

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

John S. Lacy

Dr. Cynthia MacGregor, Dissertation Supervisor

ABSTRACT

Results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress test over the past 35 years have not shown significant, long term improvement of 17 year olds in math or reading. 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. Methods of phenomenology were used to address the research questions. From a sample of 162 preservice teachers, 11 themes depicting preservice teacher beliefs about education were identified. The influence of an adolescent or youth subculture in the development of the 11 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teachers back to K-12 students is presented that illustrates how emerging adolescent beliefs may enter and how older, outdated beliefs are maintained within education culture.

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.