressing data analysis, validity, and researcher assumptions and bias. Chapter Four will present an analysis of the data collected. Chapter Five will provide a summary of findings with discussion and will address implications for future practice and research.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Introduction

Public education's resistance to change despite decades of intense reform effort suggests a cultural phenomenon of barriers and institutional structures that prevent or naturally oppose change. For the purpose of this study, the problem is an apparent lack of appreciation for the cultural nature of public education and the need to better understand public education as a cultural phenomenon. While the plethora of quantitative data generated by the NCES over the past 35 years have been useful in describing and tracking the academic achievement of groups and sub-groups of students, its efficacy in facilitating significant educational reform affecting high school reading and math achievement test scores as measured by NAEP has not been realized (Donahue & Dion, 2007; Greene, 2006; Perie, Moran, & Lutkus, 2005; & Rampey, Dion, & Donahue, 2009). To better construct a more comprehensive theory regarding public education as a cultural phenomenon, more qualitative research is needed to enhance understanding of the individual experience and shared beliefs of those involved.

Teacher socialization describes a body of research seeking to understand the development of individuals into "participating members of the society of teachers" (Zeichner & Gore, 1990, p. 329). In this context, an individual's attitudes and beliefs provide an opportunity of understanding preservice teachers' thought processes, how they might behave in the classroom, and their willingness to embrace change (Doyle, 1997; Pajares, 1992; Richardson, 1996; Zeichner & Gore, 1990). One significant finding from this body of research is that preservice teachers hold on to their beliefs regarding

education and teaching that were formed as part of their K-12 experience as students and these are the beliefs that tend to prevail and reemerge after they leave a teacher preparation program and begin teaching on their own. An application of these findings to the beliefs preservice teachers bring to teacher preparation programs from their membership in an expanding adolescent subculture has not been well defined.

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to better describe, from individual points of view, the beliefs preservice teachers bring to teacher preparation programs arising from their experiences as K-12 students and as members of an adolescent subculture. Collection and analysis of data was guided by the following research questions:

1. What individually held beliefs about education do preservice teachers bring to their teacher preparation program from their K-12 experience?
2. What individually held beliefs about education do preservice teachers bring to their teacher preparation program from their membership in an adolescent subculture?

Chapter Four is organized into four additional sections. The first is Data Collection which describes the setting, participants, and data collection protocols. The second, Data Analysis, discusses emergent themes found in data collected from the in class surveys, in-depth interviews, and a focus group interview in the context of the study's research questions. The next section, Integration of Themes, is a synthesis of themes identified in Data Analysis and is followed by a summary of Chapter four.

Data Collection

Setting

Collection of data used in this study occurred at a regional university located in the Midwestern United States. All data were collected within the first four weeks of the fall semester from preservice teachers enrolled in their first course of the university's teacher preparation program. All data were collected on campus in cooperation with the departmental chair and staff.

Participants

The participants used in this study consisted of 162 preservice teachers with an average age of 20.0 years. The total sample consisted of 118 female and 44 male preservice teachers. The criteria for participant selection were based upon the research questions posed and included:

1. Participants who were preservice teachers enrolled in a teacher education program at the *Foundations* level and were attending the entry level course.
2. Participants who would be considered traditional students, i.e., those who recently completed high school and could still be considered adolescent by ages 18 through 25.

The entire sample responded to the in class survey. Twenty-nine students provided contact information (Appendix B) for the purpose of scheduling an in-depth and/or focus group interview. From the 29 preservice teachers who committed to additional involvement in the study, 13 were selected for in-depth interviews and/or a focus group interview. Selection of these participants was based upon their willingness to further participate and scheduling. Of the ten students that agreed to an in-depth interview, four

were male and six were female. Their average age of 21.5 years was higher than the average age of the entire sample. Seven students participated in the focus group interview which consisted of five females and two males. The average age of this group was 20.1 years.

Protocol

Initial contact, recruitment, and administration of the in class survey occurred within a 15 minute time frame at the end of the class period. The recruitment and survey protocols are provided in Appendix A. Letters of informed consent, consent form, and request for further contact form are provided in Appendix B.

The survey (see Appendix C) consisted of nine questions in total. Seven descriptive questions required minimal reply while two open-ended questions asked for information requiring a more deep and thoughtful response. The purpose of the descriptive questions was to provide information useful in determining the cultural context of the participants' high school experience and their connectedness with the dominant culture of the high school. The open ended questions were designed to expose the participant's beliefs about education through their experiences as a student and member of a youth culture.

In cooperation with the departmental chair, in-depth interviews were conducted in a small office that provided convenience for the students and privacy for the interview. Ten in-depth interviews were conducted within a three day schedule. The purpose of the in-depth interview was to reach a deeper and richer understanding of individual participants' beliefs about teaching and education than was possible through the written

survey. The questions used to collect data through the interview process are provided in Appendix C.

In cooperation with the departmental chair, a focus group interview consisting of seven participants was conducted in an office with a small conference area using the same line of questions from the in depth interview with additional probes and follow-up questions (see Appendix C). The purpose of the focus group interview was to provide an alternate context of expression of meaning through the interactions of group members.

Data Analysis

Analysis of data generated in this study was a continuous and cyclical process beginning with data preparation, progressing to data exploration, to data reduction, and finally resulting in interpretation as described by Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006). The analysis was continuous in that data were analyzed as it was created rather than waiting until all the data were collected before analysis began. Descriptive and qualitative analysis of data originating from the in class survey, in-depth interviews, and a focus group discussion are presented in separate sections below. In the section that follows, themes originating from each of the data collection methods are intergraded to provide a more inclusive description of the data collected.

Descriptive Data from In Class Survey

Questions one and two provided demographic data needed to select participants by age and disaggregate data by gender. Question three provided the approximate size of the respondents' graduating class. Data from question three was not included in the study's analysis. Questions four through seven were descriptive questions designed to provide a measure of participants' personal and group characteristics associated with an

adolescent subculture, their connection to the culture of their high school, and their beliefs concerning desirable teacher qualities. Questions eight and nine were open ended questions designed to expose beliefs preservice teachers have about teaching and learning.

Question four of the in class survey asked participants to select from a list, the activities in which they participated while attending middle or high school. The question was designed to provide a measure of connectedness each participant had to their middle or high school culture through participation in school activities and to determine which of the school activities listed were most popular with this sample of preservice teachers. The list included the following possible selections: athletics, cheerleading, poms or dance squad, band, intramurals, clubs, office worker, speech and/or debate. From 115 female preservice teachers completing question four, 114 or 99.13% indicated they had participated in at least one of the eight activities provided. Ninety female respondents or 78.26% indicated that they had participated in at least two of the activities provided. From the 44 male preservice teachers completing question four, 43 or 97.33% indicated they had participated in at least one of the eight activities provided. Thirty male respondents or 68.18% indicated that they had participated in at least two of the activities provided. Table 2 provides additional detail regarding the frequency of participation by preservice teachers in middle or high school activities by male and female respondents.

From the eight possible school activities listed in question number four, participation in clubs was selected by 87 female preservice teachers or 75.65% of the group. Participation in athletics, band, and office worker ranked second, third, and fourth respectively in frequency of participation by female respondents. From the eight possible

Table 2

Question 4: Number of School Activities Selected by Preservice Teachers

Total Activities Selected	Female (n=115)		Male (n=44)	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
0	1	0.87%	1	2.27%
1	24	20.87%	13	29.55%
2	31	26.96%	7	15.91%
3	31	26.96%	13	29.55%
4	20	17.39%	10	22.73%
5	6	5.22%	0	0.00%
6	2	1.74%	0	0.00%

school activities listed in question four, participation in athletics was selected by 34 male preservice teachers or 77.27% of the group. Participation in clubs and band ranked second and third respectively in frequency of participation by male respondents. Office worker and intramurals tied for fourth and fifth by male respondents. Table 3 provides additional detail of the frequency of activities selected by male and female preservice teachers.

Question five of the in class survey asked preservice teachers “In terms of student popularity in high school, select the level of importance that best matches the characteristics provided below...” (Appendix C). A rating of one through four was used

Table 3

Question 4: Frequency of School Activities Selected by Preservice Teachers

Activity Selected	Females (n=115)		Males (n=44)	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Clubs	87	75.65%	30	68.18%
Athletics	67	58.26%	34	77.27%
Band	38	33.04%	15	34.09%
Office Worker	29	25.22%	11	25.00%
Cheerleading	31	26.96%	1	2.27%
Intramurals	14	12.17%	11	25.00%
Speech	20	17.39%	4	9.09%
Dance	15	13.04%	0	0.00%

with '1' being very important and '4' having no importance. The possible sources of popularity provided in the question included: family status, personal appearance, clothes, nice car, good grades, athletic, participation in activities, and liked by teachers. Ninety-nine female preservice teachers completed the question. As a group, female preservice teachers selected personal appearance as the most important source of popularity at school with the lowest group mean value of 1.602. Having a nice car was ranked least important in terms of popularity by female preservice teachers by having the highest group mean value of 2.765. Participation in athletics was ranked second while being liked by teachers was ranked seventh. Male preservice teachers selected participation in

athletics as the most important source of student popularity by having the lowest group mean value of 1.538. Having a nice car was also ranked least important in terms of popularity by male preservice teachers by having the highest group mean value of 2.667. Participation in activities was ranked second while clothes were ranked seventh among male respondents. Rank based upon mean values for each of the eight possible sources of popularity was different seven of eight times between male and female respondents. The largest differences in rank between the two subgroups occurred with the value placed upon appearance, clothes, and grades as sources of popularity. Table 4 provides

Table 4

Question 5: Sources of Student Popularity Selected by Preservice Teachers

Source of Student Popularity	Females (n=99)		Males (n=40)	
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank
Personal Appearance	1.602	1 st	1.949	4 th
Participation in Athletics	1.857	2 nd	1.538	1 st
Participation in Activities	1.908	3 rd	1.795	2 nd
Good Grades	1.949	5 th	1.821	3 rd
Clothes	1.929	4 th	2.385	7 th
Family Status	2.316	6 th	2.000	5 th
Liked by Teachers	2.337	7 th	2.231	6 th
Nice Car	2.765	8 th	2.667	8 th

Note. Sources of student popularity are ranked one through eight based upon the mean of individual values given by each group participant for that source of student popularity; the lower the mean value, the lower the rank and the greater the source in determining student popularity.

additional detail regarding the sources of popularity participants associated with student popularity in high school by male and female participants.

Question six was designed to provide a measure of the importance of peer group relationships in high school to preservice teachers. It asked respondents to select from the following list of five descriptors regarding peer relationships:

- My friends were a major part of my high school experience.
- I spent a majority of my free time with my friends while in high school.
- When presented with a conflict, the approval of my friends was just as important as the approval of my parents.
- When presented with a conflict, the approval of my friends was just as important as the approval of my teachers.
- My relationship with my friends was just as important as making good grades.

From the 115 female preservice teachers that completed the question, 97 or 84.35% selected two or more descriptors from the five provided. Seventy five female respondents or 65.22 % selected three or more descriptors from the five provided. Out of the 44 male preservice teachers that completed question six, 38 or 86.37% selected two or more descriptors from the five provided. Thirty male respondents or 68.19 % selected three or more descriptors from the five provided. Table 5 provides additional results regarding the number of descriptors selected by female and male participants.

Table 6 provides information regarding the frequency of selection for each of the five descriptors in question six for females and males preservice teachers. One hundred two female and 40 male preservice teachers or 87.70% and 90.91% respectively selected the descriptor “My friends were a major part of my high school experience” (Appendix

Table 5

*Question 6: Number of Peer Group Importance Descriptors Chosen by Preservice**Teachers*

Total Descriptors Selected	Females (n=115)		Males (n=44)	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
5	18	15.65%	9	20.45%
4	23	20.00%	9	20.45%
3	34	29.57%	12	27.27%
2	22	19.13%	8	18.18%
1	14	12.17%	5	11.36%
0	4	3.48%	1	2.27%

C). The descriptor “I spent a majority of my free time with my friends while in high school” (Appendix C) was selected by 84 female and 36 male respondents or 73.40% and 81.82% of each group respectively. Almost half of females and males respondents chose the descriptor “When presented with a conflict, the approval of my friends was just as important as the approval of my parents.”

Question seven asked preservice teachers to rank (1-7) teacher qualities in order of personal value to the respondent with a rank of one being most desirable and a rank of seven being least important. The teacher qualities considered were: competent instructor, effective classroom and behavior management, ethical behavior, enthusiastic about teaching, knowledge of subject, professionalism, and student centered. The mean of the

Table 6

Question 6: Frequency of Descriptors Selected by Preservice Teachers

Descriptors	Females (n=115)		Males (n=44)	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
A	102	88.70%	40	90.91%
B	84	73.04%	36	81.82%
C	56	48.70%	21	47.73%
D	29	25.22%	16	36.36%
E	71	61.74%	25	56.82%

Note.

A = My friends were a major part of my high school experience.

B = I spent a majority of my free time with my friends while in high school.

C = When presented with a conflict, the approval of my friends was just as important as the approval of my parents.

D = When presented with a conflict, the approval of my friends was just as important as the approval of my teachers.

E = My relationships with my friends was just as important as making good grades.

rank values for each teacher quality was calculated to determine the order of value preservice teachers as a group placed upon those teacher qualities. Female and male preservice teachers both ranked enthusiastic about teaching as the most desirable teacher quality and subject knowledge second most desirable. Professionalism and ethical behavior as desirable teacher qualities was also ranked sixth and seventh respectively by both female and male preservice teachers. Female and male participants ranked competent instructor, student centered, and effective management differently within the possible ranks of third, fourth, and fifth (see Table 7).

Table 7

Question 7: Desired Teachers Qualities Ranked by Preservice Teachers

Desired Teacher Qualities	Females (<i>n</i> =110)		Males (<i>n</i> =43)	
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank
Enthusiastic About Teaching	2.303	1 st	3.024	1 st
Knowledge of Subject	2.734	2 nd	3.024	2 nd
Student Centered	3.450	3 rd	4.048	4 th
Competent Instructor	4.587	5 th	3.690	3 rd
Effective Classroom Management	4.569	4 th	4.214	5 th
Professionalism	5.092	6 th	4.762	6 th
Ethical Behavior	5.248	7 th	5.262	7 th

Note. Teacher Qualities are ranked one through seven based upon the mean of individual values given by group participants for that teacher quality; the lower the mean value, the higher the rank and the more desirable the teacher quality.

Themes from In Class Survey Question Eight

Survey question eight was an open-ended item designed to elicit preservice teacher responses that would provide insight to their beliefs regarding students, teaching and learning in the context of popular teachers. Preservice teacher written responses to each question provided in the analysis were coded by gender and survey number. “F” was the code used for female respondents and “M” was the code used for male respondents. Question eight asked participants: “From your personal experience what characteristics did middle or high school teachers have who were most popular with students?”

(Appendix C). Four of the 162 respondents provided no answer. Preservice teachers' responses to question eight were analyzed to establish reoccurring themes that characterize their beliefs regarding popularity of teachers from students' perspective. Themes identified with popular teachers included *made learning fun*, *funny teacher*, *passionate teacher*, *concern for students as people*, *almost one of us*, *classroom management* and *youth culture*. Because these themes are not discrete, the data can not be discretely categorized. As a result a certain amount of overlap occurred between themes within the data provided by preservice teachers.

Made learning fun. A dominant theme incorporating the characteristic of fun and/or humor in terms of teacher popularity included having fun while teaching, having a fun teaching environment, or to make learning fun. F-9 responded, "The teachers were able to have fun and teach at the same time." F-15 answered, "They also used humor scattered through their lessons for students to better remember certain important details." F-28 noted that popular teachers, "made the environment fun." F-56 answered, "Teachers were fun and creative with different teaching methods." F-134 responded, "They also made class fun and interesting while still teaching me something." M-85 answered, "Those teachers had a profound way of making education fun, either by having a high degree of participation by the student body, or involving learning visuals to help students grasp or understand the concepts."

Funny teacher. Appearing to a lesser degree was the theme of fun or funny as a personal teacher characteristic. F-16 observed that popular teachers "were funny and made the students want to come to class." F-55 used, "a little goofy" as one of her descriptors for popular teachers. F-59 stated that popular teachers "were funny, and they

knew how to engage with students.” F-65 noted that popular teachers were “The teachers that were fun and outgoing but not always the best teacher. They are usually the ‘blow off’ class.” F-94 answered that popular teachers “were the teachers who joked with the students and had close relationships.” F-141 observed that “They joked around a lot and made the material relevant.” F-227 noted that “They knew when to have fun (joke around) and when to be serious.” M-30 stated that “They were funny and good at their craft.” M-124 included “comical individuals” in his answer. M-232 wrote that “The teachers that kept students entertained were most popular with a majority of the students.”

Passionate teacher. A third theme that appears within participant responses were descriptions of popular teachers as being passionate about their career choice and subject, being recognized for their subject knowledge, and enthusiastic teacher. F-4 observed that “The teachers that were favored by students had enthusiasm and wanted to teach. Class was interesting and was kept up to our interest level.” F-15 noted that “The teachers were always very prepared for class, and used a variety of teaching methods in order to keep the students interested.” F-36 answered that popular teachers “Loved what they did, made learning fun.” F-39 stated that “Most teachers were creative and fun and were happy and enthusiastic about what they taught.” M-26 described popular teachers as “enthusiastic about the subject and teaching in general. They possessed a great knowledge of the subject and kept good classroom control.” M-139 noted that popular teachers “had a genuine love for teaching and could make even the most boring subjects interesting.” M-210 answered that “They were interested in what they talked about and presented the information in an appealing way while being efficient.”

Able to relate to students. As a theme, *able to relate to students* describes the teacher's ability to connect with students in the classroom for the benefit of enhanced student learning. F-68 wrote "They could relate to the students. They also know their subject, but were also able to transmit the knowledge to the students effectively. They also seemed like [they] actually cared about their students." F-92 noted that popularity depended on "how well they connected with students, treating them equal, treating [them] with respect, treating them as young adults, letting them have some freedom, let the students have an opinion." F-101 noted that "They were enthusiastic and outgoing and really [k]new how to relate to the students." F-219 noted that popular teachers "treated their students as peers and didn't baby them." M-44 described popular teachers as "friendly, cared about every one...Able to talk to students as a friend and as a teacher." M-109 wrote "You could almost say they were like students themselves by relating to them, but still having a serious attitude towards structure and education."

Concern for students as people. *Concern for students as people* describes student/teacher relationships where the teacher's ability to connect with students on a personal level goes beyond the classroom for the benefit of the student as described by participants. In the context of teacher popularity from the student's point of view, F-2 observed that:

Middle or high school teachers who were most popular with students were most often involved with either athletic programs or clubs around the school. They held an "open office" policy in which students could stop by with problems, or if they just needed to talk.

F-25 wrote:

They actually cared about what happened to you outside of class. To some of them, they cared for me and how I was, [more] than the class work, and that made me do my stuff even more because they trusted and believed in me.

F-29 noted “They were able to communicate on a level the student could understand and the student was able to talk to the teacher about any problems.” F-121 wrote that popular teachers “cared about students not just in classrooms but also outside of class.” F-64 noted that teachers “were usually younger and could relate very well with students. Some others were popular because they honestly cared about our future and would not accept failure.” F-76 described her favorite teacher:

She related to the class, had a sense of humor, but really understood the daily pressures that faced high school students. She would act as a counselor when you were having a bad day, and would be your best friend when you were having a great day.

F-79 noted that “my math teacher was popular with the students because he turned on the news channel and let us say our opinion about whatever was showing and have an educated debate.” F-81 observed that “they were relatable; they spoke ‘our language’.”

F-83 stated that:

In my opinion the teachers most popular with the students were the ones that were very exciting. The teachers that sang in class or made learning seem more like gossip or interesting. The most popular teacher in my high school gossiped for the first half of class, then we went to lunch and learned a little after lunch.

F-84 wrote that popular teachers “were involved with students and cared about them as a whole, rather than academically. They were happy to be at school with their students.” F-

131 said the “Most that were the ‘cool teachers’ talked to students with respect and as an adult that made students feel appreciated.” F-132 related that popular teachers:

would talk to the students before or after school or class if they needed their questions answered or help. They would also tell the students if something is bothering them or [needed] someone to talk to, that their door is always open.

F-151 observed that:

Popular high school teachers showed an interest in other school activities outside the classroom. The teachers who would support their students in athletics were more liked than others. Also, teachers who allowed the students to trust them with more personal problems (while still be professional) were more favored.

F-215 wrote that “They related with the students and were realistic with the way kids are today. They understood the life styles that we lived and our stresses.” For M-126, teachers popular with students “cared about each one of us. We were a family and were crucial in my development as a man.”

Almost one of us. Teacher popularity as a function of age, appearance, knowledge of youth culture and extra curricular activity emerged as a reoccurring theme noted by preservice teachers. F-13 wrote that popular teachers “seemed to be in-the-know about current pop culture events.” F-42 described popular teachers as “very charismatic in their teaching, and tried to be the ‘good guy’ while still being the teacher at the same time.” F-55 observed that popular teacher were “Younger in age, a little goofy, interactive, coaching staff also, very brilliant and willing to help at all times.” F-59 wrote that “A lot of those teachers were also young.” F-61 added that “The most popular teachers tended to be around 23 to 40 years old.” F-64 wrote that “They were usually younger and could

relate very well with students.” F-74 observed that “Characteristics usually included being a coach of some sort, typically younger, and more laid back when it came to actual class work.” F-98 wrote that “The coaches and young teachers were most popular with students.” F-141 stated “one of my teachers smoked weed with students and bought them alcohol.” F-145 believed that:

Overall, teachers that were most popular in high school were the ones that treated students like adults...and was current of things going on around in the news and things that were important to teens, such as celebrities, music, and car (or iPods or whatever).

For F-152 the popular teachers were “Young, good looking, kind, not many rules, easy to talk to.” F-225 observed that the popular teachers “Related with students, organized big activities (ex. Student Counsel), coaches of football team or major sport teams, teacher was good looking (tattoos, well “developed”, muscular).” M-96 wrote “They were mostly young teachers and could relate to the students on a personal level.” M-109 observed that “The teachers that were most popular were funny and energetic. You could almost say they were like students themselves by relating to them...” M-123 wrote “The teachers that seem to be most liked were un-strict, ‘Hip to the Times’ types. It seems some care less about subject types and more about popularity.” M-139 believed popular teachers “had good teacher to student social relations. They were in a sense like a much older friend.” M-206 wrote that popular teachers were “fun, good looking, coaches, science, or history teachers.” For M-213:

The characteristics of those teachers, in my opinion, matched those of the students. They may have been knowledgeable, but were very unprofessional.

They seemed to have a difficult time distinguishing the difference in friendship with students, and simply having respect.

M-221 wrote that popular teachers “Always helped out with students who needed help, lenient on behavior issues, knew everything that went on between students.

Classroom management. As a theme, *classroom management* speaks to the teacher’s approach to classroom management, course rigor, student accountability, and to what extent the classroom environment supports learning. F-10 noted that “Most of the teachers that were popular with student were easy going and fun. You still got work done, just in a friendly environment.” F-16 stated that popular teachers “were more laid back about assignments and related to the students more.” F-33 wrote “Good classroom management, on task, friendly, but professional.” F-44 wrote “The teachers whom were most well liked...didn’t let kids control the classroom, didn’t just stand at the board and talk.” F-50 responded with, “Understanding, had control of classroom, knew subject material...” F-63 believed popular teachers “were effective with what they were doing, could relate to students in different ways, had an open door policy, and were lenient in ways, but never allowed students to walk all over them.” F-82 wrote “Great speaker, control of the classroom, kids knew what was expected...knew each child.” F-90 wrote “In middle and high school, the teachers who were more popular were more care-free...and they had a very free flowing classroom setting.” F-125 liked teachers that were “organized”. For F-129, popular teachers “...created a comfortable, not uptight, atmosphere.” F-145 noted “teachers that were most popular in high school were the ones that treated the students like adults, relaxed on some rules while being firm on other rules...” F-208 wrote “They did not have ridiculous rules and were very laid back. F-231

wrote “A lax sense of discipline, willing to listen.” M-46 wrote “They were serious when they had to be, but laid back.” M-97 described popular teachers as “laid back, had a sense of humor. Easy going, not very critical on homework or tests.” M-211 added “...allowed minimal visiting with friends...”

Youth culture. A theme consistent with Coleman’s (1961) and Husen’s (1996) description of adolescence and Garner et al. (2006) characteristics associated with a youth culture were apparent in some of the responses provided by participants. One defining characteristic of youth culture is a transition from reliance on parents and family as a primary social support structure to a reliance on peers. Other characteristics include an emphasis placed on athletic success, name-brand consumerism, personal appearances, social poise, irresponsibility, and anti-intellectualism. Emphasis on athletics and appearance were common characteristics with in describing popular teachers. F-2 wrote “Middle or high school teachers who were the most popular with students were most often involved with either athletic programs or clubs around school.” For F-79 “...the characteristics that teachers teaching high school had that were most popular with the students were if they were sports related or if they brought outside influences in to the classroom.” F-225 included “coaches of football team or major sports teams [and] ...good looking (tattoos, well ‘developed’, muscular)” in her description of characteristics of popular teachers. M-206 used “good looking [and] coaches” to describe popular teachers.

Themes from In Class Survey Question Nine

Question nine of the in class survey was an open ended item designed to draw out preservice teacher beliefs in the context of teaching, learning, and the roles of students

and teachers in each. Question nine asked participants to “Describe the relationship, if any, between the concepts of teaching and learning and who is responsible for each?” (Appendix C). As in question eight, participant responses were coded by gender and survey number. An analysis of responses from the 162 participants who returned the survey revealed answers consistent with four themes or beliefs regarding teaching and learning and who the preservice teachers believe are responsible for each. Themes identified include, *teachers more responsible for learning*, *shared responsibility for learning*, *teachers teach–students learn* and *clueless*. Because these themes are not discrete, the data can not be discretely categorized. As a result a certain amount of overlap occurred between themes within the data provided by preservice teachers.

Teachers more responsible for learning. One theme that became apparent was the belief that teaches are, for the most part, responsible for both teaching and learning and that the student’s responsibility for learning is less significant. One participant, F-33 noted that “The teacher is responsible for the teaching and part of the learning process. The student should be in charge of their learning and making sure that they understand fully.” F-62 added that “Teaching and learning are directly related. Teachers are responsible for both, they need to teach class/subject, but they need to learn from their experiences and help make themselves a better teacher.” F-73 wrote that “The teacher is responsible for being enthusiastic and teaching the students what they need to be taught. The student is responsible for showing up and listening.”

F-83 answered:

Teaching is an art, being able to effectively teach children, teachers need to know how a child learns, and how to use all the types of learning in one setting to bring

that subject to life for each student in their classroom. Learning is something everyone can do as long as they apply themselves. So teaching is learning, but learning is not teaching.

F-107 noted that:

A teacher is obligated to facilitate learning in anyway possible. Some students may be 'unreachable' or seem so. I feel that those students may simply be beyond the capacity of a particular teacher or district resources. A teacher has the majority of the [onus].

F-230 wrote "The teacher is accountable in providing information needed for the student and to display the information differently to customize it for the learner. The student needs to have a learning spirit to focus." M-91 added that "Without learning, teaching would be useless. The teacher is responsible for making the student want to learn." M-109 believes that "a good teacher must also be someone who's willing to learn everyday. They must learn from the students being taught so they can be more effective."

Shared responsibility for learning. A second theme that emerged from survey question nine was that responsibilities for teaching and learning are shared by both the teacher and student somewhat equally and teacher and student interactions flow both ways. F-2 wrote:

I think the relationship between [the] concepts of teaching and learning go hand in hand. A student cannot effectively learn if a teacher doesn't teach effectively and vice-versa. If a student refuses to learn, a teacher cannot teach effectively.

F-9 answered that:

The teacher and the student are responsible for both. You can't teach without learning and you can't learn without teaching. Teachers can't have a closed mind about subjects. Students can teach, or bring different points of view to the classroom and the teacher must be willing to adapt.

F-39 noted that "you cannot teach without learning and when you learn you are able to teach others as well. I think teachers learn from the students as much as they teach them."

F-49 added that "the teacher must be able to teach the class and learn from the students about what they need to do better in the classroom." F-76 wrote "It's the responsibility of the teacher to convey their knowledge to students in any way that would maximize learning. However, students can be just as effective in teaching their educators on issues that may not be in a curriculum." F-208 wrote "I think that students are just as responsible for teaching as teachers are. Teachers are there to guide students. Student inquiry should be the main focus. Students and teachers are equally responsible for learning." M-78 believes that "it is the responsibility of both the student and the teacher to do both. The teacher needs to learn how to teach particular students and the students need to teach the teacher the most effective thing for learning."

Teachers teach-Students learn. A third theme expressed by preservice was the belief that teachers were responsible for only the act of teaching and students were to be held responsible for learning the material. For example, F-80 answered "Teachers can teach as long and as hard as they want, but it is up to the students to learn from it." F-106 noted that "the teacher is responsible for getting the ball rolling for the students. It is up to the students to decide what they will do with what they are taught." F-121 wrote that "Teachers are responsible for teaching and students are responsible [for] learning the

subject that is taught.” For M-30, “Teaching is the job for a teacher, but a teacher can’t control what is learned.” M-46 simply stated “Teachers teach and students learn.”

Clueless. The fourth theme derived from participant responses to question nine was that 49 of the 162 preservice teachers (30 %) chose for some reason to not respond compared to only four of the same group (2.5%) who chose to not respond to question eight. Compared to question eight, which asked participants to list characteristics, question nine asked students describe a relationship between the two abstract concepts of teaching and learning and assign to teachers and students the roles each have in that relationship. One explanation that warrants consideration in addition to the difficulty of the question was a general lack of clarity these respondents may have had for these two abstract concepts. One respondent, M-142, answered “No clue what this means.”

Summary of questionnaire findings. Questions four through seven of the in class survey were designed to yield descriptive data that would provide a measure of the preservice teachers’ group characteristics associated with a youth or adolescent sub-culture, their connection to the culture of their high school, and their beliefs concerning desirable teacher qualities. Data collected from questions four, five, and six supports the following observation: As a group, the sample population embraced the culture of their high school and its elements of a youth culture as part of their high school experience. This observation is supported by the number and types of activities in which they participated from question four. It is also supported by the of sources of popularity they valued as most and least important in question five and the relative importance they placed on peer or social relationships compared to their parents, teachers, and making good grades in question six.

Interpretation of descriptive data invokes themes that are consistent with themes arising from question eight. Blending the descriptive meaning arising from questions four through seven with the appropriate qualitative themes from the in class survey strengthens those themes and provides a clearer and more complete interpretation of data from the in class survey. Descriptive data from questions four, five, and six share common characteristics with those of a youth culture theme. From question four, nearly 80% of female preservice teachers and 70% of male preservice teachers participated in at least two activities while in middle school or high school ((Table 2). Fifty-eight percent of the females and 77% of the males from the sample population participated in athletics (Table 3).

Data from question five indicate that female preservice teachers placed personal appearance and participation in athletics as the first and second source of student popularity in high school. Male preservice teachers ranked athletics and participation in activities first and second respectively in terms of popularity in high school. For female preservice teachers, making good grades was placed behind appearance, athletics, activities, and clothes as sources of popularity. Being liked by teachers ranked seventh and sixth for females and males respectively, in terms of value related to popularity (Table 4). Question six was designed to provide a measure the importance of peer group or social relationships in high school to preservice teachers. Almost 89% of females and 91% of males indicated that “My friends were a major part of my high school experience” (Appendix C). Nearly half of the preservice teachers selected “When presented with a conflict, the approval of my friends was just as important at the approval of my parents” (Appendix C) and over half of the sample population selected “My

relationships with my friends was just as important as making good grades” (see also Table 5).

Question seven (Table 7) provides descriptive data that ranked seven teacher qualities in order of importance to the preservice teachers. Enthusiastic about teaching and knowledge of subject were ranked as first and second respectively by the sample population as most desired teacher qualities and are consistent with the theme passionate teacher. Competent instructor was ranked fifth and third by female and male preservice teachers respectively and is also a descriptor for the theme passionate teacher. Student centered was ranked third and fifth by females and males respectively as an important teacher quality and would seem to relate to the themes *made learning fun* and *able to relate to students*. Effective classroom management as a desirable teacher quality was ranked fourth and fifth by female and male preservice teachers and aligns with the theme *classroom management*. Professionalism and ethical behavior ranked next to least important and least important teacher qualities by the preservice teachers and do not appear to be related to any of the themes that have emerged from the qualitative data.

Themes from In-Depth Interviews

Ten preservice teachers, six female and four male, volunteered to participate in an in-depth interview. Their average age was 21.5 years, 1.5 years older than the average age of the entire sample. The interview protocol is provided in Appendix C. Follow up questions and probes were utilized in an effort to draw out more detailed responses richer in meaning. Themes identified from preservice teacher responses to interview questions included: *made learning fun*, *passionate teacher*, *able to relate to students*, *concern for students as people*, *almost one of us*, *classroom management*, *youth culture*, *shared*

responsibility for learning, and teachers teach—students learn. Data from in-depth interviews are presented by theme. Fictitious names were used to maintain confidentiality of interview participants.

Made learning fun. Characteristics associated with fun and humor emerged as a reoccurring theme from responses provided by preservice teachers in the interviews. Teachers having fun while teaching, teachers providing a fun learning environment, or teachers that made learning fun were components of the *made learning fun* theme. In the context of qualities of a teacher that preservice teachers would want to be most like, Robyn described her favorite teacher:

She was a great teacher... [She] made literature a lot more fun. She had us write, do a lot of writing exercises, really fun projects. She'd make you feel really good that she wanted to use your project, or your assignment, or your poem for something later, so she kept a portfolio of past students. That was always fun to see.

In the context of characteristics of popular teachers, Jane stated "Teachers that made it fun, whenever you walked in the classroom there would be colors or something on the wall. You just knew that the teacher was...not straight one way." For Judith, popular teachers have:

somewhat of a sense of humor about things. Not so dry... I'm thinking of teachers I've had before who were completely monotone and no sense of humor whatsoever, the class would drag on and I didn't really feel like I learned much.

Linda provided an example of a popular teacher:

Friendly but assertive. I think it's important to establish respect across the board.

We had this teacher...he was 4'11" or five feet. He was so short but he loved scuba diving. The first day of class, we walk in and sit down and up on the projector screen is a picture of him in a Speedo scuba diving. The humor of that, he set this tone for the whole school year. Immediately after that we went over the rules. He wanted us to feel comfortable and confident being in his classroom.

Sometimes students look at going to school as a chore.

In the context of teacher characteristics preservice teachers would want to model in their career, Matt said:

I think teachers as they get older and get a lot more comfortable within their course work, they...lose that finesse that made them get into it, and I can...see it...now looking back in some of my older teachers that taught history opposed to some of my younger teachers who taught history. They still have that passion for it...I had a brand new ninth grade American history teacher, and he made history a lot of fun. We talked about all kinds of things, everything was relevant and then I had an eighth grade history teacher...An older guy...he knew all this stuff, and it was so well known to him that he didn't care as much about it...if you're teaching the exact same stuff for so long it just becomes that mundane daily process.

Passionate teacher. *Passionate teacher* as a theme appeared within preservice teacher interviews to describe teachers who had passion for their subject, had passion for their career choice, were recognized for their subject knowledge, and/or were enthusiastic

in their teaching. In the context of teacher qualities the participant would most want to be most like in their career, Jane stated:

I had a really, really good English teacher in high school. It was actually from a great books class and she knew the book back...she knew the whole book...she was able to explain the symbolism and put it in terms that we would understand because most of the literature you read in high school goes right over you head. She...took the time to sit there and explain it to us and whenever we asked questions, she wouldn't look at us like: that's a dumb question.

Robyn stated:

She was a great teacher. She did literature, reading. She really got kids excited about what they were doing. We would read different plays and it was fun to not have to...you could have a part by not being embarrassed.

Marilyn said that teachers:

need to be successful in the subject matter. There is lot of teachers that you can tell...They just kind of wound up in that subject matter, and it's not something they were passionate about, so they don't continue to learn it...

For Linda, her favorite teachers were passionate:

I've had a handful of really awesome teachers...They have got to be passionate about what they are teaching. If they have [an] inkling of doubt about what they're doing then they shouldn't be doing it because students need someone to encourage them and be positive... When they come to school they need to feel that focus, they need to feel the passion the teacher projects.

In the context of teacher and student roles in education, Jane said that:
“[Teachers] need to know the material, they need to know what they’re teaching before they try to have students learn it...they need to present the material in a way that the age level...can understand it.” In terms of characteristics of a popular teacher Matt responded, with:

As a professional, they’re the ones...that go above and beyond. They’re the ones that make things fun. In my field, I’ll be teaching kids that would rather be outside or playing video games...opposed to sitting my classroom, so I feel that I should have to make them want to be there, so the hands-on stuff like bringing arrowheads or things like that, that make things relevant...they were very popular...I hope to be able to have a personal connection with somebody the same way like my teachers did. So I think the most well-liked teachers find a good balance between the personal and professional level...I think that’s a fine line.

Able to relate to students. The teacher’s ability to connect with the students on a personal level in the classroom for the benefit of learning is a descriptor of this theme. In the context of a favorite teacher, Karie stated:

I think most of all I had a teacher that really instilled a value of self-confidence or self-achievement, you know, feeling that what you’ve accomplished is something of value beyond just the classroom...you can take this out into the real world...I think an effective classroom is a classroom where you can meet your goals and students can meet their goals, and everyone is still interacting on a personal level. I like that close one-on-one type of relationship between the student and teacher.

In the context of teacher qualities preservice teachers would most want to be most like in their career, Judith stated:

One teacher who just was awesome...he was my art teacher. He was really big on giving advice...having us change our art work...He would do it in such a way that he really just wanted to know your opinion of it and by talking to you...he would almost allow you to point out yourself what was wrong with it...That really helped...you were able to change it and felt like [it was] your work. I really liked that about him.

Matt stated:

Understanding. Not to be a push over, but to understand and not make things more difficult than they have to be...A lot of people don't find a lot of relevance in history, so I hope to make things relevant for them, and that's kind of where my strongest teachers have been...the ones that can take something as dry as toast and make it into something exquisite and relevant.

For Ben, it was a third grade teacher that he would like to model:

My elementary physical education teacher is why I wanted to go into teaching. He was really good at giving people feedback and making them feel welcome. There are some gym teachers who will just focus on the athletes, but he did a good job of making everyone feel as if they were welcome in the gym.

Concern for students as people. *Concern for students as people* describes student/teacher relationships where the teacher's ability to connect with students on a personal level goes beyond the classroom. For Kevin:

There's a professional teacher and the teacher who wants to be the students' friend...I like to be their friend. Not only are you there to teach the class, and inform them of knowledge, but you're also there to kind of counsel, and any questions they might have, and then you're also there to understand it from their point of view. I know it's easier for me that if I'm a friend with that person, and they've been talking to me, and I can at least get a feeling of their perspective, then I might even be able to adjust my lessons to where it actually fits them better and they're actually learning a lot more.

For Marilyn:

A lot of times teachers will get stuck in their day-to-day...and they just don't care...Students can really tell that, and that's frustrating. That was the number one quality that I didn't like. The teachers that do care, those are the ones I looked up to. They also listen. A lot of times students are going to come up with excesses, and teachers will look at everything as just an excuse when there could really be some serious issues going on, and you have to listen to that and guide them through it. Even at the high school level, they don't necessarily have the mindset to understand that they need help, or maybe they don't need help, maybe they just need a little push in the right direction. I think listening is also an important characteristic.

For Don, his favorite teacher was very nice. He provides an example:

With my senior year they had this rule where if you got all "A's" you didn't have to take the final. I went up to him one day and I asked because I was on the curve 'What do I have to do to set some extra credit?' 'Well you go into the dictionary,

you look at the “y’s” and you write down all the words.” And I’m like ‘Ok, ok.’”

And he said ‘you really going to do that?’ I’m like ‘Dude, I want to get an A.’ and he said ‘Don’t worry about it.’ A very understanding teacher. I think you have to put yourselves in the perspective of the students because that helps you teach better. You got an idea of what they’re going through and what they’re thinking so that’s a big key.

In terms of characteristics of popular teachers, Judith believes that students need to:

feel like ‘OK’, this teacher knows where I am coming from. They’re not just teaching me because it’s their job, they actually care. They actually know what might be going on in my life. They are not way off in left field with what’s going on in my life.

Almost one of us. Teacher popularity as a function of age, appearance, knowledge of youth culture and extra curricular activity emerged as a reoccurring theme noted by preservice teachers. In the context of characteristics of popular teachers, Ben said that they were:

The ones who try to be friends with students. The easy ones who are watching movies on Fridays. The ones who don’t have tests. The ones who don’t challenge. [Students] knew that they would get an easy ‘A’...Maybe they are tenured so they don’t care anymore so they make class easy...No one wants to be disliked. No one wants to think kids are coming to your class dreading it.

Don observed that:

popular teachers tend to be more of a friend...to most students...I’ve had a few teachers in my time where at the end of the year you vote for the best teacher and

they actually took it to heart and made signs and tried to be the most popular with candy...They campaigned for it. You don't do that. That's for the students.

For Marilyn some popular teachers:

were just another student. They fit right in, they dressed like the other students, they went to all the activities, they were maybe the coaches, which I don't have anything against coaches, but they were more concerned with making the students like them than getting the information out to them, which I want to be an even balance.

Ben noted that "If a teacher is stuck in the sixties, I don't think they're going to be able to connect with kids here in the twenty-first century." In the context of characteristics of popular teachers, Robyn stated:

They seem to be a little younger than most of the other teachers...It seemed like they wanted to feel welcomed by the kids rather than looked as a disciplinary figure, as an authoritarian...their classes weren't very stimulating educationally. Being in their classes, it was like anything goes kind of. If you didn't want to turn in the homework, you could turn it in tomorrow...

For Judith, popular teachers needed to "have some knowledge of the pop culture, what's going on in their students' time period. If you don't know what a text message is and your students are doing that, then you might be a little out of the loop."

Classroom management. As a theme, *classroom management* describes the level of control a teacher has over the learning environment, to what extent the classroom environment supports learning, course rigor, and student accountability. In the context of a favorite teacher that preservice teachers would want to model Robyn said "She was

very friendly, but to the point...she knew how to discipline kids, but to the point where you didn't dislike her afterwards. You [knew] she was doing it for a good reason." For Kevin, his favorite teacher:

was very organized. I really liked the organization she had in her classroom. She had everything set in stone the way it was going to be...It kept the class on task. [Students] all come in and they're ready to do their work because that's just the way she ran her class. You go into somebody else's class, who's more of a relaxed teacher, and they come in and they're bouncing off the walls.

In the context of teacher and student roles in education, Robyn stated teachers need to maintain respect from students.

I think the biggest part is just being respected by the students because I know the minute you...break respect it's really hard to get it back with students because they find that weakness and...want to walk on it because they feel like now they have that power over you...I think the role of any student would be [to] stop doing that and want to be there to learn and want to respect [teachers].

In the context of characteristics of popular teachers, Jane stated "I think the teachers that were strict, but weren't too harsh, they had a schedule already made up so you knew what was expected of you, but yet they would be lenient on certain things."

Youth culture. *Youth culture* as a theme speaks to a generalized description of the beliefs, values, and behaviors associated with youth or adolescents. A defining cultural characteristic of youth culture is a transition from reliance on parents and family as a primary social support structure to a reliance on peers. Other characteristics include an emphasis placed on athletic success, name-brand consumerism, personal appearances,

social poise, irresponsibility, and anti-intellectualism (Coleman, 1961; Garner et al., 2006; & Husen, 1996). Data from the in-depth interview revealed six sub-themes of youth culture in the responses provided by the preservice teachers.

In the first sub-theme, *youth culture-athletics*, participation in athletics is highly valued within the school setting. When describing successful students, Ben simply states: “If they’re involved in extra curricular activities, being part of an organization, hopefully taking some college level credit courses.” Jane stated:

I just think it has a lot to do with the way they [students] were raised by their parents. If they only were involved with high class social things, that’s how they were in high school...the sports teams, those were always the wealthier kids...always played sports. They always sat together.

In the context of characteristics of popular teachers, Robyn stated:

I would say the teachers that I looked at as popular by people in my grade would be... most of them were coaches, female or male, it doesn’t matter. There was a cheerleading coach that was very popular, and then there were the soccer coaches that were very popular...if I had a coach that I looked as popular I wouldn’t be excited to have their class because I never did sports and I kind of felt that a lot of the coaches weren’t really interested in any of the students that didn’t play sports.

Youth culture-materialism is a second sub-theme of youth culture. Name brand consumerism is a distinguishing characteristic in this sub-theme. In describing her friends from high school, Linda noted that: “Things were disposable to them. Their parents were buying vehicles that were outrageous...” Regarding the student culture at Matt’s high school, he said:

I went to the rich, white high school, so my culture was very mommy and daddy bought me this, mommy and daddy bought me that. I didn't have that, I was lucky to be in suburbia. I guess the culture was very privileged at my school, [on] sixteenth birthdays, kids would drive brand new cars.

A third sub-theme of youth culture is *youth culture-appearance*. In this sub-theme, personal appearance is a valued characteristic. Matt stated: "at that age I think people are more focused on being pretty, being cool, being the best as opposed to their education like they should." In describing her classmates, Jane replied: "...then you noticed the people that were only there to socialize that always dressed up to go to school because that's all they really cared about." When asked what his classmates valued, Matt replied: "Oh, it was very vain, looks, material possessions, the sports people..."

A fourth sub-theme, *youth culture-accountability*, is characterized by the absence of personal accountability common to many adolescents. As discussed in Chapter Two, Husen (1996) used the phrase socially induced irresponsibility to describe some of this behavior. Marilyn described unsuccessful students in light of not taking responsibility for their actions:

[They] think that the world just revolves around [them]...it goes back to egocentrism which we all think starts and stops at young ages, but I don't think it does. It continues on all the way through adulthood. If something is not going my way then its somebody else's fault, it can't be their fault.

In describing her friends from high school, Linda speaks to their accountability:

Do I think that they weren't held accountable for what they were doing? I'm sure they weren't because in the environment I lived in...the third wealthiest

community in the United States. It's a wealthier community and of course these kids weren't being held accountable...They were exposed to adult circumstances before I felt we were equipped to handle them. That was a distraction. They [were] being distracted from their high school experience.

Youth culture-peers as a sub-theme of youth culture describe a student preference for relating to their peers for their social needs. For Matt, "the social aspects [of school] get in the way of school." In the context of their view of their high school culture and what was valued by students, Jane replied:

I think for most of the kids that I went to high school with weren't there at all for school...At my high school it was just a huge social thing. You could tell which kids were trying to further their education, get them into a better college, and how they worked hard, and then you noticed the people that were only there to socialize...

For Matt, he "was there for a social aspect, you know what was happening on the weekends, what we were doing after school."

The sixth sub-theme, *youth culture-anti-intellectualism*, speaks to a general devaluation of academic pursuits over the other five sub-themes described above. In describing characteristics of a successful student, Matt noted that: "They pay the most attention. They participate in class. The kids that are just thirsty for knowledge, and aren't afraid to be the smart kid, or be laughed at for wanting more knowledge about something." In reference to athletes, Jane stated: "A lot of times they'd exclude kids who didn't play sports, or were in different activities that weren't considered cool, or if they were in academic activities." Robyn stated:

I know there were certain groups where grades did not matter. They went to school basically for an attendance thing...They didn't necessarily care about their grades as long as they were able to go on to the next grade, able to not take this class again.

When asked about the value of grades, Matt replied:

Yeah. I mean they pulled their grades, but just to me, that was never the focus for these groups, and all my friends were straight A students. I wasn't, I was nowhere near, but I would say the emphasis was on social, and I'm sure that's high school from the get go.

Don describes pressure from his friends to not achieve academically:

I would always get that 'A' and they would be 'Oh, look at that, the white kid getting an 'A'. They kind of did that to me. At first I didn't let it get to me, but as I started to have my friends and see what they were doing, I thought: 'Oh that's pretty funny, I'm working and they're just sliding through.'

For Ben, "It seemed a lot of people spent their time in other ways rather than worrying about school and taking it seriously..." He observed that unsuccessful students "don't see how its [high school] going to help them in life." When asked what these students do care about, Ben replied "partying or hanging out with friends. The more friends you have in high school the more likely you will worry about the social aspect rather than academics." For Marilyn, it was the community that determined what was valued at her high school:

I think it was very important to students in my school to get good grades because the students who didn't, even if they were in that popular crowd, they were kind

of pushed aside a little bit because in my community it was important. Most people from my community graduate high school and they go on to college and they get their degree and whatever they want to do. That was just expected.”

Matt stated that: “As Americans we put too much emphasis on athletics and cinema...things like that...”

Shared responsibility for learning. As a theme, *shared responsibility for learning* places the responsibility for learning on both the teacher and student. In the context of acquired student skills or learned student behaviors that lead to student learning, the student is responsible for managing their time wisely, managing their social life, and showing up to class eager to learn while taking an active approach to his or her learning.

Jane said that:

Time management is a big thing in high school, especially when you’re getting into your junior and senior year. You want to be active and hang out with your friends a lot because you’re running out of time with them, but you also have to remember that you have classes. So it’s time management and staying organized.

For Robyn, choosing the right friends facilitates a proper balance between social needs and academics. In describing successful students she stated: “They’re typically less social...if they are social they have a good group of friends that have the title on them as ‘the good group.’ They come to every class. They don’t skip out on classes or leave early.” When asked to describe unsuccessful students, Robyn replied:

Probably not coming to classes. I know a lot of kids in high school would just skip classes, not do their homework, maybe be behavioral problems, getting into trouble when they’re not there...not very socially involved in school

For Don successful student are:

Eager to learn...I always sat in the front row, not afraid to ask questions, get to know your teacher, homework is a key to do. It's not difficult to find out who is going to want to succeed in class and who's not, but it's your job to help.

Jane stated that students:

should be willing to listen and try their best to understand the material, ask questions because sometimes we just sit there even though we don't know what's going on, and never say more because we don't want to get embarrassed...I think the student should step up and ask if they have problems.

For Karie, "the student needs to have an open mind and needs to at least be willing to get to know the teacher, and then maybe the material or the subject matter will come later."

In the *shared responsibility for learning* theme, preservice teachers believe that in addition to presenting curriculum to students, teachers are also responsible for developing student learning skills, for making content relevant to each student, for differentiating instruction to meet the students' capacity for learning, and creating an enthusiastic and motivating classroom environment.

For Marilyn:

Time management is going to be a big thing, and that's something that I'm willing to add into my little piece of the curriculum to help them learn that because if they don't have those foundations, they won't be able to succeed in their classes. I mean they'll get by, but they won't be successful.

In terms of unsuccessful students, Matt replied:

[They] don't care and make it clear they don't care... As a teacher, you have to bring them back...you know, why this stuff is relevant, why basic studies are going to be necessary...I was kind of one of those kids. I wasn't good in high school at all. I always showed up...but I just didn't care. I had a couple teachers that made things relevant for me, and those were the classes that I learned in, but I could have the exact same type of class the next year, and then not care again...

For Matt, the role of the teacher is to teach "the child to the best of the child's capacity" regardless of the time needed.

I had a lot of nine to five teachers, once the bell rang, they were out. I mean they were in their cars before the kids were, and I found it hard to swallow that they've chosen this profession, to deal with children and don't want to put that extra effort into it...it's important to me to make sure that they're educated as well as you could educate them in your subject matter.

For Karie:

The teacher really just needs to appeal to every student and kind of bring each student into a motivating environment, bring the student up to being enthusiastic and kind of set the tone for the class from the beginning with each student...

Teachers teach—Students learn. In the *teachers teach—students learn* theme, student success is the responsibility of the student. Interview responses that describe qualities of successful students, describe student characteristics associated with success as innate. They should be developed before the student enters the classroom and therefore are not the responsibility of the teacher. For Matt it is the students that "are driven" that are the most successful. Matt noted that successful students are:

the ones that don't mind staying after school for an hour or more...studying, talking with teachers, and making sure they understand everything fully...it's all in the person. If the person wants to succeed they'll succeed. If they want to skate by, they'll skate by.

Karie stated:

I think being self-motivated is a big one. It's always more difficult when you have to have someone continuously pushing you the whole time...maybe aggressiveness, being able to go forth and find the tools you need to succeed on your own. That's what I would say would make you the most successful.

For Kevin "success is what you make it. I mean, I'm also a very big practitioner of people who can walk their own path." Successful students for Linda:

have a good attitude about learning and an open mind. Open heart because you have to be willing to experience something to get anything out of it...There's got to be a greater purpose. They have got to understand that there is going to be some sort of benefit.

Unsuccessful students, according to Judith typically lack interest. "It seems...they have no interest in the subject or what the teacher is saying." Jane stated that unsuccessful students "just don't care enough. They sit and doodle in their notebooks instead of learning the material. They would never ask questions." Don noted: "From my perspective when I was in school, the majority of the bad students were from single to very little parent involvement families, low income...They seem not care. The problem with education is the caring factor." For Kevin the students who do not succeed are those "that don't have goals, the ones who are just there just because they have to be." Linda

believes unsuccessful students “are not very goal oriented” and that “parents sometimes enable their children” to have no goals. Linda stated:

[Students] don't understand the means for success because things have been handed to them. A lot of ineffective students in high school who have a lower success rate are the ones that just assume their life is going to be handed to them. There are things that are just there and just a given and if their parents continue to do that it makes it hard to feel that need for success. That value, the value of a dollar, the value of a proper education, I think that's huge. I think it starts at a young age.

In the context of teacher and student roles in education, Don believes:

The role of the student is to show up on time, be prepared and do what he needs to do to succeed in my class. The teacher's role is to help the student succeed. The teacher can't do anything if the student is not going to show they need help...Student, it's a job but you got to do it. Show up on time so you don't get fired.

With regard to a philosophy about student and teacher roles in education, Kevin believes:

...students are there to learn. Now whether or not I can teach them or not, I guess is not really up to me, I'm hoping to God there is somebody in the whole faculty that can teach them, even if it's not me because if they're not interested in what I have to say, that's fine, they don't have to be. They have the freedom to learn whatever they're interested in, but I'm hoping that with the broad background that I have, I can tell them of my experiences, and teach them of my experience, and

they can learn from it. That's all I can really ask for, and if that doesn't work, I guess teaching is not for me. But so far that's not the case.

Summary of in-depth interview findings. While preservice teacher responses to in-depth interview questions provided data that were richer and deeper in meaning, the number of themes emerging from those conversations was less compared those from the 162 respondents taking the in class survey. Themes were designated as major or minor based upon the relative quantity and quality of interview data supporting those themes. Eight major themes or preservice teacher beliefs about education emerged from the responses of the ten interview participants. Those major themes include: *made learning fun, passionate teacher, almost one of us, able to relate to students, concern for students as people, youth culture, teachers teach-students learn, and shared responsibility for student learning.* *Classroom management* was considered the only minor theme from the data revealed through the interview process.

Themes from Focus Group Interview

Seven preservice teachers volunteered to participate in a focus group interview. The group consisted of five female and two male preservice teachers. The initial questions used to guide the group discussion are listed in Appendix C. Follow up questions and probes were also utilized to further refine participant answers. An analysis of participant responses revealed answers consistent with several themes or preservice teacher beliefs that emerged from the data. Themes identified include *made learning fun, passionate teacher, able to relate to students, concern for students as people, almost one of us, youth culture, teachers more responsible for learning, and teachers teach-students learn.* Data from focus group interviews are presented by theme. Fictitious names were

used to maintain confidentiality of interview participants. A unique feature of focus group interview data is the interaction that occurs between group participants. Interaction between group participants has been included within the theme and context of the initial response.

Made learning fun. *Made learning fun* appeared as a theme in the context of characteristics of an ideal teacher. Carl stated that an ideal teacher “likes to have fun...”

Passionate teacher. As theme, *passionate teacher* appeared in the context of describing an ideal teacher. Sarah stated “They don’t just set at their desk and give you work, they actually interact with you to help you learn the subject...they’re not monotone they just seem to enjoy what they are doing. It’s not a chore.” For Karie “a good teacher is really great at teaching, enthusiastic about students, and knows effective ways of teaching...they could really be effective teaching any subject if they use those skills.”

Able to relate to students. The ability to relate to students as a reoccurring theme appeared in the context of an ideal teacher. Karie stated:

an ideal teacher definitely can appeal to the different levels and the different interests [of a student and]...use that diversity and ...develop something that the kids are going to be excited about and its going to motivate them...if you are engaging yourself in the activity its showing enthusiasm and commitment and its showing the students good modeling for motivation and they’ll be more accepting and willing to work with you. I think if you come down to their level.

Jennifer added that an exceptional teacher will “learn how to interact with those that maybe have special needs or just to be there for all your students, connect with them.”

Concern for students as people. As a theme, *concern for students as people* describe teacher student relationships that go beyond the classroom. It appeared in the discussion of an ideal teacher. Judith stated “they want to help you and they want to be in your life some how or another.”

Almost one of us. As a theme, *almost one of us*, appeared in the context of an ideal teacher. Carl stated that an ideal teacher “tries to interact with you, more like a friend than a teacher.” When asked why it’s important for teachers to be a friend, Carl replied “Because to have someone know that someone cares about you and wants you to know the stuff because it’s important to them, they want it to be important to you too.” In discussing teacher – student friendship, Holly replied to Carl’s comment by stating:

About the friend thing though...There is a way of letting the friend see...letting the student see that you are friendly with them without...giving...that title of ‘we’re friends’, because that might make things somewhat...so there is kind of a boundary there I think.

Karie adds “I think it’s really a fine line... and exceptional teacher would be able to see where that boundary lies and its going to be different with every student.” In support, Judith states “If you were to give them discipline, they would almost feel like they were hurt... That’s kind of the same with parents who become friends with their kids verses a parent.”

Youth culture. A theme consistent with Coleman’s (1961) and Husen’s (1996) description of adolescence and Garner et al. (2006) description of a youth subculture became apparent in the responses provided by members of the focus group in the context of high school students and what they value. Three sub themes of youth culture appeared

in the focus group data. When asked what high school students value, *youth culture-peers*, *youth culture-materialism*, and *youth culture-appearance* emerged from the discussion.

Youth culture-peers as a sub theme of *youth culture* became apparent when Carl stated: “I would say social relationships more than anything. Hang out with friends, that sort of stuff.” For Judith, “it was academics but also social, I think a mix, it was finding a balance in high school...like hanging out with friends and meeting with boys and things like that and exploring relationships with people...” Kevin stated “social status and reputation I think is the number one thing for much of the average if not every high school student.” Karie noted that it was her reputation or identity within her circle of friends that was most important and the circle of friends would change each year allowing her to change her identity:

I know my freshmen year of high school I was kind of more of a little punk rock type, little trouble maker and by my senior year taking AP classes and really was not hanging out with my friends from freshman year...in my high school it was really easy to move each year. Each year you are presented with this new group of people and you...have to figure where you fit in the balance...it’s a transition from...childhood to adulthood in figuring what your path is going to be.

When probed about high school students and material possessions, *youth culture-materialism* as a sub-theme of *youth culture* appeared as Kevin immediately responded with, “Your car. I mean I didn’t really care about what I drove, but everybody I think is attached to having some form of transportation once you are able to have one.” Carl added: “I would say technology. All these kids have the newest technology, and still even

with college students some of us just get the newest thing every time it comes out.” Karie stated that:

it’s a status thing. I think that if you have the newest technology...you are...a step above the rest when it comes to trends and not just in clothes, but...cars and all things like that; I think that is something that is valued at high school.

Jennifer adds: “yes, I would say it’s based on what you have that makes you more popular than maybe somebody else.” Judith recalled an example of peer influence to purchase shoes. “...Dr. Martins, those were the thing to have when I was in sixth grade. That was the first time I ever remember there being an importance to all of us having this one item.” Karie simply stated: “Your appearance”, also a *youth culture* sub-theme.

Teachers more responsible for learning. The theme that teachers are more responsible for learning than students appeared throughout the focus group interview. In the context of an ideal teacher, Judith stated that “a good teacher can point out differences...in a child...I think it is their responsibility to seek that out and with that, a good teacher would be able to plan their curriculum...around the children’s learning styles.”

In the context of an ideal student, the expectations of the preservice teachers were somewhat situational depending on the age of the student. Judith, who will teach secondary, stated that the student’s role is to have an “open mind, [one] who is coming in ready to take in what the teacher has to say...somebody ready for knowledge.” From Sarah’s perspective of a preservice elementary teacher, the role of a student in learning is to first behave. “If they behave in class I can teach them even if they are not willing to learn, but if I have 20 kids who are just bouncing off the walls none of them are going to

be able to learn.” In support of Judith, Kevin stated “you just give [me] a kid that is open minded. I don’t care if they are bouncing off the walls because I can sit that person down.” In the context of responsibility for student success, Judith stated that it is the teacher and parents who are responsible.

Teachers teach—Students learn. In this theme, students being responsible for their own learning appeared in the context of student success. Kevin stated that “I am a big practitioner of you get to master your own fate...as a student I know I was the biggest drive for what I was going to do in life. I think a teacher’s number one thing... they want to entice you to do what ever you are interested in.” Carl agreed saying “they [students] have to be self motivated, teachers can’t motivate every student to do what they want them to do...so they [students] have to motivate themselves too.” For Jennifer, responsibility for student success is somewhat situational:

With the younger grades I think partly it’s the teacher...[and] also the parent needs to be...more involved...Because the student is not really going to care that much when they are younger. But I think in the high school that it’s really the student’s choice because if they are not willing to, you can’t force them.

Judith agreed with Jennifer and added “I think if that desire is put in them early on to learn...they’ll do better later on.” Karie recalls one specific example of a student that was non-verbal until the right teacher became involved:

I don’t think that the student wasn’t willing, I just think there wasn’t a teacher that... was able to dig down and get to that issue... you can have a student who is willing and a teacher is just not working for that student...I think it would be fair to say ultimately the student [is responsible for their success], if they are just flat

out not willing it will cause a major road block, but I also think it would be fair to say that the teacher has a responsibility and an obligation to really...push and probe the student to come out and be willing to learn.

For Sarah, responsibility shifts for student success as the student gets older.

As they get older it shifts to more of the student's responsibility because now they know what is expected of them and it's on them. They don't want to learn...you can't force them to. They need to take that responsibility for themselves, the teacher can't do that for them when they are in high school.

Summary of focus group interview findings. While preservice teacher responses to the focus group interview provided data that were richer and deeper in meaning, and provided an opportunity for participants to interact in the process, the number of themes emerging from those conversations was less compared to those from the 162 respondents taking the in class survey. Themes were designated as major or minor based upon the relative quantity and quality of interview data supporting those themes. Seven major themes or preservice teacher beliefs about education emerged from the responses of the seven focus group interview participants. Those major themes include: *teachers more responsible for learning, passionate teacher, almost one of us, able to relate to students, concern for students as people, youth culture, and teachers teach-students learn. Made learning fun* emerged as a minor theme in the focus group data.

Integration of Data into Common and Less Common Themes

Data collected through the application of the in class survey, in-depth interview, and the focus group interview instruments found in Appendix C provided results with common content that were placed into themes of reoccurring responses or beliefs. While

each data collection protocol provided data with unique characteristics and occurred within unique settings, they also resulted in data that, when combined, provides a window into the beliefs of preservice teachers. Themes that emerged from the data were divided into two categories: the common themes that were present in each of the data instruments and the less common themes which were unique to one or two, but not found in all three of the data instruments. Figure 1 provides a graphic organizer of the themes common to all three data collection instruments.

Common Themes

Themes that were common to all three data collection instruments were: *made learning fun*, *passionate teacher*, *almost one of us*, *able to relate to students*, *concern for students as people*, *youth culture*, and *teachers teach-students learn*. A description of each common theme is provided below and includes the context in which they appeared in the data.

Made learning fun. As a common theme, *made learning fun* included the following descriptors or sub-themes: the teacher having fun while teaching, the teacher providing a fun learning environment, the teacher makes learning fun, and the student having fun while learning. *Made learning fun* was associated with popular teachers, the teachers preservice teacher would to be most like, and characteristics of an ideal teacher.

Passionate teacher. *Passionate teacher*, as a common theme, included enthusiastic teacher, teacher passion for subject matter, teacher passion for career choice, and superior content knowledge. *Passionate teacher* was used to describe characteristics of a popular teacher, a teacher that preservice teachers would want model in their career, in the context of the teacher's roles in education, and as a descriptor of an ideal teacher.

Themes	Survey	Interview	Focus Group
Made learning fun	Yes	Yes	Yes
• Teacher made learning fun	OEI		
• Teacher has fun while teaching	OEI		
• Teacher provides fun learning environment	OEI		
• Student Centered	DI		
Passionate teacher	Yes	Yes	Yes
• Enthusiastic teacher	OEI & DI		
• Teacher passion for subject matter	OEI		
• Teacher passion for career choice	OEI		
• Superior Content Knowledge	OEI & DI		
Almost one of us	Yes	Yes	Yes
• Age	OEI		
• Appearance	OEI		
• Knowledge of youth culture	OEI & DI		
• Support extracurricular activities	OEI		
Able to relate to students	Yes	Yes	Yes
• Able to connect with students in classroom for the benefit of enhanced student learning	OEI & DI		
Concern for students as people	Yes	Yes	Yes
• Student/Teacher relationships beyond the classroom for the benefit of the student	OEI		
Youth Culture	Yes	Yes	Yes
• Youth culture-athletics	OEI & DI		
• Youth culture-materialism	OEI & DI		
• Youth culture-appearance	OEI & DI		
• Youth culture-accountability	OEI		
• Youth culture-peers	OEI & DI		
• Youth culture-anti-intellectualism	OEI & DI		
Teachers teach-Students Learn	Yes	Yes	Yes
• Teachers only responsible for teaching	OEI		
• Students responsible for their learning	OEI		

Note. OIE = Open ended item, DI = Descriptive Item

Figure 1: Themes Common to All Data Instruments

Almost one of us. As a common theme, *almost one of us* appeared in the context of a popular teacher. It characterized teacher popularity as a function of age, appearance, knowledge of youth culture, and extracurricular activity.

Able to relate to students. As a common theme, *able to relate to students* describes the teacher's ability to connect with students in the classroom for the benefit of enhanced student learning. *Able to relate to students*, appeared in the data in the context of a popular teacher, a favorite teacher, an ideal teacher, and teacher qualities worthy of modeling.

Concern for students as people. *Concern for students as people*, as a common theme revealed by preservice teacher responses, centers on relationships between teachers and students beyond the classroom setting and is interpreted as a personal benefit to the student. *Concern for students as people* appeared in the context of teachers students considered popular or a favorite teacher.

Youth culture. As a common theme, *youth culture* provides a cultural framework from which to view the K-12 experience of the preservice teachers in this study. The descriptive data generated in questions four through six of the in class survey in concert with preservice teacher responses to open ended questions from each of the data instruments establishes *youth culture* as one of the dominant themes of this study. Sub-themes for *youth culture* include athletics, materialism, appearance, accountability, importance of peer relationships, and anti-intellectualism. Elements of *youth culture* appear in the context of teacher popularity, successful and unsuccessful students, peers, and high school culture.

Teachers teach-students learn. As a common theme, *teachers teach–students learn* describes a clear division of teacher and student responsibilities with regard to teaching and learning found in preservice teacher responses. In regard to student success, it speaks to student characteristics, behaviors, or skills that are innate or should have been developed before the student entered the classroom and therefore are not the responsibility of the teacher. *Teachers teach-students learn* as a theme appears in the data in the context of student and teacher roles in teaching and learning and successful or unsuccessful students.

Less Common Themes

Themes that were not common to all three data collection instruments were: *funny teacher, classroom management, teachers more responsible for learning, shared responsibility for learning, and clueless*. A description of each of the less common theme is provided below and includes the context in which they appeared in the data. Figure 2 provides a graphic organizer of the less common themes found the data.

Funny teacher. As a less common theme, *funny teacher* appeared in the responses of preservice teachers to the in class survey as a characteristic of popular teachers. It was not revealed in the data from the in-depth or focus group interview.

Classroom management. As a minor theme, *classroom management* speaks to the level of control a teacher has over the learning environment, course rigor, and student accountability. As a descriptor it was used to describe popular teachers and teachers that preservice teachers would most want to model. The theme *classroom management* did not appear in responses from the focus group interview.

Themes	Survey	Interview	Focus Group
Funny teacher	Yes	Not Found	Not Found
• Fun or funny as a personal teacher characteristic	OEI		
Classroom Management	Yes	Yes	Not Found
• Teacher control of learning environment	OEI		
• Course rigor	OEI		
• Student accountability	OEI		
Clueless	Yes	Not Found	Not Found
• Reluctance or inability of preservice teachers to discuss concepts of teaching and learning	OEI		
Teachers more responsible for learning	Yes	Not Found	Yes
• Teacher primarily responsible for teaching and student learning	OEI		
Shared responsibility for learning	Yes	Yes	Not Found
• Responsibility for learning is shared equally by teacher and student	OEI		

Note. OEI = Open ended item

Figure 2: Themes Not Common to All Data Instruments

Teachers more responsible for learning. As a theme, *teachers more responsible for learning* place the responsibility for teaching and learning primarily upon the teacher. While students have some responsibility for their learning, teachers shoulder most of the burden. This theme describes approximately one-fourth of the responses to question nine of the in class survey and was used to describe an ideal teacher in the focus group interview.

Shared responsibility for learning. *Shared responsibility for learning*, as a theme, places the responsibility for teaching and learning equally upon the teacher and student. Shared responsibility for learning describes approximately one-fourth of the responses to question nine of the in class survey and was used to describe student and teacher roles in

teaching and learning and the behaviors of successful students by preservice teachers responding to in-depth interviews.

Clueless. As a minor theme, *clueless* appeared only within the in class survey and represents the missing responses to question nine from 30% of the participants. In this context clueless speaks to a possible inability of preservice teachers to describe the differences between teaching and learning and assign student and teacher responsibilities to each.

Summary

Chapter Four provided a brief review of the study in terms of the problem and resulting research questions. A discussion providing details of the data collection process including the setting, a description of participants, and data collection protocols were presented. An analysis of data by data collection instrument was provided with examples of participant responses to data instruments based upon emerging themes. Seven common themes and five less common themes emerged from the data based upon reoccurring participant responses discovered from the data of each data collection instrument.

Chapter Five provides a summary of findings and conclusions presented in the context of each of the research questions from Chapter One. A general discussion of the results follows and a discussion of the study's limitations is presented. A discussion of the results in the context of implications for future practice and future research is provided as well.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe, from the individual points of view of each participant, beliefs preservice teachers bring to teacher preparation programs arising from their experiences as K-12 students and as members of an adolescent subculture. Research question one was developed in the context of teacher socialization. In this milieu, an individual's attitudes and beliefs provide an opportunity of understanding preservice teachers' thought processes, how they might behave in the classroom, and their willingness to embrace change (Doyle, 1997; Pajares, 1992; Richardson, 1996; Zeichner & Gore, 1990). One significant finding from this body of research is that preservice teachers hold on to their beliefs regarding education and teaching that were formed as part of their K-12 experience as students and these are the beliefs that tend to prevail and reemerge after they leave a teacher preparation program and begin teaching on their own. Research question two was developed as an application of these findings from teacher socialization studies. Its purpose was to focus on the youth culture component of preservice teachers' K-12 lived experiences and its effect on the beliefs about education preservice teachers bring to their teacher preparation program.

Chapter Five is divided into five major sections. The first section, summary of findings, presents a review of the study's qualitative approach and participants, the development of the theme *youth culture*, as a measure of youth culture appearing in the 11 remaining themes, and a discussion of the 11 remaining themes in the context of research questions one and two. The second section, discussion, attempts to connect the

findings to portions of the literature review and the larger background presented in Chapter One. The final three sections include discussions of possible limitations, implications for practice, and implications for future study

Summary of Findings

Data collected from the in class survey, in-depth interviews, and focus group interview were analyzed to identify themes that would reveal beliefs held by preservice teachers regarding education. Due to the average age (20.0) of study participants and their limited exposure to the university's teacher education program it was assumed that the beliefs regarding education held by these preservice teachers were formed through their lived experience in K-12 education and may have been influenced by the degree of their immersion in a youth culture characteristic of adolescents. Data were collected and themes were developed and analyzed from a perspective of phenomenology using an ontological philosophical approach as discussed in Chapter 3.

In analyzing the themes from an ontological philosophical approach it becomes relevant to understand the reality preservice teachers bring to the study in the context of their K-12 experience and membership in youth culture. Descriptive data from the in class survey revealed the following group characteristics of the sample participants. As a group, preservice teachers embraced the culture of their public school as evident through their participation in curricular and extracurricular activities. Nearly all female and male preservice teachers participated in at least one of the school activities provided in the survey. Over half of preservice teachers sampled participated in three or more different activities provided in middle or high school.

Participation in athletics was a dominant theme with regard to the participants' high school experience. Among the choices of activities provided, participation in athletics ranked second and first with female and male preservice teachers respectively. It is notable that one-fourth of both female and male preservice teachers selected office worker as an activity where their exposure to public school culture beyond the classroom and hallway would have been enhanced.

Characteristic of youth culture, the value the group placed on academics in their high school experience ranked lower than other non-academic sources of popularity. Female preservice teachers placed personal appearance, participation in athletics and participation in activities as the first, second, and third most important sources of student popularity in their high school experience. For male preservice teachers, participation in athletics, activities, and good grades were placed as first, second, and third important sources of popularity. Being liked by teachers was ranked seventh out of eight possible choices by female and sixth out of eight by male preservice teachers as an important source of student popularity.

Peer relationships played a major role in the preservice teachers' high school experience. For a large majority of female and male preservice teachers, their friends were a major part of their high school experience. Over half of the sample group felt that their relationships with their friends were just as important as making good grades and just slightly less than half of the preservice teachers felt that when presented with a conflict, the approval of their friends was just as important as the approval of their parents.

The themes that developed from data common to each of the data instruments were: *made learning fun, passionate teacher, almost one of us, able to relate to students, concern for students as people, youth culture, and teachers teach-students learn*. Themes that emerged from only one or two data instruments were: *funny teacher, classroom management, teachers more responsible for learning, shared responsibility for learning, and clueless*.

As the data unfolded through analysis, it became apparent that the lived K-12 experiences of preservice teachers and the effects of their membership in a youth culture are so closely bound that it became difficult to distinguish either in a discussion of preservice teacher beliefs. As a result, both research questions will be addressed together with each theme or belief as they are presented. While the theme and sub-themes of *youth culture* did appear in the data, they appeared more as a cultural frame from which to view the lived experience and beliefs of preservice teachers, than a specific belief regarding education. To make a connection of a theme or belief to youth culture, the sub-themes of *youth culture* found in the data of each of the remaining 11 themes were use as a qualitative measure of youth culture influence. As a result the theme *youth culture* was not presented as a theme or belief to be measured in the context of the research questions but as a theme to be used to measure the existence of youth culture in the context of research question two. The research questions used to guide this study and the following discussion are:

1. What individually held beliefs about education do preservice teachers bring to their teacher preparation program from their K-12 experience?

2. What individually held beliefs about education do preservice teachers bring to their teacher preparation program from their membership in an adolescent subculture?

Themes and Preservice Teachers Beliefs

From the results presented, it should become apparent that while this group of preservice teachers has many characteristics in common from their K-12 experience and their current career choice, their beliefs concerning education are not all necessarily the same. In some cases their beliefs are in opposition with each other, and in one case may be non-existent. For reasons discussed above, the theme *youth culture* will be presented first. Its sub-themes that appear in the data were used to analyze the 11 remaining themes and beliefs in the context of research question two.

Youth culture. As a theme, *youth culture* speaks to values and norms characteristic of adolescents in a highly industrialized society. Youth culture values and norms are often supported by the culture of the high school and the culture of the surrounding community and parents. Six sub-themes of *youth culture* appeared in the data. *Youth culture-athletics*, *youth culture-activities*, *youth culture-materialism*, *youth culture-appearance*, *youth culture-accountability*, *youth culture-peers*, and *youth culture-anti-intellectualism* appear in the data in the context of teacher popularity, student, school, and community values, and qualities of academically successful or unsuccessful students. With regard to *youth culture-athletics*, question five of the descriptive data suggested preservice teachers believe that participating in athletics or school activities is more important and desirable than making good grades in terms of student popularity and student status. In terms of teacher popularity, F-2 wrote “Middle or high school teachers

who were the most popular with students were most often involved with either athletic programs or clubs around school.” For F-79 “...the characteristics that teachers teaching high school had that were most popular with the students were if they were sports related or if they brought outside influences in to the classroom.” For the sub theme, *youth culture-materialism* preservice teachers believe that material possessions are highly valued in terms of student popularity and status. For example, in describing her friends from high school, Linda noted that “Things were disposable to them. Their parents were buying vehicles that were outrageous...” Regarding the student culture at Matt’s high school:

I went to the rich, white high school, so my culture was very mommy and daddy bought me this, mommy and daddy bought me that. I didn’t have that, I was lucky to be in suburbia. I guess the culture was very privileged at my school, [on] sixteenth birthdays, kids would drive brand new cars.

During the focus group interview, when probed about high school students and material possessions, Carl added: “I would say technology. All these kids have the newest technology, and still even with college students some of us just get the newest thing every time it comes out.” Karie stated that:

it’s a status thing. I think that if you have the newest technology...you are...a step above the rest when it comes to trends and not just in cloths, but...cars and all things like that; I think that is something that is valued at high school.

Jennifer adds: “yes, I would say it’s based on what you have that makes you more popular than maybe somebody else.”

Youth culture-appearance places value on personal appearance in terms of student popularity and status. Question five of the descriptive data suggested preservice teachers believe that appearance is more valued by students than making good grades in terms of student popularity and status. From the in-depth interviews Matt stated; “at that age I think people are more focused on being pretty, being cool, being the best as opposed to their education like they should.” In describing her classmates Jane replied: “...then you noticed the people that were only there to socialize that always dressed up to go to school because that’s all they really cared about.” When asked what his classmates valued, Matt replied: “Oh, it was very vain; looks, material possessions, the sports people...” With regard to the sub-theme *youth culture-accountability*, preservice teachers believe that students generally do not hold themselves responsible for their poor behaviors. From the in-depth interviews, Marilyn described unsuccessful students in light of not taking responsibility for their actions:

[They] think that the world just revolves around [them]...it goes back to egocentrism which we all think starts and stops at young ages, but I don’t think it does. It continues on all the way through adulthood. If something is not going my way then its somebody else’s fault, it can’t be their fault.

In describing her friends from high school, Linda speaks to their accountability:

Do I think that they weren’t held accountable for what they were doing? I’m sure they weren’t because in the environment I lived in...the third wealthiest community in the United States. It’s a wealthier community and of course these kids weren’t being held accountable...They were exposed to adult circumstances

before I felt we were equipped to handle them. That was a distraction. They [were] being distracted from their high school experience.

In terms of *youth culture-peers*, the preservice teachers lived experience in high school placed a relative high value on their peer or social relationships. Descriptive data from question six of the in class survey indicates that for a majority of the respondents, their peer relationships were just as important to them as making good grades and nearly half valued their peer relationships as much as their relationships with their parents. From the in-depth interview data Jane replied: “I think for most of the kids that I went to high school with weren’t there at all for school...At my high school it was just a huge social thing.” For Matt, he “was there for a social aspect, you know what was happening on the weekends, what we were doing after school.” From the focus group interview data, in the context of values of high school culture, Carl stated: “I would say social relationships more than anything. Hang out with friends, that sort of stuff.” For Judith, “it was academics but also social, I think a mix, it was finding a balance in high school...like hanging out with friends and meeting with boys and things like that and exploring relationships with people...”

In regard to the sub-theme *youth culture-anti-intellectualism*, the lived experience of the preservice teachers placed the value of academic achievement below participation in athletics and activities and below appearance for female participants in terms of student popularity. Learning is generally not valued by students or the school culture compared to the value placed on athletics, appearance, materialism, and peer relationships. Students who do achieve academically run the risk of negative responses from their peers unless academic achievement is a community wide expectation. For

example, in describing characteristics of a successful student, Matt noted that: “They pay the most attention. They participate in class. The kids that are just thirsty for knowledge, and aren’t afraid to be the smart kid, or be laughed at for wanting more knowledge about something.” Don describes pressure from his friends to not achieve academically:

I would always get that ‘A’ and they would be ‘Oh, look at that, the white kid getting an ‘A’. They kind of did that to me. At first I didn’t let it get to me, but as I started to have my friends and see what they were doing, I thought: ‘Oh that’s pretty funny, I’m working and they’re just sliding through.’

When asked what these students do care about, Ben replied “partying or hanging out with friends. The more friends you have in high school the more likely you will worry about the social aspect rather than academics.” For Marilyn, it was the community that determined what was valued at her high school:

I think it was very important to students in my school to get good grades because the students who didn’t, even if they were in that popular crowd, they were kind of pushed aside a little bit because in my community it was important. Most people from my community graduate high school and they go on to college and they get their degree and whatever they want to do. That was just expected.”

Made learning fun. As theme, preservice teachers generally believe that to make learning fun for their students is a positive characteristic of teachers. To make learning fun for students includes the idea of teachers having fun while teaching, the teacher providing a fun learning environment and that the teacher is student centered. Data supporting this belief appeared in each of the instruments used in this study. This belief

surfaced from preservice teacher experiences with teachers who were popular with students. For example, Robyn described her favorite teacher:

She was a great teacher... [She] made literature a lot more fun. She had us write, do a lot of writing exercises, really fun projects. She'd make you feel really good that she wanted to use your project, or your assignment, or your poem for something later, so she kept a portfolio of past students. That was always fun to see.

Robyn's description of a teacher who made learning fun would also be applicable to a description of student centered. Student centered as a valued teacher quality ranked 3rd behind enthusiastic about teaching and knowledge of subject. Made teaching fun also appeared in the context of an ideal teacher, or teacher characteristic respondents would want to model. Matt responded with:

I think teachers as they get older and get a lot more comfortable within their course work, they...lose that finesse that made them get into it, and I can...see it...now looking back in some of my older teachers that taught history opposed to some of my younger teachers who taught history...I had a brand new ninth grade American history teacher, and he made history a lot of fun. We talked about all kinds of things, everything was relevant and then I had an eighth grade history teacher...An older guy...he knew all this stuff, and it was so well known to him that he didn't care as much about it...if you're teaching the exact same stuff for so long it just becomes that mundane daily process.

Preservice teacher beliefs characterize this theme as a positive attribute of popular teachers and for some should be modeled. With regard to research question two, in Matt's

response, he makes the distinction, from his point of view, between older and younger teachers and their ability to project fun into their teaching. One of the sub-themes of youth culture is that adolescents are generally set apart from adults and rely on peers for their primary relationships. One application of this phenomenon to Matt's response may be that Matt associates fun teachers with younger acting teachers, teachers who are closer to him in age and behavior.

Passionate teacher. Based upon their experience in K-12 education, preservice teachers believe that a passionate teacher is a positive quality of those teachers, who are popular with students or the ideal teacher. To be a passionate teacher, means to have enthusiasm for teaching, have passion for the subject matter and your career choice, and have superior content knowledge. Data supporting the *passionate teacher* theme were common to each of the three data instruments. For example, Jane stated:

I had a really, really good English teacher in high school. It was actually from a great books class and she knew the book back...she knew the whole book...she was able to explain the symbolism and put it in terms that we would understand because most of the literature you read in high school goes right over you head. She...took the time to sit there and explain it to us and whenever we asked questions, she wouldn't look at us like: that's a dumb question.

Preservice teachers also believe that it is a responsibility of a teacher to be passionate in their teaching and is a teacher characteristic that should be modeled. For example, Linda's favorite teachers were passionate:

I've had a handful of really awesome teachers...They have got to be passionate about what they are teaching. If they have [an] inkling of doubt about what

they're doing then they shouldn't be doing it because students need someone to encourage them and be positive... When they come to school they need to feel that focus, they need to feel the passion the teacher projects.

From the data collected, there does not appear to be a specific or unique connection between characteristics of youth culture and the theme passionate teacher. The descriptor passionate and enthusiastic seemed to be used synonymously throughout the data. Enthusiastic about teaching as a teacher quality was selected as the most important teacher quality out of seven by preservice teachers completing the in class survey.

Almost one of us. As a theme, *almost one of us* speaks to a phenomenon experienced by preservice teachers where some teachers, by virtue of their age or conscious effort, emulate student physical or behavioral characteristics or knowledge of the youth culture. Descriptors of this belief address a teacher's age, appearance, knowledge of youth culture and teacher's support for athletics and other activities. The beliefs preservice teachers have regarding this theme in terms of its value to teaching are mixed. Data from the in class survey regarding this theme were mostly positive in the context of teachers who were viewed as popular to students. For example, F-141 observed that popular teachers were "current of things going on around the news and things that were important to teens, such as celebrities, music, and car. (or iPods)." For F-152 the popular teachers were "Young, good looking, kind, not many rules, easy to talk to." F-225 observed that the popular teachers "Related with students, organized big activities (ex. Student Counsel), coaches of football team or major sport teams, teacher was good looking (tattoos, well "developed", muscular)." Examples of negative

responses from preservice teachers based on their experiences include M-213's observation that:

The characteristics of those teachers, in my opinion, matched those of the students. They may have been knowledgeable, but were very unprofessional. They seemed to have a difficult time distinguishing the difference in friendship with students, and simply having respect.

Ben said that they were:

The ones who try to be friends with students. The easy ones who are watching movies on Fridays. The ones who don't have tests. The ones who don't challenge. [Students] knew that they would get an easy 'A'...Maybe they are tenured so they don't care anymore so they make class easy...No one wants to be disliked. No one wants to think kids are coming to your class dreading it.

Robyn stated:

They seem to be a little younger than most of the other teachers...It seemed like they wanted to feel welcomed by the kids rather than looked as a disciplinary figure, as an authoritarian...their classes weren't very stimulating educationally. Being in their classes, it was like anything goes kind of. If you didn't want to turn in the homework, you could turn it in tomorrow...

Data that were considered positive from the preservice teachers' point of view, used descriptors associated with *youth culture* sub-themes (peers, accountability, athletics, appearance) to describe the positive attributes of teachers who were almost like one of us. For example, young, not many rules, easy to talk to, coaches of football team or major sport teams, teacher was good looking, tattoos, well developed, and muscular

are descriptors that can be used to define values found in youth culture. Preservice teachers who viewed *almost one of us* as positive may see those teachers more as a peer than an adult teacher and those teachers may see their students as more of a peer than as a student who is set apart from them. The experiences of preservice teachers who viewed *almost one of us* as a negative teacher characteristic seemed to be able to make the distinction between those teachers who want to be a friend or peer with their students and those who see a necessary boundary between students and teachers. The differences in belief within this group of preservice teachers may be an indication of the level of their immersion into a youth culture or an indication of their transition from adolescence to adulthood.

Able to relate to students. Based upon their experience in K-12 education, preservice teachers believe that a teacher's ability to relate to students on a personal level, in the classroom, for the benefit of enhanced student learning is a positive attribute of teachers. As a theme, the ability to relate to students emerged from preservice teacher experiences with teachers who were popular with students, favorite teachers, the ideal teacher, and a quality worthy of modeling. For example, in the context of teacher qualities preservice teachers would most want to be most like in their career Judith stated:

One teacher who just was awesome...he was my art teacher. He was really big on giving advice...having us change our art work...He would do it in such a way that he really just wanted to know your opinion of it and by talking to you...he would almost allow you to point out yourself what was wrong with it...That really helped...you were able to change it and felt like [it was] your work. I really liked that about him.

Matt stated:

Understanding. Not to be a push over, but to understand and not make things more difficult than they have to be...A lot of people don't find a lot of relevance in history, so I hope to make things relevant for them, and that's kind of where my strongest teachers have been...the ones that can take something as dry as toast and make it into something exquisite and relevant.

Karie stated:

an ideal teacher definitely can appeal to the different levels and the different interests [of a student and]...use that diversity and ...develop something that the kids are going to be excited about and its going to motivate them...if you are engaging yourself in the activity its showing enthusiasm and commitment and its showing the students good modeling for motivation and they'll be more accepting and willing to work with you. I think if you come down to their level.

From the data collected, there does not appear to be a specific or unique connection between characteristics of youth culture and the theme *able to relate to students*. *Able to relate to students* may have components common with the concept student centered which was ranked as the third most important teacher quality by respondents to question seven of the in class survey.

Concern for students as people. As a belief, *concern for students as people* exemplifies a phenomenon based upon the experience of preservice teachers where teachers choose to relate to their students as people beyond the classroom for the personal benefit of the students. Data from each of the instruments utilized indicate that preservice

teachers valued those teachers who developed deeper personal relationships with students beyond the classroom. For example, F-76 described her favorite teacher:

She related to the class, had a sense of humor, but really understood the daily pressures that faced high school students. She would act as a counselor when you were having a bad day, and would be your best friend when you were having a great day.

In some instances, value was added to teachers who injected elements of their own personal life into the teacher student relationship. For example, F-151 observed that:

Popular high school teachers showed an interest in other school activities outside the classroom. The teachers who would support their students in athletics were more liked than others. Also, teachers who allowed the students to trust them with more personal problems (while still be professional) were more favored.

One dimension of the theme is a belief of preservice teachers that in some instances their care for the student as an individual out weights their academic expectations of that student. For Don, his favorite teacher was very nice. He provides an example:

With my senior year they had this rule where if you got all “A’s” you didn’t have to take the final. I went up to him one day and I asked because I was on the curve ‘What do I have to do to set some extra credit?’ ‘Well you go into the dictionary, you look at the “y’s” and you write down all the words.’ And I’m like ‘Ok, ok.’ And he said ‘you really going to do that?’ I’m like ‘Dude, I want to get an A.’ and he said ‘Don’t worry about it.’ A very understanding teacher. I think you have to put yourselves in the perspective of the students because that helps you teach

better. You got an idea of what they're going through and what they're thinking so that's a big key.

In each of these statements regarding this belief, there is either an element of support for athletics, which is highly valued in youth culture, or a perception that student-teacher relationships bordering on the level of peer relationships will make you a better teacher. Kevin provides an example:

There's a professional teacher and the teacher who wants to be the students' friend...I like to be their friend. Not only are you there to teach the class, and inform them of knowledge, but you're also there to kind of counsel, and any questions they might have, and then you're also there to understand it from their point of view. I know it's easier for me that if I'm a friend with that person, and they've been talking to me, and I can at least get a feeling of their perspective, then I might even be able to adjust my lessons to where it actually fits them better and they're actually learning a lot more.

Adolescents value their relationships with their peers, this may be one other example.

Teachers teach-students learn. Based upon their lived experience in K-12 education, preservice teachers believe the responsibility for learning falls upon the student, and teachers are only responsible for presenting the material. This theme was one of four that emerged from preservice responses to question nine of the in class survey. It is the only one of the four themes to appear in the in-depth and focus group data as well. The essence of this phenomenon seems to be based upon the belief that when students fail to learn, it is due to student characteristics that are either intrinsic or should have been acquired before the student entered the classroom and therefore are not the responsibility

of the teacher. This theme appeared in data from each data instrument in the context of teacher and student roles and responsibilities related to the concepts of teaching and learning. For example, F-80 answered “Teachers can teach as long and as hard as they want, but it is up to the students to learn from it.” For M-30, “Teaching is the job for a teacher, but a teacher can’t control what is learned.” M-46 simply stated “Teachers teach and students learn.” In response to an in-depth interview question Matt said that it is the students that “are driven” that are the most successful. Matt noted that successful students are:

the ones that don’t mind staying after school for an hour or more...studying, talking with teachers, and making sure they understand everything fully...its all in the person. If the person wants to succeed they’ll succeed. If they want to skate by, they’ll skate by.

During the focus group discussion involving roles and responsibilities for teaching and learning, the student responsibility for learning became a function of student age. For Jennifer, responsibility for student success is somewhat situational:

With the younger grades I think partly it’s the teacher...[and] also the parent needs to be...more involved...Because the student is not really going to care that much when they are younger. But I think in the high school that it’s really the student’s choice because if they are not willing to, you can’t force them.

For Sarah, responsibility shifts for student success as the student gets older.

As they get older it shifts to more of the student’s responsibility because now they know what is expected of them and it’s on them. They don’t want to learn...you

can't force them to. They need to take that responsibility for themselves, the teacher can't do that for them when they are in high school.

One possible connection of this belief, to their experience with youth culture, is the sub-theme, *youth culture accountability* in which not feeling responsible for personal behavior is an acceptable response. The interview data provides an example: With regard to his philosophy about student and teacher roles in education, Kevin believes:

...students are there to learn. Now whether or not I can teach them or not, I guess is not really up to me, I'm hoping to God there is somebody in the whole faculty that can teach them, even if it's not me because if they're not interested in what I have to say, that's fine, they don't have to be. They have the freedom to learn whatever they're interested in, but I'm hoping that with the broad background that I have, I can tell them of my experiences, and teach them of my experience, and they can learn from it. That's all I can really ask for, and if that doesn't work, I guess teaching is not for me. But so far that's not the case.

Funny teacher. *Funny teacher* as a less common theme, appeared only within the in class survey and speaks to a belief of some preservice teachers that being funny as a personal teacher characteristic is valued by students in terms of teacher popularity. For example, F-16 observed that popular teachers "were funny and made the students want to come to class." F-55 used "a little goofy" as one of her descriptors for popular teachers. F-65 noted that popular teachers were "The teachers that were fun and outgoing but not always the best teacher. They are usually the 'blow off' class." F-94 answered that popular teachers "were the teachers who joked with the students and had close relationships." M-124 included "comical individuals" in his answer.

A connection of the theme *funny teacher* with experiences from youth culture is not clear. If being a funny teacher is associated with the blow off class, then it may be another example of *youth culture-anti-intellectualism*. If the theme *funny teacher* is associated with close relationships with students, then its value maybe connected to the value adolescents place on peer relationships or *youth culture-peers*.

Classroom management. As a less common theme, *classroom management* emerged from the in class survey and in-depth interview data in the context of teacher popularity and teacher characteristics preservice teachers would want to emulate. Descriptors of the theme include the degree of control a teacher has over the learning environment, course rigor, and the degree to which students are held accountable for teacher expectations. Preservice teacher beliefs regarding classroom management were mixed depending on the value placed on each descriptor. For example, F-33 wrote “Good classroom management, on task, friendly, but professional.” F-63 believed popular teachers “were lenient in ways, but never allowed students to walk all over them.” F-90 wrote “In middle and high school, the teachers who were more popular were more care-free...and they had a very free flowing classroom setting.” F-125 liked teachers that were “organized.” For F-129, popular teachers “...created a comfortable, not uptight, atmosphere.” F-208 wrote “They did not have ridiculous rules and were very laid back. M-46 wrote “They were serious when they had to be, but laid back.” M-97 described popular teachers as “laid back, had a sense of humor. Easy going, not very critical on homework or tests.” In the context of a favorite teacher that preservice teachers would want to model, Robyn said “She was very friendly, but to the point...she knew how to

discipline kids, but to the point where you didn't dislike her afterwards. You [knew] she was doing it for a good reason." For Kevin, his favorite teacher:

was very organized. I really liked the organization she had in her classroom. She had everything set in stone the way it was going to be...It kept the class on task. [Students] all come in and they're ready to do their work because that's just the way she ran her class. You go into somebody else's class, who's more of a relaxed teacher, and they come in and they're bouncing off the walls.

A connection between preservice teacher beliefs associated the descriptors from the *classroom management* theme and youth culture seems unclear. Preservice teacher preferences to management style and classroom environment may be a matter of individual student learning styles rather the influence of youth culture. However, a preference for less rigor and lowered academic expectations may be associated with the *youth culture-anti-intellectual* sub-theme.

Teachers more responsible for learning. As a less common theme, *teachers more responsible for learning* describe a belief of preservice teachers that places the responsibility for student learning primarily on the teacher. This theme was one of four that emerged from preservice responses to question nine of the in class survey and is also found in data from the focus group discussion. For example, F-62 stated that "Teaching and learning are directly related. Teachers are responsible for both, they need to teach class/subject, but they need to learn from their experiences and help make themselves a better teacher." F-83 answered:

Teaching is an art, being able to effectively teach children, teachers need to know how a child learns, and how to use all the types of learning in one setting to bring

that subject to life for each student in their classroom. Learning is something everyone can do as long as they apply themselves. So teaching is learning, but learning is not teaching.

F-107 noted that:

A teacher is obligated to facilitate learning in anyway possible. Some students may be 'unreachable' or seem so. I feel that those students may simply be beyond the capacity of a particular teacher or district resources. A teacher has the majority of the [onus].

F-230 wrote "The teacher is accountable in providing information needed for the student and to display the information differently to customize it for the learner. The student needs to have a learning spirit to focus."

The effect of a youth culture experience on preservice teachers in their development of this belief is not clear. For these preservice teachers, their immersion in a youth culture may have been minimal or other influences such as a favorite teacher with similar beliefs may have had a greater influence in their development of this belief.

Shared responsibility for learning. As a less common theme, *shared responsibility for learning* describes a belief of participants that teachers and students have an equal share of responsibility for student learning. This theme was one of four that emerged from preservice responses to question nine of the in class survey and also appears in data from the in-depth interviews. For example, F-39 noted that "you cannot teach without learning and when you learn you are able to teach others as well. I think teachers learn from the students as much as they teach them." F-49 added that "the teacher must be able to teach the class and learn from the students about what they need to do better in the

classroom.” F-76 wrote “It’s the responsibility of the teacher to convey their knowledge to students in any way that would maximize learning. However, students can be just as effective in teaching their educators on issues that may not be in a curriculum.” In-depth interview data describes student responsibility for learning in the context of acquired student skills or learned student behaviors that lead to student learning, the student is responsible for managing their time wisely, managing their social life, and showing up to class eager to learn while taking an active approach to his or her learning. Jane said that “time management is a big thing in high school, especially when you’re getting into your junior and senior year.” For Don successful student are:

Eager to learn...I always sat in the front row, not afraid to ask questions, get to know your teacher, homework is a key to do. It’s not difficult to find out who is going to want to succeed in class and who’s not, but it’s your job to help.

For Karie, “the student needs to have an open mind and needs to at least be willing to get to know the teacher, and then maybe the material or the subject matter will come later.”

In the *shared responsibility for learning* theme, preservice teachers believe that in addition to presenting curriculum to students, teachers are also responsible for developing student learning skills, for making content relevant to each student, for differentiating instruction to meet the students’ capacity for learning, and creating an enthusiastic and motivating classroom environment. For Karie:

The teacher really just needs to appeal to every student and kind of bring each student into a motivating environment, bring the student up to being enthusiastic and kind of set the tone for the class from the beginning with each student...

A connection of youth culture to the development of the shared responsibility for teaching theme is not clear. The development of this belief may simply be the influence of favorable K-12 experiences with teachers who projected a similar belief, were sensitive to the needs of preservice teachers, and were willing to listen their students.

Clueless. As a less common theme, *clueless* emerged as a theme from the absence of response by preservice teachers to question nine of the in class survey. Question nine asked preservice teachers to discuss the concepts of teaching and learning and the roles teachers and students have in each. One implication of *clueless* is that nearly one-third of the preservice teachers were unable to distinguish differences or similarities between teaching and learning and/or the corresponding roles of teachers or students. An application of youth culture experiences to the existence of a possible clueless phenomenon does not seem pertinent without further development.

Eleven beliefs or themes applicable to the first research question emerged from an in class survey, in-depth interviews and focus group interview data instruments designed to reveal the lived K-12 experiences of preservice teachers. These themes or beliefs appeared in the context of characteristics of popular teachers, teaching and learning and the role teachers and students play in each, characteristics of favored or ideal teachers, teachers that participants would most want to model, successful or ideal students, student values, and high school culture. Where applicable, descriptive data from the in class survey designed to measure preservice teacher preferences for school activities, perceptions of student popularity, peer relationships, and important teacher qualities were used to help characterize the sample population and supplement theme development. The emergent themes developed from the lived K-12 experiences of preservice teachers

common to each data instrument were, *made learning fun, passionate teacher, almost one of us, able to relate to students, concern for students as people, and teacher teach-students learn*. Emergent themes developed from the lived K-12 experiences of preservice teachers that appeared in one or two of the data instruments were *funny teacher, classroom management, teachers more responsible for learning, shared responsibility for learning, and clueless*.

An analysis of data associated with each theme or belief from the frame of research question two suggest that some degree of influence from youth culture may have been instrumental in the lived K-12 experience of preservice teachers and their development of a portion of their beliefs about education. Emergent themes or beliefs that include data from each of the instruments indicating an influence by youth culture include, *made learning fun, almost one of us, concern for students as people, and teachers teach-students learn*. Themes or beliefs in which the influence of youth culture found in the data is less clear include *funny teacher, classroom management, teachers more responsible for learning, and shared responsibility for learning*. Themes or beliefs in which the influence of youth culture found the data is not apparent include *passionate teacher* and *able to relate to students*. As theme, *clueless* emerged from a considerable absence of data causing analysis to be not applicable.

Discussion

In the discussion that follows an attempt is made to account for the effects of youth culture in this study and the implications of a youth or adolescent subculture that is increasing its duration of influence on K12 education as our industrialized society continues to evolve. A discussion of preservice teacher beliefs from the study is provided

in the context of Nespor's (1987) characteristics of beliefs verses knowledge, the enduring nature of these beliefs, and an application of a recycling process with two preservice teacher beliefs from this study

Youth Culture

One hundred sixty two preservice teachers completed the in-class survey, ten participated in the in-depth interviews and seven preservice teachers formed a focus group for discussion. As a group these preservice teachers were relatively homogenous with regard to their age, career choice, level of teacher preparation, and location. Each is a product of a successful K-12 experience that has resulted in their acceptance into a regional university and teacher preparation program. As a group, these preservice teachers provided responses that exhibited many of the norms and values common to Garner et al's. (2006) description of a prep culture that is most closely aligned to the values and norms of middle to upper-class cultures in America and emphasize "athletic success, physical attractiveness by mainstream criteria, ownership of conservative, expensive name-brand consumer goods, and sufficient academic success to qualify for college admission" (p. 1027). This description of prep culture is very similar to the school-oriented crowd Coleman (1961) used to describe the dominant sub culture of adolescents in his research. The prep culture also continues in post secondary settings such as college, fraternities, sororities, and corporate cultures. It "provides anticipatory socialization for the values and norms of many adult institutions and communities" (Garner et al., 2006, p. 1027).

In spite of the several characteristics common to these preservice teachers, their responses found in the in class survey data to certain themes or beliefs produced opposing

perspectives. One possible explanation for these differences in belief about education could be the degree to which each of these preservice teachers has been influenced by youth culture.

An increasing influence of youth culture in the development of preservice teacher' beliefs about education is consistent with observations that the period of adolescence in America has increased as America's economy evolved from a pre-industrial society to somewhere between an industrial and a post-industrial economy. There is general consensus that an adolescent subculture emerged in America after the Second World War (Coleman; 1961, Garner et al., 2006; & Maira & Soep, 2004) during the progressive era of public education. Maira and Soep (2004) suggested that modern conceptions of adolescence in industrialized societies are connected to the development of "leisure industries ...that targeted a generation of young people who had new levels of disposable income and were between childhood compulsory education and the adult labor force in a way that had not existed before" (p. 258). The lower age limit of the adolescent period of transition from child to adult is defined by physiological characteristics of puberty and rapid changes in height and weight. The upper limit of the adolescent period is defined as a social condition of being able to take on adult responsibilities such being able to financially support oneself through work, and marriage (Coleman, 1961; Husen, 1996). When comparing recent and historical demographic data for the average age at marriage, average age at birth of first child, and enrollment data for under and post graduate education, not only is adolescence a condition of industrialization as first argued by Colman (1961), the duration of adolescence in America has increased as the level of

industrialization increases. As defined in this study the period of adolescence may extend to 25 years of age.

If preservice teachers retain their K-12 beliefs about education as suggested by the teacher socialization body of research, and if their beliefs are susceptible to the influences of youth culture as indicated in the findings, then there is the potential of preservice teachers beginning their teaching degree as an adolescent, if less than 25 years of age, with beliefs about education that were partially developed through the lens of an adolescent. It seems likely that in some cases there will be adolescents teaching adolescents in the context of beliefs influenced by youth culture.

Preservice Teacher Beliefs

According to Richardson (1996), a belief “describes a proposition that is accepted as true by the individual holding the belief. It is a psychological concept and differs from knowledge, which implies epistemic warrant” (p. 104). Knowledge implies an element of truth that is shared by a community of knowledgeable peers. Elements of truth through community consensus are not required to form a belief (Bruffee, 1999; Richardson, 1996). This distinction between belief and knowledge becomes critical in attempting to understand teacher behavior, resistance to change, and the relatively ineffectiveness of teacher preparation programs in changing teacher beliefs as suggested by Pajares (1992) and Richardson (1996).

An application of Nespor’s (1987) four common characteristics of beliefs to the emergent themes discovered in the data provide a mechanism to distinguish them from knowledge and provides insight as to why these beliefs might be difficult to change. One characteristic common to beliefs is an existential presumption. Applied to education

existential presumption occurs when the existence or nonexistence of a student or teacher characteristic becomes more than a label, it becomes embodied within the teacher or student. Existential presumptions package “transitory, ambiguous, conditional or abstract characteristics into stable, well defined, absolute and concrete entities” (Nespor, 1987, p. 318), which by nature are assumed to be beyond the control of a teacher. For example, the belief that teachers are not responsible for student learning found in the *teachers teach–students learn* theme is not based upon knowledge as defined above, it is based upon student characteristics that have become personified as part of that student and therefore beyond the control and responsibility of the teacher. Students that are driven, self-motivated, aggressive, want to succeed, have good attitude, an open heart to learning, care about learning , have goals, are embodied student characteristics found in the data associated with the teachers teach–students learn belief. A degree of existential presumption would also apply to the beliefs *passionate teacher, almost one of us, able to relate to students, concern for students as people, teachers more responsible for learning, and shared responsibility for learning*.

Alternativity describes a feature of beliefs that represent alternative realities to which a teacher has no direct experience or knowledge. It “refers to conceptualizations of ideal situations differing significantly from present realities” (Nespor, 1987, p. 319). These beliefs cannot be challenged and when the alternative reality cannot be achieved, their value is still maintained. The preservice teacher beliefs regarding the themes *made learning fun, passionate teacher, almost one of us, able to relate to students, concern for students as people, and shared responsibility for learning* contained elements of the ideal

situation verses the current reality of their experience. For example, from the theme *able to relate to students*, Karie stated:

an ideal teacher definitely can appeal to the different levels and the different interests [of a student and]...use that diversity and ...develop something that the kids are going to be excited about and its going to motivate them...if you are engaging yourself in the activity its showing enthusiasm and commitment and its showing the students good modeling for motivation and they'll be more accepting and willing to work with you.

From the theme *almost one of us*, Carl stated that an ideal teacher “tries to interact with you, more like a friend than a teacher.”

A third feature of beliefs that distinguish them from knowledge is the affective and evaluative aspects of beliefs. Nespor (1987) noted that “feelings, moods, and subjective evaluations based on personal preferences seem to operate more or less independently of other forms of cognition typically associated with knowledge systems” (Nespor, 1987, p. 319). One example of a preservice teacher belief based upon subjective personal preferences is found in the theme teachers *made learning fun*, as illustrated in the following response by M-85, “Those teachers had a profound way of making education fun, either by having a high degree of participation by the student body, or involving learning visuals to help students grasp or understand the concepts.” Elements of this characteristic of beliefs would also apply to the themes *passionate teacher*, *almost one of us*, *able to relate to students*, *concern for students as people*, *funny teacher*, *classroom management*, *teachers more responsible for learning*, and *shared responsibility for learning*.

Episodic storage is a fourth feature of beliefs that distinguish beliefs from knowledge. Nespor (1987) noted that

...information in knowledge systems is stored primarily in semantic networks, while belief systems are composed mainly of 'episodically' - stored material derived from personal experience or from cultural or institutional sources of knowledge transmission (e.g., folklore)...beliefs often derive their subjective power, authority and legitimacy from particular episodes or events. These critical episodes then continue to colour or frame the comprehension of events later in time. (p. 320)

Preservice teacher beliefs about teaching are formed early as students through episodic storage of personal experience with school, teachers, and teaching (Nespor, 1987). An example of episodic storage in the formation of the theme or belief *able to relate to students*, was illustrated the context of teacher qualities preservice teachers would most want to be like in their career when Judith stated:

One teacher who just was awesome...he was my art teacher. He was really big on giving advice...having us change our art work...He would do it in such a way that he really just wanted to know your opinion of it and by talking to you...he would almost allow you to point out yourself what was wrong with it...That really helped...you were able to change it and felt like [it was] your work. I really liked that about him.

Elements of episodic storage would also apply to the themes *made learning fun*, *passionate teacher*, *concern for students as people*, *funny teacher*, *classroom*

management, teachers more responsible for learning, and shared responsibility for learning.

The beliefs arising out of the study do not require and are not subject to external evaluation and consensus. They are therefore not susceptible to change as are knowledge systems which require group consensus (Nespor, 1987). One of the challenges to teacher preparation programs according to Decker and Rimm-Kaufman (2008) is the difficulty of unlearning existing beliefs compared to learning new beliefs. If left unexplored by preparation programs, the beliefs preservice teachers bring “may be responsible for the perpetuation of antiquated and ineffectual teaching practices” (Pajares, 1992, p. 328). Helterbran (2008) suggested that teacher educators are not immune to the effects of their own beliefs about education when teaching preservice teachers. “Teacher educators replicate teaching strategies from their own past and in doing so pass this legacy on to their preservice students” (p. 126).

Two characteristics of K-12 beliefs contribute to their inherent stability that permits them to be recycled back to students through new teachers. The first is the 13 year duration of exposure built into K-12 systems of education and a possible 13 year interaction with youth culture compared to a three to four year exposure of preservice teachers to a teacher preparation program. Second, is the relative age of exposure. K-12 exposure typically begins at age five and continues through age 18. Exposure to youth culture and its potential influence covers an approximate age span of 12 to 25 years of age, compared to teacher preparation programs beginning at age 19 and ending three to four years later. In his synthesis of research on beliefs, Pajares (1992) noted the following findings: Individual beliefs develop early in life and are often immune to change caused

by reason, time, experience, or schooling. The sooner a belief is incorporated into a belief system the more difficult it becomes to modify, those which are recently acquired are the most susceptible to change (Pajares, 1992).

Even if knowledge from exposure to three to four years of teacher preparation programs is acquired, the beliefs about education a preservice teacher brings to the program will act as a filter that may “significantly affect how and how much they internalize the content of the teacher education program” (Mahlios et al., 2008, p. 66). Pajares (1992) suggested that an individual’s beliefs are like a system default that will automatically override knowledge when individuals are confronted with unknown or poorly defined circumstances or a reality in which the individual has no applicable knowledge or may have applicable knowledge but no experience. Nespor (1987) used the terms ill-structured problems and entangled domains to describe these circumstances. According to Nespor (1987), “When people encounter entangled domains or ill-structured problems, many standard cognitive processing strategies ...are no longer viable” (p. 325). In this context, the teaching experience, the constant interaction with students, administrators, and parents, and added stress derived from social and political pressures would seem to be fertile ground for individual beliefs and belief structures to dominate the actions of new, inexperienced teachers (Nespor, 1987; Pajares, 1992). Figure 3 provides an illustration of how preservice teacher beliefs may be recycled from preservice teachers back to K-12 students by new teachers, the possible influences of youth culture in the process, and the relatively instability of knowledge acquired through exposure to teacher preparation programs.

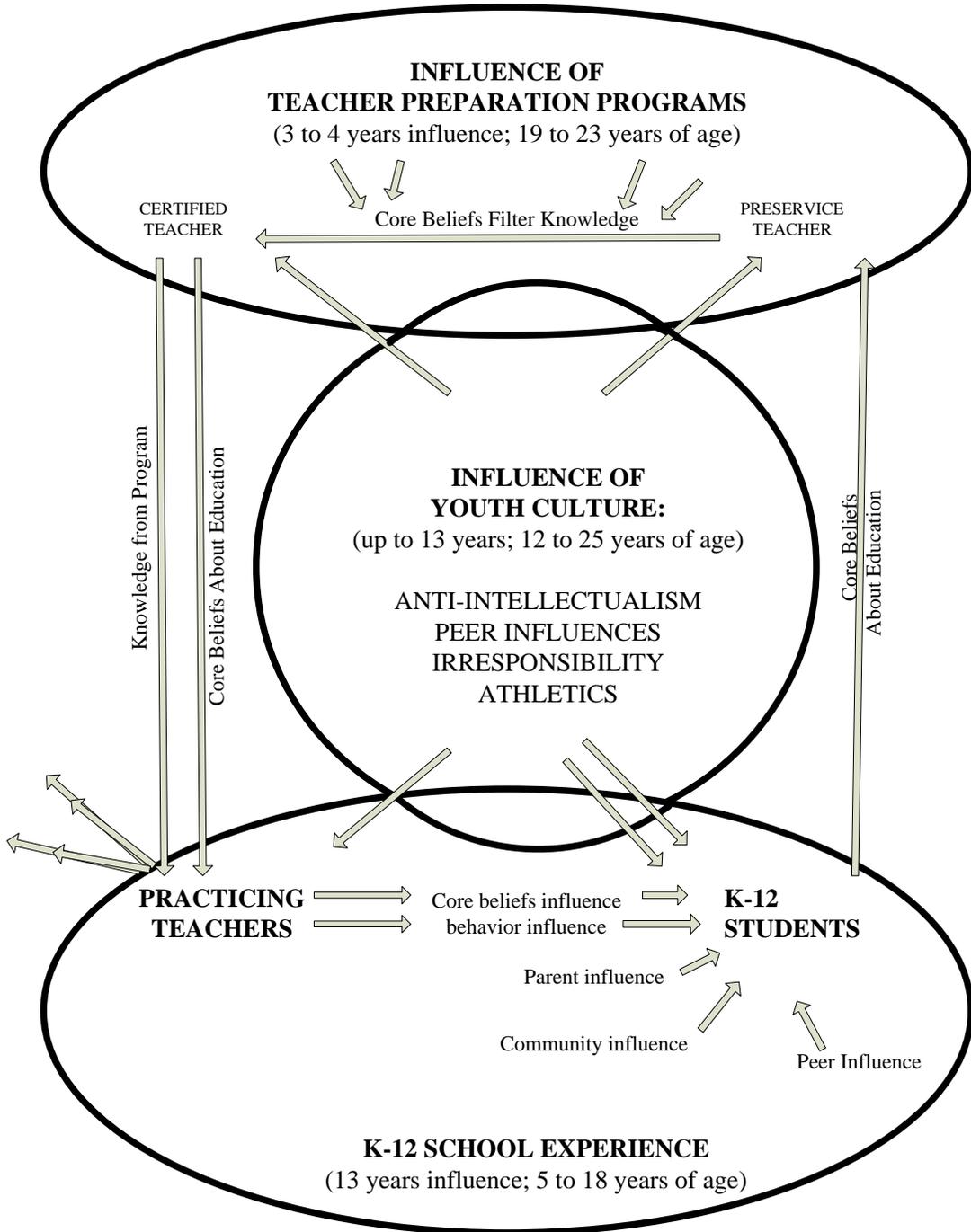


Figure 3. Recycling of Core Educational Beliefs Developed in K-12 Education

An application of the recycling scenario to the *almost one of us* theme revealed in the data illustrates the potential recycling of a belief between generations of students, by students who become teachers that perpetuate the belief and resulting behavior. As a theme, *almost one of us* speaks to a phenomenon experienced by preservice teachers where some of their teachers, by virtue of their age or conscious effort, emulate student physical or behavioral characteristics or knowledge of the youth culture. The belief and resulting behavior is that teachers who want to become popular with students need to be more student like than adult like will be recycled by new teachers to new generations of students as the recycled phenomenon repeats itself. Additionally, it could be argued that as the period of adolescence lengthens and its effect on youth intensifies, as suggested above, the efficacy of recycling of adolescent influenced beliefs will increase until complete and the belief is accepted as normal or until its assimilation is stalled by another, opposing cultural belief or barrier.

A second application of the recycling phenomenon of preservice teacher beliefs may be applied to the theme *teachers teach-students learn*; not as a vehicle for assimilating new beliefs, but instead as an example of the preservation of an existing belief that may be outdated. The teachers teach-students learn belief assumes the responsibility for learning falls upon the student, and teachers are only responsible for presenting the material. This theme was one of four that emerged from preservice responses to a question from the in class survey regarding the concepts of teaching and learning and the roles of teachers and students in each. It is the only one of the four themes to appear in the in-depth and focus group data as well. The essence of this phenomenon seems to be based upon the belief that when students fail to learn, it is due

to student characteristics that are either intrinsic or should have been acquired before the student entered the classroom and therefore are not the responsibility of the teacher. The possibility of this belief being tied to the youth culture sub-theme, *youth culture-accountability* described above or part of main stream American culture that values independence, self-reliance, or personal accountability is not all that clear. However, what is clear is that this theme is not congruent with the most recent paradigm shift in public education in America. The accountability movement and its implied threat of teacher sanctions was formally placed into action when President Bush signed the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) act in 2002 (Hess & Finn, 2007). This movement is transforming the expectations placed upon teachers for student learning. It is a shift from an emphasis in the process of education to an emphasis on student learning. The recycling of the *teachers teach-students learn* belief to a new generation of students when this study's preservice teachers enter the classroom is an example of a cultural barrier that is working against the most current educational reform effort America.

This resistance to change by public education despite four decades of intense reform effort suggests a cultural phenomenon of barriers and institutional structures that prevent or naturally oppose change. Policy and reform efforts that do not consider the cultural context of public education, such as the current NCLB movement, are destined to fail. As stated in Chapter One, the problem is an apparent lack of appreciation for the cultural nature of public education and the need to better understand public education as a cultural phenomenon. As applied to this discussion, the cultural barriers to change are the enduring nature of beliefs developed early in life through 13 years of experience as a K-12 student, the growing influence of a youth culture that places the value of education

behind less intellectual pursuits, and the operational norms of K-12 and higher education. As institutional structures, the cultural boundaries between K-12 education and higher education are so ridged that a functional interface between the two subcultures of education becomes difficult.

Limitations

One of the distinguishing characteristics of qualitative research is the recognition of a researcher's potential effect on research methodology and interpretation of findings. The assumptions and personal biases the researcher brings to the process can potentially misdirect the methods used and mask the meaning of data generated (Krueger & Casey, 2000; Seidman, 1991). Studies that seek meaning of the lived experience of participants are particularly susceptible to researcher bias and assumptions (Creswell, 1998; Krueger & Casey, 2000; Seidman, 1991). While the researcher took steps to minimize the effect of researcher assumptions and bias through assuming a position of neutrality and standardization of methodology, the possibility of researcher bias and influence on the subjects, data collected, data transcription, and data analysis must be acknowledged.

Second, three-fourths of the preservice teachers enrolled in the *Foundations* level class of the university's teacher preparation program responded to the in class survey. Approximately two-thirds of those responding met the criteria for participation in the study. While the number of these participants would be a good representation of the total enrolled in the program at this level, the criteria of sampling used for the in-depth interviews and focus group discussion provided a less diverse representation of the larger sample. As a sub-group of the larger sample, data from the in-depth and focus group interviews appeared to be more homogenous compared to the variation encountered

within the responses of the larger group. As a result, the data collected through the in-depth survey and focus group interviews may not be as true a representation of the preservice teachers as found in the in class survey data.

A third limitation may exist due to inherent differences in methodology used to collect data when all three instruments could not be applied to a theme. Specifically, the theme *clueless* was developed from a conspicuous absence of data and one supporting response out of a possible 162 respondents. Due to the nature of the in-depth and focus group interview protocol the likelihood of reproducing the same lack of response was not high. Because of the differences in data collection techniques utilized in this study, themes were grouped and labeled as common themes if they appeared in each of the data instruments. If they appeared in only one or two data instruments they were labeled as less common themes.

Implication for Practice

As discussed in Chapter One, education reform in America has been slow to produce significant improvements in student achievement for 17 year old students over the past four decades. Research has shown that teacher skills and knowledge are the key components of teacher quality. If student achievement is to improve, the quality of teacher skill and knowledge must also improve (Humphrey et al., 2000; & Levine, 2006). A missing variable in the above statement, as Schein (1996) would suggest, is a lack appreciation for the effects of culture on the student-teacher interaction. While there are multiple cultural interfaces involving public education that need to be addressed, the implications for practice based upon the results of this study are confined to teacher preparation programs.

Four themes or preservice teacher beliefs from the findings seem to be contrary to the goals of public education and teacher preparation programs. Those that have an apparent connection to youth culture include: *almost one of us*, *concern for students as people*, and *classroom management*. While the connection to youth culture is less clear for the preservice teacher belief *teachers teach-students learn*, its conflict with current reform effort is considerable. Not only do teacher preparation programs need to equip preservice teachers with skills that will cause students to learn, but they need to recognize those beliefs preservice teachers bring to their program that are counter productive to the goals of the institution and student learning, and effectively address those beliefs.

Pre-service students enter teacher preparation programs with 13 years of personal school experience. They have developed lasting beliefs about schooling, learning, teaching, and teachers. These beliefs have a powerful effect in how they view, interpret, and assimilate new materials presented as part of their program of studies and are difficult to change (Doyle, 1997; Hart, 2002; Richardson, 1996). As noted by Decker and Rimm-Kaufman (2008):

This situation creates a challenge to teacher educators striving to improve the practices of future educators. This challenge occurs because, in human learning, it is clear that it is more difficult to unlearn existing beliefs than it is to learn new beliefs. (p. 46)

In dealing with those preservice teacher beliefs that are counter productive to research-based knowledge regarding student learning, teacher preparation programs have one of three options or a combination of each: First, it begins with a more rigorous screening of potential candidates. Not only must teacher preparation programs raise their

academic standards for entrance into their program (Levine, 2006), they must screen potential teachers for those personal beliefs that are counterproductive to the future of education. For example, roughly one-fourth of the preservice teachers surveyed believe they have little to no responsibility as future teachers with regard to students learning in their class. Nearly a third of the sample could not or would not respond to the in-class survey question asking them to compare the concepts of teaching and learning and the roles if any, teachers and student have in both concepts, leaving one to wonder about their level of development regarding those concepts. Second, once teacher preparation programs have screened their applicants, they must decide if they want to include only those who do not have to be reacculturated, which teacher socialization research suggests is difficult, and prepare the remaining applicants within the limits of existing programs.

Third, when changes in beliefs about teaching do take place, they occur primarily through experience in the field and through extensive reflective practices and analysis. Faculty of teacher preparation programs must help their students discover and examine individually held beliefs about teaching and then provide opportunities for reflection and change when program and individual beliefs do not match (Doyle, 1997; Hart, 2004; Minor et al., 2002; Pajares, 1992; Richardson, 1996; & White-Clark, 2005). Accordingly, Levine (2006) recommended an enriched or advanced major for teacher preparation similar to the University of Virginia and Stanford. In these programs the preservice teacher completes four years of undergraduate work including general education courses and major and one year to 15 additional months of study in pedagogy and teaching the major subject.

While either of the above options will not address the current shortage of teachers which has a significant influence on the goals of many teacher preparation programs (Levine, 2006), the phenomenon of recycling academically poor students and counter productive beliefs about learning back to K-12 education must be addressed. If not, the maintenance of those beliefs within the culture of public education will likely continue.

Implication for Future Research

From a cultural perspective, improving public education involves much more than the application of some kind of superficial, mandated reform effort. Advancements in academic achievement will require a better understanding of the cultural relationships and social structures inherent in the institutions of public and higher education that affect academic achievement (Hanson, 2001; Schein, 1996). According to Decker and Rimm-Kaufman (2008):

The majority of work on teacher beliefs is based on in-service, not preservice teachers which pose a problem. The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education recommends that teacher educators increase their awareness of beliefs of their pre-service teachers. (p. 46)

Further investigations that examine the cultural relationships between students, student subcultures, teachers, administration, parents, etc. and the resulting beliefs about teaching and academic achievement arising from those relationships are needed. While much more difficult to accomplish, only those reform efforts that include the cultural dynamics of public education have any chance of success (Schein, 1996).

Schein's (2000) assertion that an inability of cultures and subcultures to communicate across respective cultural boundaries contributes to the status-quo must be

considered when explaining the lack of significant progress in education reform over the past 35 years. In that context, additional research is needed to better understand points of interaction between other culturally definable subunits of public education. For example, a better understanding of the educational beliefs administrators, preservice teachers, in-service teachers, higher education, and legislators bring to their cultural boundaries of interaction may help to define and eventually eliminate barriers of communication that are preventing meaningful change.

A second implication for future research is the need to develop a measure of an individual's immersion into and away from youth culture. A mixed design approach could be developed that measures an individual's engagement in youth culture. Quantitative analysis of descriptive data linking high school students and preservice teacher characteristics to youth culture could be paired with qualitative data from surveys and interviews to determine if a connection can be made between youth culture themes and individual characteristics. This line of research would prove useful to teacher preparation programs and K-12 institutions when screening applicants for beliefs detrimental to their goals for education.

A third line of implicated research includes a characterization of in-service teachers' beliefs about education. Data from these studies could be applied to the effectiveness and goals of professional development programs for practicing K-12 teachers.

A longitudinal line of research is indicated to better capture the essence of the lived teaching experience of preservice teachers, new teachers, and veteran teachers as they move through their career. Data from such studies would be useful to teacher

preparation programs and K12 education as they screen applicants, modify programs based on teacher need, improve teacher retention, and improve professional development.

One reaction to the shortage of qualified teachers in K-12 education often proposed by legislators includes alternative methods of teacher certification. One concern with alternative certification programs is that these teacher candidates have even less opportunity to examine their educational beliefs in the light of established pedagogy (Hart, 2004). Studies should be conducted to determine if those teachers who circumvent formal teacher preparation programs have beliefs compatible to the needs of K-12 and if those teachers bring other qualities or beliefs to the profession compared to teachers just completing traditional preparation programs.

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Appendix A

Recruitment

1. Recruitment and Survey Protocol
2. Recruitment Script

Recruitment and Survey Protocol:

1. Obtain permission from the Chair of the Department of Educational Foundations and Literacy to gain access to beginning Foundations level students in their classroom.
2. Contact individual instructors for permission to recruit students and schedule a date to enter their class.
3. Enter the class with 15 minutes remaining in the period.
4. Introduce myself and read the recruitment script that briefly explains the project, informed consent, survey, and additional contact.
5. Hand out the informed consent, survey, and request for additional contact.
6. Provide three separate boxes for students to place each document as they leave the room.
7. Collect all materials after students have left the room.
8. Schedule one-on-one or focus group interviews with those students who have consented to additional contact.

Recruitment Script:

Hello;

My name is John Lacy. I am a MU graduate student conducting a research project for my dissertation. With your permission I would like take a few minutes of your time to explain my study and perhaps recruit some volunteers to participate.

The first thing you need to know that your participation is voluntary and you may leave at any time. The second thing you need to know is that if you do decide to participate, your identity will be protected at all times.

The focus of my research project is to understand the beliefs preservice teachers have about education before they enter into a teacher education program. The data I will collect will come from a short survey, which you may complete today, and one-on-one interviews and focus group interviews that will be scheduled for a later date.

I will hand out three separate documents.

The first is an informed consent form. Please read it. If you are willing to complete the survey, please sign the attached informed consent form and complete the survey.

Once you complete the survey, the third document will ask you if you are willing to participate in an in-depth interview or a focus group. If you are willing, please provide the contact information requested and I will be in contact to schedule an appointment.

Place each of the three documents (informed consent, survey, and contact information) in its respective box as you leave the room.

If you choose not to participate in the study simply return each document to its respective box as you leave.

Thank you.

Appendix B

Informed Consent and Contact Information

1. Letter of Informed Consent
2. Informed Consent Form
3. Contact Information

Letter of Informed Consent

Dear Research Participant:

Thank you for considering participation in the study "Preservice Teacher Beliefs about Education from Their Experiences as K-12 Students and as Members of an Adolescent Subculture" This study is being conducted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Education degree in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis at the University of Missouri-Columbia.

The purpose of this study is to better describe, from the individual points of view of each participant, the beliefs about education preservice teachers bring to teacher preparation programs arising from their experiences as K-12 students and as members of a youth subculture. This information will be useful to the design and development of more effective teacher education programs.

Before you make a final decision about participation, please read the following about how your input will be used and how your rights as a participant will be protected:

- Participation in the study is completely voluntary. You may stop participating at any point without penalty.
- You need not answer all of the questions.
- Your answers will be kept confidential. Results will be presented to others in summary form only, without names or other identifying information.
- Initially, your participation will amount to completing a brief survey that will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. If you are willing to continue participation in the study you may be asked to participate in an in-depth interview and/or a focus group discussion with other participants. The in-depth interview or focus group discussion would last no longer than 90 minutes.
- The data collected will be held in a locked file cabinet in the researcher's office and disposed of at the conclusion of the study.

This project has been approved by the University of Central Missouri Human Subjects Review Committee and the University of Missouri-Columbia Campus Institutional Review Board (IRB). These committees believe that the research procedures adequately safeguard the subject's privacy, welfare, civil liberties, and rights, and may be contacted at 660 543-4621 or 573 882-9585. The project is being supervised by Dr. Cindy MacGregor, Associate Professor, CLSE, Missouri State University (417 836-6046).

If at this point you are still interested in participating and assisting with this important research project please complete the consent form provided below. Keep the top of this letter for future reference. You can contact me by phone at 816 365-6528 or by e-mail (jsl942@mail.mizzou.edu) if you have questions or concerns about your participation. Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
John Lacy, University of Missouri-Columbia

Informed Consent Form

I, _____, have read the Letter of Informed Consent and agree to participate in the study entitled “Preservice Teacher Beliefs about Education from Their Experiences as K-12 Students and as Members of an Adolescent Subculture” that is being conducted by John Lacy. I understand that:

- My answers will be used for educational research.
- My participation is voluntary.
- I may stop participation at any time without penalty.
- I need not answer all of the questions.
- My answers and identity will be kept confidential.

I have read the information above and any questions I asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this activity, realizing that I may withdraw without prejudice at any time.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Contact Information:

Would you be willing to further contribute to this study by participating in an interview or as a member of a focus group? The approximate time commitment would be 60 to 90 minutes. If yes, please complete the information requested below and place the form in the specified box. If no, please return the form to the specified box.

I am willing to help with:

- a. _____ a focus group interview
- b. _____ a one-on-one interview
- c. _____ both a focus group and one-on-one interview

Name: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Appendix C

Research Instruments

1. In Class Survey
2. In-depth Interview Guide
3. Focus Group Interview Guide

1. Gender: Female _____ Male _____

2. Age: _____

3. Approximate high school class size at graduation: _____

4. From the list provided below, please select the activities in which you participated while attending middle or high school.

a. _____ Athletics	e. _____ Intramurals
b. _____ Cheerleading	f. _____ Clubs
c. _____ Poms or Dance Squad	g. _____ Office Worker
d. _____ Band	h. _____ Speech and/or Debate

5. In terms of student popularity in high school, select the level of importance that best matches the characteristics provided below. Use a “1” for very important; “2” for important; “3” for not so important; or a “4” for no importance.

a. _____ Family status	e. _____ Good grades
b. _____ Personal appearance	f. _____ Athletic
c. _____ Clothes	g. _____ Participation in activities
d. _____ Nice car	h. _____ Liked by teachers

6. From the statements listed below please check all those that describe your relationships with your friends and peers while in high school.
 - a. _____ My friends were a major part of my high school experience
 - b. _____ I spent a majority of my free time with my friends while in high school.
 - c. _____ When presented with a conflict, the approval of my friends was just as important as the approval of my parents
 - d. _____ When presented with a conflict, the approval of my friends was just as important as the approval of my teachers
 - e. _____ My relationships with my friends was just as important as making good grades

7. As a student, rank (1-7) the following teacher qualities in order of value to you. The most desirable quality rank with a 1, the least important quality rank with a 7.
 - _____ Competent instructor
 - _____ Effective classroom and behavior management
 - _____ Ethical behavior
 - _____ Enthusiastic about teaching
 - _____ Knowledge of subject
 - _____ Professionalism
 - _____ Student centered

8. From your personal experience what characteristics did the middle or high school teachers have who were most popular with students?

9. Describe the relationships, if any, between the concepts of teaching and learning and who is responsible for each.

In-depth Interview Guide

1. When did you start your degree program?
2. What grades will your certification include?
3. What is your content area?
4. Describe why you have chosen teaching as a career?
 - a. What personal benefits are you expecting with a teaching career?
 - b. What personal challenges are you expecting with your teaching career?
5. From your point of view what common characteristics or behaviors do the most successful high school students have?
6. From your point of view what common characteristics or behaviors do the least successful high school students have?
7. Describe the qualities of a middle or high school teacher you experienced that you would want to be most like in your teaching career. Why does this teacher rate higher than others you experienced.
8. What characteristics, professional and personal, did middle or high school teachers have who were most popular with students?
9. What characteristics, professional and personal, did middle or high school teachers have who were least popular with students?
10. From your experience do younger teachers relate better to students than older teachers? Why or why not?
11. From your experience, what does it mean to teach? Who is responsible and what activities are involved?
12. From your experience, what does it mean to learn? Who is responsible and what activities are involved?
13. From your experience as a K-12 student, describe the most memorable part of the experience and explain why.
14. From your experience, what could be changed in middle or high school that would have made your experience more valuable?
15. In your philosophy of education, what is the role of the student and what is the role of the teacher?

16. What skills or knowledge about teaching do you expect to learn from the teacher education program in which you are enrolled?

Focus Group Interview Guide

1. When you started your education program what were you expecting?
2. When you started the program you had a certain conception of what teaching was, has any of that changed at this point based upon your limited experience?
3. How would you describe the ideal teacher, in your vision... you all have ideals.
4. What is your ideal teacher?
5. Why do you think is important to be a friend?
6. Have any of you had that ideal teacher? Personally?
7. Student success, who has primary responsibility for student success.
8. When we talk about high school students, what kinds of things are important to high school students in general; from your experience or from what you have observed. What do high school students value?
9. How about material things, what material things are important to high school age kids?
10. In terms of student achievement and education reform, elementary grades seem to show improvement, seem to show improvement first and easiest compared to secondary grades, whether it's the new MAP test, or the new latest state assessment. When everyone's out trying to increase the grades, it seems like elementary grades are more responsive than secondary grades. Why do you think that is?
11. Studies have shown that achievement test scores in math and reading in America or in American high schools have not significantly improved for 35 years. What factors do you believe are preventing high school students from reaching greater levels of achievement on the national tests?
12. How important to our culture is academics? When you think of our culture, do we value academics as a nation as a community?

VITA

John Lacy graduated from Missouri State University in 1976 with a Master's degree in Biology. After a short stay with KU Medical Center, he began nine years of employment as a virologist, manufacturing animal vaccines. At age 34 he changed careers to public education where he taught biology and chemistry for six years. In 1992 he completed his Specialist degree in Education Administration. In 1993 he was employed by the Billings R-IV school district as its high school principal. Three years later he became superintendent and remained at Billings R-IV for an additional nine years.

Currently, he is in his fifth year as the Deputy Superintendent for the Excelsior Springs 40 school district. He is responsible for a 30 million dollar budget, 375 employees, safety, district transportation, food service, and maintenance. As a cabinet member of central office, his major responsibility is the supervision of administrators and instruction.