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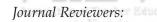Harrisonburg, VA 22807
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The Teacher Educators Journal

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To Our Members,

Thank you for your support of teacher education through your membership in the Association of Teacher Education-Virginia. As an organization, we are committed to improving teacher education. We do this by meeting to engage in meaningful dialogue, sharing the most current research, and engaging in networking sessions. Frequently, we take these relationships for granted. We assume that everyone knows what we know about our field and our organization. Given the end of my tenure as President and at the risk of being redundant, I want to highlight the work of the organization during this past year so you will know why your involvement is critically important at this time.

In the fall, we met for our annual meeting at Sweet Briar College. Our meeting provided an opportunity to discuss teacher education with leaders from across the state as we met with the Secretary of Education and Department of Education. Members who attended the national conference shared their expertise and we learned that Jim Alouf was elected President of ATE. Jim is the first Virginian to receive this honor. We were elated. Overall, the state of our professional organization was stable and so it seemed that teacher education was valued as a high quality endeavor.

The change in the seasons was accompanied by the forecast of storms of criticism when the U.S. News & World Report announced that it was teaming with NCTQ (National Council of Teacher Quality) to evaluate teacher education programs in the nation. Although this sounds innocuous enough, the work of NCTQ has been criticized by mainstream educational leadership groups due to their failure to adhere to traditional research guidelines as well as their focus on alternative methods to licensure. To counter their action, the executive board of the Virginia Association of College of Teacher Education and the Association of Teacher Education –Virginia worked diligently to respond to their request. A letter was drafted to the editor, Brian Kelly, explaining why Virginia Institutions of Higher Education would not be participating in this action. Letters to the leadership in Richmond were also posted. The letter that was sent to Brian Kelley is included in this edition of the ATE-Virginia Journal.

With the onset of spring, we are looking forward to our meeting at Sweet Briar. We weathered the winter storm by working together. As we enjoy the drive through the rural roads of Virginia, we may tend to take our meeting for granted. The work that we accomplished because we met cannot overstated. Without the joint leadership of both groups, we would not have had an opportunity to have an impact at the national movement. Take a moment to provide a special thanks to Jurgen Combs, Pat Shoemaker, Phil Wishon, Sue Magliaro, Cathy Fisher, and other members of the executive boards. They represented your interests well.

As we move into summer, I will turn the gavel over to Alice Young, the next President of ATE-Virginia. We support her leadership by maintaining our membership in ATE-Virginia and encouraging others to do so. When we speak with one voice for children-one voice for teacher education-we roar. Thank you for allowing me to be a part of the roar.

Dorothy Justus Sluss
President, ATE-Virginia

VACTE

VIRGINIA
ASSOCIATION
OF COLLEGES
OF TEACHER
EDUCATION

One Voice for Education

ATE·VA

Association of Teacher Educators
in Virginia

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February 3, 2011

On January 25, 2011, deans of schools of education and institutional representatives received a request to participate in a comprehensive review of teacher preparation programs across the United States to be conducted by the National Council on Teacher Quality in partnership with U.S. News and World Report. We are committed to ensuring that our programs prepare strong teachers who can reach and teach diverse learners. Evaluation of programs is essential to continuous improvement. We write to address how we can collaborate with U.S. News and World Report in establishing a valid and reliable survey of the state of teacher preparation programs.

An extensive array of data and reports are already available to the public which might provide resources for such a project. Our schools, colleges, and departments of education (SCDE's) work in close partnership with PK-12 schools in designing, implementing, and evaluating preparation programs. We regularly complete state and federal reports regarding the structure of our programs; descriptions of coursework and extent and quality of field experiences; admission requirements; profiles of our candidates; enrollments and graduation rates; faculty qualifications, teaching, service, and scholarly productivity; and descriptions of program assessment plans and how we use results of assessments to improve candidate performance, programs, and unit operations.

Programs implement annual assessments that are aligned with state and national standards which outline what candidates should know and be able to do regarding subject matter knowledge and professional and pedagogical knowledge and skills based on current research. Programs are required to ensure and document the impact of candidates upon K-12 student learning. Candidates must pass rigorous licensure exams to demonstrate their mastery of basic proficiency skills in reading, writing, and mathematics; subject matter knowledge (Virginia's cut scores are among the highest in the nation); and knowledge and skills for the teaching of reading. These data and reports are far more comprehensive than what is suggested in the Tomorrow's Teachers project, which appears to plan to only review candidate profiles from PEDS and available print-copy descriptions of "inputs" such as course syllabi, handbooks, program descriptions, etc.

We applaud and share the commitment of the National Council of Teacher Quality "to ensure that every child has an effective teacher." However, based upon a lengthy history of experiences of several institutions and states in similar projects conducted by NCTQ, we have serious concerns regarding NCTQ's capacity to conduct a valid and reliable project. For a sample of letters from institutions and agencies outlining concerns please see: http://aacte.org/index.php?/Traditional-Media/Resources/aacte-members-respond-to-nctq-qresearchq-efforts.html. In order to use the results of such projects to assess our programs and improve what we do, we must have confidence in the results of the project. Moreover, the public deserves valid and reliable results.

NCTQ states its 'method' for its evaluation includes ten standards which have a limited or non-existent research basis and, unlike other state and national standards, have not been vetted by any external agent. NCTQ has not shared any information regarding the protocol for the conduct of the project: e.g., the kinds of data collected, scoring methods, rater characteristics and inter-rater reliability---common expectations among those conducting research with high-stakes results that will be reported publicly, particularly in national ratings of project participants. A number of institutions and states have had experiences with NCTQ's evaluation process that raise concerns

about the reliability and accuracy of the data they collect and the inferences they draw from the data. Institutions have had several experiences in which NCTQ did not correct factual errors when these were identified. A factual basis for inferences in the results of projects was often absent.

Of special concern is that, according to the FAQ document available on the NCTQ website (http://www.nctq.org/edschoolreports/national/faq.jsp):

> NCTQ and U.S. News & World Report will publish ratings of how well the vast majority of teacher preparation programs meet the standards of the review, regardless of these programs' degree of cooperation. For all programs, some of the information needed for the review is publicly available, and will be used as the basis of NCTQ's judgment. If an institution that chooses not to cooperate is a public university, NCTQ plans to make open records requests to gather the documentation the review requires. And in cases where we cannot get documents needed to make ratings, NCTQ will declare that the institution failed to meet the standards in question.

This seems to be contrary to USNWR practice in how it carries out similar projects. Such a policy violates accepted practice in research and evaluation. Thus we assume this is not a qualified research, survey, rating, or evaluation project and USNWR should not promote it as such. An outside consumer of the results of this project would never know if an institution truly failed the review, or on what criteria it fell short, or if it simply did not participate. Importantly, this implied coercion casts doubt on the results of the entire project. It is so out of step with accepted practice in research and evaluation that it is incomprehensible why NCTQ and USNWR have adopted this stance.

U.S. News and World Report could view this appeal as simply a matter of opposing viewpoints. Or it could decide to delve further to consider these concerns and rise to the level of U.S. News and World Report's established reputation record of thoughtful, informed, and responsible journalism including

efforts to provide valid and reliable information to its constituencies.

Thank you for considering the concerns of the Virginia Association of Colleges of Teacher Education and the Association of Teacher Educators in Virginia. Along with our appreciation for your consideration of our concerns, we offer our assistance with initiatives you wish to undertake to report the status of the nation's teacher preparation programs in the most accurate and reliable light possible.

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Evaluating the Instructional Effectiveness of One College's Pre-Service Teacher E-Portfolio Development Process

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Abstract
The purpose of this evaluation study was to determine the instructional effectiveness of the electronic portfolio (e-portfolio) that all teacher candidates in a college's education program must defend upon their completion of student teaching. The results of the evaluation and corresponding recommendations can be used to improve the existing e-portfolio development process and to further refine the data collection instrument as well as, more broadly, inform current e-portfolio practice.

This pilot evaluation study focused on teacher candidates at a small, private, liberal arts college located in the mid-Atlantic region of United States and pseudonymed Rosselin College (RC). Each teacher candidate at this college is required to take an

instructional technology course during their educational studies. In this course, teacher candidates learn how the appropriate use of instructional technologies can increase teacher effectiveness and efficiency, help the teacher stay current, and revitalize the classroom. In addition, the teacher candidates learn how to develop the major components of an electronic portfolio (e-portfolio).

During the instructional technology course, teacher candidates learn how to use Microsoft Word to create Web pages and Photoshop Elements to create graphics. With proficiency in these two tools in place and a sample e-portfolio to use as a model, teacher candidates build their teaching e-portfolios and save them on network drives provided by the college. Teacher candidates continue to add to their e-portfolios throughout the teacher education program. Upon graduation, teacher candidates are encouraged to save their e-portfolios to CD to share with prospective employers, as the college's network drives can only accommodate their e-portfolios while they are enrolled as students.

The e-portfolio documents a teacher candidate's mastery of the four learning goals established by RC's teacher education program: content, pedagogy, practice, and progress. Content addresses the central topics of a discipline. Pedagogy represents the ability to understand and develop compelling instruction. Practice is the implementation of instruction that reflects pedagogical mastery. Progress is the demonstration that the student understands how to grow as a professional teacher.

The teacher candidate demonstrates mastery of the program's conceptual framework by incorporating personally relevant information, an educational philosophy, daily lesson or unit plans, assessment samples, innovative classroom activities, professional experiences, photos, and/or presentation slides into the e-portfolio. The e-portfolio must be presented at the conclusion of student teaching in digital format and is evaluated by the student teacher's college supervisor and, through an oral defense, by a committee of at least three faculty members.

The academic year 2007-2008 was only the second year that the e-portfolio incorporated the department's goals and required teacher candidates to demonstrate mastery of them. A pilot study was designed as a means for RC to evaluate the effectiveness of

the revised e-portfolio experience. A customized survey was developed to determine if the inclusion of the e-portfolio: improved the teacher candidate's instructional technology skills; improved the teacher candidate's mastery of the targeted departmental goals; aided teacher candidates in the job search process; and, provided technological experiences that were applicable in classroom instruction.

Theoretical Framework

Barrett (2007) defines the portfolio as a mechanism that holds the work a learner has carefully collected, referred to as artifacts, to demonstrate his/her growth in one or more designated areas over time. Approximately 89% of institutions with teacher education programs utilize some sort of portfolio-based assessment (Salzman, Denner & Harris, 2002). With advances in digital media and the onslaught of the standards movement, a majority of these institutions are now or will transition to e-portfolios (Lynch & Purnawarman, 2004). E-portfolios can serve a plethora of purposes from evaluation to recruitment (Brandes & Boskic, 2008; Wang, 2009) and can appear in many different formats (Strudler & Wetzel, 2008). Such potential diversity can, however, add to the confusion of what type and format will best suit the varying needs of learners at different institutions. Choices can be informed by conducting a formative evaluation through which data are collected to determine the effectiveness of current formats and identify areas for improvement (Russ-Eft & Preskill, 2001). The opportunity for such data-based guidance provided a strong rationale for performing an evaluation of the fairly young e-portfolio process at Rosselin College.

Recent research indicates that for the e-portfolio to be a significant learning experience, it must be a construction that moves beyond a simple compilation of teaching artifacts (Brandes & Boskic, 2008) or that exists for the goal of merely satisfying a set of institutional standards to aid in accreditation (Wilhelm et al., 2006). The e-portfolio should also be a vehicle through which the education student begins to develop his/her sense of being as a professional teacher (Hallman, 2007). RC's intentional reshaping of the e-portfolio experience around departmental goals

represents such an extension of the e-portfolio as a more meaningful part of professional learning and development. RC's e-portfolios are, of course, evaluated by the faculty. However, research indicates that it is also important to understand how students view the e-portfolio concept, process, and development (Ritzhaupt, Singh, Seyferth & Dedrick, 2008) and, more broadly, how students view technological innovativeness and integration, in general (Williams, Foulger, & Wetzel, 2009). Thus, a priority for this evaluation was to provide a preliminary picture to RC faculty of how their students conceptualized the e-portfolio process in order to provide data-based recommendations that emphasized the student perspective.

Methods

Data for this evaluation project were collected through a customized survey (see Appendix A) that was administered to RC education student graduates. The survey was composed of 14 Likert scale questions; five open-ended questions and one demographic question. To increase the validity of the newly developed survey instrument, so that it might be utilized with more confidence in a larger and more formal evaluation, it was first piloted with participants representative of the target population.

Procedures

The cover letter and survey were disseminated to education student graduates via email and returned in the same fashion. With the goal of enhancing the return rate, the cover letter identified the significance of the data to be collected and how the findings might be utilized. Data were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative analysis methods. Likert scale responses ranged from one to five (1-Strongly Disagree; 2-Disagree; 3-Neither Agree nor Disagree; 4-Agree; 5-Strongly Agree) and results were reported through descriptive statistics (mean values and percentiles). Open-ended comments were coded for emergent themes across surveys.

Participants

RC's department of education revised its conceptual framework and goals during the summer of 2006. During the fall of 2006, the e-portfolio format reflected these changes. Therefore, the potential pool of study participants consisted of education students who completed their e-portfolios under the new format from the fall of 2006 until the fall of 2007 (just prior to study inception), approximately 35 education students over the course of three semesters. Since this study was a pilot, the actual sample included student teachers that had completed their e-portfolios in the fall of 2007; the potential benefits being that the experience of completing the e-portfolio was still fresh in mind and that all were readily available for contact. The pilot survey was sent to ten individuals and completed and returned by nine; a reasonable size for a pilot but certainly a recognized limitation of the study.

Findings, Recommendations, and Conclusions

Findings indicate that the e-portfolio development process had a positive impact on student teachers in four areas: (a) improvement in technology skills and usage; (b) progress toward mastery of department-established developmental goals; (c) establishment of a resource for job searches; and (d) transfer of knowledge and skills gained to the workplace. Detailed findings in each of these four categories follow.

Technology Skills and Usage

The first key evaluation question to be answered by this study was: To what degree did the e-portfolio experience improve a teacher candidate's general technology and instructional technology skills? Survey results indicated that 22% of the respondents strongly agreed and 67% agreed (89% in total) that the e-portfolio increased their general technology skills. Additionally, 67% agreed that the e-portfolio aided their understanding of instructional technology. Lastly, 22% strongly agreed and 44% agreed (66% in total) that the e-portfolio allowed them the opportunity to demonstrate their technology skills.

Participant comments complement the quantitative data in that they reflect an understanding of the goal of building technological competence as a teaching professional. One participant noted: "I think the purpose for the electronic portfolio was to expand my skills in technology as well as display in an organized manner what I am capable of as a teacher…" and, another graduate stated: "I think [the purpose of the e-portfolio experience] was to learn about the technology available to teachers...".

Findings reflect that most student teachers agreed that the e-portfolio experience did indeed aid in the understanding of how to use technology in general and in the classroom. However, some respondent comments reflect that more timelines and instruction were necessary to help with the process. One respondent commented: "Perhaps they could create a timeline for students as they approach their defense, such as certain dates various aspects of the portfolio need to be ready."

Based on the findings, it was recommended that RC: (a) determine the specific technological support needs for student teachers developing their portfolios and tailor support to meet the circumstances of student teachers and, (b) construct a timeline for completing the e-portfolio that includes suggested deadlines so that student teachers, with the support of supervising faculty, can monitor progress.

Mastery of Departmental Goals and Growth

The next key question sought to determine to what degree the design and presentation of the e-portfolio contributed to the education student's understanding and mastery of departmental goals and sub-goals. Findings revealed that most participants agreed or strongly agreed that the electronic portfolio component helped them demonstrate mastery of three departmental goals; specifically, 55% for the departmental content goal; 66% for the pedagogy goal; and 66% for the progress goal. The departmental goal of practice was the only one that fell short of a majority; only 44% agreed or strongly agreed that the electronic portfolio helped them demonstrate mastery of the practice goal. This last finding could be because demonstrating how one teaches can be more challenging to display through electronic means via a Web site.

Beyond demonstrating departmental goals, 66% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that the electronic portfolio helped them reflect upon their growth and accomplishments. As one respondent put it: "It was a tool for us to not only display how we've met the goals of the department, but to organize all of the work and materials we've created throughout the growth process of becoming a teacher." Another respondent contributed: "It was beneficial to create the Web site, and I feel it was a good way to showcase my teacher preparation and strengths. Creating it helped me to recognize my strengths and areas I felt I excelled." A third respondent commented: "I enjoyed developing it…. It was interesting to see how I changed as a person from my freshman year, how my goals changed, and how my teaching philosophy changed."

Even though most findings in this category were positive, the poor response regarding the demonstration of the practice goal suggests an opportunity for improvement. Thus, it was recommended that RC incorporate additional approaches for a student to demonstrate their mastery of the departmental goal of practice, such as short videos of the student teaching and/or video blogs of a student critiquing his/her teaching. Such strategies would add to existing artifacts, not only aiding in the demonstration of practice, but also in the development of additional technological skills.

Resource for Employment

Another key component of this evaluation was to answer the question: For those education students who sought teaching jobs, to what degree were they able to utilize the e-portfolio in their job search? Fifty-five percent of the participants felt that the e-portfolio could be a tool to be shared with employers; 22% did not. In addition, 55% felt that it was a beneficial experience; 22% did not. Participant comments clearly identified that a significant problem with the current system is that the e-portfolios are deleted from the college's server very soon after students graduate. As one respondent pointed out: "I was pleased with my electronic portfolio once I finished it. I was glad to have the opportunity to display my work in my student teaching experience; however, my portfolio is currently no longer

accessible on the Internet. For all the work and time put into it, it would have been beneficial to have the Web site remain on the Internet."

It was recommended that RC develop a system to help students maintain e-portfolio Web access after graduation. Potential solutions include: reserving college server space for a designated period after graduation and identifying free or inexpensive hosting services for students to rely on upon graduation, even assisting students in completing the transition of portfolio materials. Further, it was advised that the college coach students in their existing job search seminar on how to position their e-portfolios when job hunting; for example, making the Web URL available before the interview as a demonstration of their teaching and technological competencies. Lastly, it was advised that college faculty coach students in the job search seminar on how to sell their e-portfolio. They can talk about the innovative characteristics it possesses and how it demonstrates their technological skills, professional and personal abilities.

Applicability in the Classroom

The final set of key evaluation questions addressed the degree to which education graduates have (a) utilized electronic portfolio-related technology skills, and (b) benefitted from the goals relating to content, pedagogy, practice, and progress in their current teaching assignments. Of the nine survey respondents, five were in long-term substitution or full-time teaching positions. Thus, findings in this last category are based on those five individuals. Sixty percent of respondents agreed that they had utilized the technology skills gained from the e-portfolio in their current classroom situation. Sixty percent agreed or strongly agreed that they had learned enough to feel motivated to incorporate technology in their current classroom. Additionally, 60% agreed that the e-portfolio's focus on the departmental goals had aided them in their current classroom situation. However, 60% disagreed that they were able to use their e-portfolio as part of finding a job. Overall, findings suggest that recent graduates feel that the e-portfolio experience organized around the college's departmental goals has benefitted them as beginning teachers in the classroom, but not as a tool to aid them in securing a position.

Scholarly Significance of the Study

This study contributes to research and practice in two ways. First, it demonstrates that collecting data from education students regarding their e-portfolio experience can provide an important lens for teacher educators to formatively evaluate an e-portfolio process. Findings can provide benefits for all stakeholders and even offer a basis for more expedient improvements when deficiencies are revealed (Ritzhaupt et al., 2008). Ultimately, education students need to be viewed as important stakeholders and to understand that their perceptions matter and can make a difference (Wetzler & Strudler, 2005). When a formative evaluation that includes student perceptions is implemented as an integral part of the design and development of the e-portfolio process (Russ-Eft & Preskill, 2001), it contributes a learner-centered element and an informative and valuable perspective for teacher educators.

Secondly, this study validates that an e-portfolio should not be considered a mere collection of artifacts to show at the end of an educational program but rather a process for learning (Brandes & Boskic, 2008). When the e-portfolio is developed to be a learner-centered process and communicated as such, students embrace the process more constructively (Barrett, 2007). When the e-portfolio experience includes students reflecting deeply about their own teaching methodology, the process facilitates learning (Strudler & Wetzler, 2008) and provides a basis for students to contemplate their identities as teachers (Hallman, 2007).

In closing, this study points to the relevance of analyzing student perspectives in the e-portfolio process as well as creating a process that is learner-centered; includes deep reflection on the part of the education student; and incorporates conversations with teacher educators regarding how the e-portfolio can be utilized as a tool for learning. As a result of the study, Rosselin College has already made enhancements to the e-portfolio program and, most importantly, now has a practical vehicle, in the form of an easily administered electronic survey, for ongoing evaluation and revision. Other colleges and universities employing e-portfolios should be encouraged, through the RC experience, to incorporate formative evaluation and revision into the e-portfolio process.

Appendix A

Assessing Rosselin College's Teacher Candidate
Electronic Portfolio

Instructions: Please complete the following survey based on your experiences and opinions about completing the Department of Education's Student Teaching Electronic Portfolio. Type your answers below and return to me via email attachment. Your individual responses will remain confidential and anonymous in any of the evaluation report findings.

Part I: General Questions

Creating the electronic portfolio:	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	5	4	3	2	1
1. increased my knowledge of technology in general.					
2. increased my knowledge of technology that I could use in the classroom.					
3. allowed me the opportunity to demonstrate my knowledge of technology.					
4. allowed me the opportunity to demonstrate my understanding of the departmental goal of content, which relates to the actual subject matter that is taught.					
5. allowed me the opportunity to demonstrate my understanding of the departmental goal of pedagogy, which relates to the manner that lessons are designed and planned.					

Creating the electronic portfolio:	Strongly Disagree 5	Disagree 4	Neither Agree nor Disagree 3	Agree 2	Strongly Agree 1
6. allowed me the opportunity to demonstrate my understanding of the departmental goal of practice, which relates to how the lesson is actually delivered.					
7. allowed me the opportunity to demonstrate my understanding of the departmental goal of progress, which relates to how I was able to grow professionally in the field of education.					
8. provided me with the opportunity to reflect upon my growth and accomplishments at the end of the education program.					
9. could be a tool to share with potential employers, especially those in the field of education.					
10. was a beneficial experience for me.					

Additional comments from any of the above questions. Please list the specific question(s) on which you are commenting.

Part II: Short Answer Questions

11. Now that you are finished, how do you currently feel about your electronic portfolio or the process of developing it?

12. What do you think was the primary purpose(s) for the electronic portfolio that you created?

13. In the future, do you think you will use or adapt the electronic portfolio that you created? Have you already had the opportunity to share your electronic portfolio during any interviews?

14. How could the faculty at RC have improved the electronic portfolio or the process by which you developed it?

15. Do you have any further suggestions for how the education faculty at RC could have provided more training or support, to prevent excessive work for the end of the semester?

16. Are you currently teaching, even as a substitute teacher? If yes, proceed to Part III. If no, you are finished with the survey. Thank you!
     a. Where?
     b. How long?
     c. What subject(s) and grade(s)?

Part III: Teaching-Related Questions

If you are currently teaching, even as a substitute teacher, please continue below.

Creating the electronic portfolio:	Strongly Disagree 5	Disagree 4	Neither Agree nor Disagree 3	Agree 2	Strongly Agree 1
17. has allowed me to utilize the technology skills, I learned while developing the portfolio, in my classroom.					
18. has encouraged me or influenced me to use technology in my classroom when available or possible.					
19. and its focus on mastering the goals of content, pedagogy, practice and progress have aided me in my teaching position.					
20. provided me with a visual demonstration of my skills and accomplishments that I was able to share with employers when I was interviewing for teaching positions.					

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Implementation of Service-Learning in Language Courses:
A Pilot Experience

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Abstract:
This article examines the integration of a service-learning component into Spanish language courses at a small four-year liberal arts college in Virginia. It assesses the pros and cons of the mentioned project as well as the support and resources needed to complete it. Additionally, this piece describes the benefits derived from this pilot experience for all involved: students, faculty, and community members alike.

As an integral part of the educational process at Emory & Henry College, the Appalachian Center for Community Service practices a relational, place-based approach to service and education linking classroom teaching and learning to persons' life experiences. In addition to the educational components of this vital, place-based work, it also carries with it the obligation to provide a range of resources to serve people and places locally, regionally, nationally, and globally. (Statement of Mission and Values, 1996, p.1)

Introduction

In June 2008, members of various departments at Emory & Henry College participated in a six-day seminar sponsored by The Appalachian Center for Community Service. Participants included ten members of the faculty of Emory & Henry College from the following departments: physical education, music, religion, biology, mass communications, business administration, languages, and theatre. The goal of this seminar was to plan and discuss the integration of a service-learning component into a variety of disciplines and courses. Consequently, this seminar enabled the languages department to develop their own ideas and methods in order to integrate service-learning into selected Spanish classes. During the seminar, participants learned the importance of going beyond the classroom setting and the necessity of making connections with the outside world through service-learning, "(…) the academy must look beyond the campus walls. In other words, a commitment to the common good should be at the center of citizenship, and such a commitment is best acquired through service in the larger community" (Fisher, 2002, p. 94).

The discussions during this summer seminar allowed participants to reflect on the issues entailed by adding a service-learning component to their disciplines and to their specific courses. Questions brought to their attention dealt with a variety of topics such as:

1. How was service-learning defined?

2. What resources and support were available?

3. How could service-learning be integrated into a course?

4. Were the extra time, work, and commitment worth it?

5. What were the challenges?

6. What were the benefits?

Participants at the seminar discussed the various definitions of service-learning. For the languages department at Emory &

Henry College, some of the characteristics that best exemplified languages and service-learning encompassed academic learning, benefits for both students and recipients, and commitment to the community. This approach was best articulated by The Community College National Center for Community Engagement, "Service-learning programs involve students in organized community service that addresses local needs, while developing their academic skills, sense of civic responsibility, and commitment to the community" (Service-Learning, 2003, p. 9). The languages department at Emory & Henry defined service-learning as a process in which learning takes place through two avenues: The first is by empowering college-level students to convey learning to other students; thus, reinforcing student's own knowledge of the Spanish language and culture. The second affords college-level students an opportunity to participate in service efforts and, thereby, develop a strong sense of commitment to their designated communities.

The Appalachian Center for Community Service provided numerous reading materials, bibliography and made needed resources available. Their members facilitated individualized meetings to discuss and mentor projects. They also introduced guest speakers. The strong commitment of the center's staff to ensure the success of the projects became apparent to all involved. Nonetheless, the responses to the rest of the questions required each department to search for answers upon completion of their projects. The following is an attempt to answer such questions based on the experience of the languages department.

This pilot initiative in the languages department focused on two different Spanish classes taught during the 2008-2009 academic year: Spanish 351: *Advanced Grammar and Composition* and Spanish 203: *Spanish Conversation*. The time and effort required for this enterprise represented a major commitment by those involved. Nevertheless, the possibilities and benefits seemed endless as supported by the state of research on the subject: "However, faculty and administrators alike saw the potential for enhancing community relations, student learning, and overall scholarship performance of the institution through applied scholarship and various forms of community-based learning" (Holland & Gelmon, 2003, 195).

Spanish 351: Advanced Grammar and Composition

In the fall of 2008, the languages department included a service-component into Spanish 351. All nine students registered in the class participated in this pilot experience. This course focused on an intense grammar review to enable students to express themselves both verbally and in written form in the target language: Spanish. As part of this course, students were required to complete a service-learning project which accounted 15% of their final grade. During the first week of classes, students received information concerning potential sites and projects. The syllabus provided specific guidelines and expectations from the instructor to the students:

1. After selecting partners, projects, and appropriate sites, students were to create Spanish lessons including vocabulary, grammar, activities, and culture.

2. Upon completion of the lessons, students were to teach those lessons created by them at the selected sites.

3. Students were required to keep a weekly journal for their specific project incorporating their personal reflections.

4. Students were responsible for meeting outside the classroom with their partners and collaborate on the project. Part of the success on the project depended on their willingness to work as a team.

5. Class time was devoted to the discussions of their projects and carrying out the project according to an attached schedule. The Spanish term tertulias was used for this discussion time.

Students were provided two options to fulfill their service-learning assignment:

Option 1

It required working with The Highlands Project for Public Education, a partnership between Emory & Henry College and the Monroe District Schools of Washington County. The Highlands Project provided after-school academic program for

students from third to eighth grades in the area. Five of the nine students in the class selected this option. This option encompassed four parts: to create Spanish units, to teach them to the children, to keep a journal reflecting on their experiences, and to discuss their project in class with their classmates and instructor.

Implementation of option 1

The group who selected this option was responsible for designing Spanish lessons targeting elementary and middle school children. Emory & Henry students dedicated the first part of the semester working on their units. They also submitted detailed information of their work. They included the theme of the unit, its description, objectives, materials needed, and activities developed to reinforce the subject presented. The lessons consisted of vocabulary related to numbers, family, animals, sports, and food. They also incorporated units pertaining to piñatas, quinceañeras, Christmas, and Spanish-speaking countries like Mexico and Spain. During the second part of the semester, students taught their lessons to the children in one hour intervals for five weeks.

As part of their service-learning project experience, students kept a journal describing their experience including challenges encountered as well as rewards: "Journals can be an effective way to develop self-understanding and connect the service experience to the course content." (Bringle, 113). During the semester, class time was devoted to discuss topics pertaining to the progress of the project, the negatives and positives of such and the value of service-learning.

Option 1: Challenges

Students at Emory & Henry faced several obstacles. The main one was the lack of adequate preparation in dealing with children and young people in a classroom setting. For four of the five students involved in this project, it was their first time as instructors to children ages 8 to 14. Therefore, they had trouble maintaining discipline and managing the class time.

The following are excerpts from Emory & Henry students'
journals as they reflected on this difficulty:

- Our first day of teaching was, well, exciting to say the least.
  As I wandered into the basement of the chapel to find the
  kids I was supposed to be working with, the last thing I
  expected was to see around fifty of them doing a number
  of things ranging from running, screaming, doing
  homework, crying, yelling, more screaming. At that point I
  realized that I would be lucky to make it out of the
  basement alive when my time with the kids was up.

- The attitude of the students was disappointing, but those
  students who told us what they remember from the
  previous days outweighed the negative.

- This group would not focus and had a very hard time
  listening to me and respecting me.

- They really weren't as bad as we made them out to be, but
  they were hard to deal with.

- After my experience with them, I don't think it was all that
  bad, but I could see how the kids could be a handful if you
  let them get to you.

Also, there were difficulties trying to work outside the classroom
as a group. Some students complained on the fact that certain
members of the group carried most of the work of the project
while others did not fulfill their expected responsibilities.
Another concern stated by students was "the overkill on
paperwork for students that were not part of the Appalachian
Center."

Option 1: Rewards

Despite the challenges, the benefits of the project were
apparent. Emory & Henry College students recognized the
positive impact of this project and expressed thus in their final
reflections:

- The service learning experience was a good idea…I believe it was helpful to us and the children.

- I really enjoyed the whole experience and felt that all of the kids learned a lot. Hopefully they will be able to carry over the knowledge.

- I know this journal makes it seem like I have changed career plans, but something happened today that make me desire teaching even more. A girl in my third group came to me excited and recited 0 to 10 in Spanish and one of Stephanie's kids did the same. We were all so happy that we were really teaching something to the children. I believe this further proves that we were really teaching something to the children. I believe this further proves that we really do make a difference in the lives of those of look up to us.

- The community service portion of Spanish 351 is over. All in all, it was a great experience. It's a good feeling to use what I have learned to help and teach others even it is elementary/middle school students…Please keep this as a part of Spanish 351.

Option 2

It entailed working with Mt.Rogers Regional Adult Education program which offered English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes at Pleasant View Methodist Church. Four students selected this option. This project centered on the creation of language units in both Spanish and English for Spanish-speaking adults in our area, teaching the lessons, keeping a journal, and participating in the discussions of their project in class.

Implementation of option 2

This group required to create units including vocabulary and activities related to common challenges that adults encounter as they struggle with a language barrier. Some of these lessons encompassed situations such as visiting a doctor or a dentist, going to a hospital, shopping, filling out forms, etc. As part of this

project, students were responsible for teaching these lessons and preparing activities. Such lessons focused on developing verbal communication and conversation rather than written work. As in option 1, the first part of the semester was spent working on their units and the second part teaching them to the adults in one and a half hour intervals for four weeks. Students also kept a journal reflecting on the project and participated in the tertulias or discussions in class.

Option 2: Challenges

The main obstacle of this project was the inability of some of the Emory & Henry students to work together. Certain members of the group did not participate nor did they cooperate with the rest of their fellow classmates. As a result, several members worked a lot harder than others creating conflict among themselves. They expressed their frustrations in their journals:

- So, we were supposed to meet tonight, and he was going to bring his laptop and we were going to collaboratively create the lesson plans. However, that didn't happen…we didn't have any computer or anything to work on because he didn't show up at all. It is 11:30 and he just messaged me and said, "Oh, I forgot…" So typical…
- He didn't come to the planning session tonight. He said that he would be here, but he didn't show up.

Option 2: Rewards

Despite the mentioned obstacle, Emory & Henry students were able to prepare their units and successfully taught them to the adults. They received excellent evaluations from the site director. Also, the satisfaction among this group was very high as reflected on their journals:

- I had a really good time with this project and I'm very happy that I got the opportunity to use my Spanish and get a little more comfortable speaking Spanish to native speakers…

- Well, it is our last night. Actually, the last time was our last *required* night, but we are going back…Honestly, I wish I had time to keep going to the classes-I really enjoyed it.

- Overall, I had a very positive experience with this service learning project. In a way it made me feel good that we were providing this service to people who otherwise wouldn't be receiving that service. It really made me appreciate what an uphill battle it is to become acclimated to a culture. I can say for a fact that it makes me want to do more in this respect. And it also had its benefits for me. It helped me to improve my communication skills, especially in Spanish where I learned new words and new ways to say things.

Spanish 203: Spanish Conversation

In the spring of 2009, the languages department incorporated a service-component into Spanish 203. This course focused on the development of listening, comprehension, and verbal skills at an intermediate level in Spanish. This class also emphasized vocabulary acquisition and the development of reading skills. As in Spanish 351, the eight students enrolled in this course were required to complete a service-learning project which accounted for 15% of their final grade. The syllabus provided specific guidelines and expectations from the instructor to the students as discussed for Spanish 351. During the first week of classes, students received information concerning their assigned site: Marion Primary School.

Implementation

This group was expected to work with Marion Primary School through its after-school program, Star Mountain Club. They were to work with children from pre-k to second grades. Students spent the first part of the semester working on their lessons and the last part of such teaching their lessons created in one hour intervals for five weeks. The implementation of their lessons followed the following format, as recommended by the program director:

1. Day 1: Students prepared half an hour of activities working together in a big group that included all the children from the after school program. After the first day, students had the option to work individually with a group of four children or work with a classmate with a group of eight to nine children.
2. Day 2: They worked on days of the week. They also created Valentine cards in Spanish.
3. Day 3: They learned vocabulary about family and animals.
4. Day 4: The lesson involved working with colors.
5. Day 5: Students prepared a fiesta with games, food, and activities for the children.

As in previous options, participants were required to submit their reflections in a journal form and to participate in class discussions or tertulias.

Challenges

This group faced the most obstacles of all. The distance to the site was one of them since students were expected to travel for approximately 45 miles round-trip to teach their lessons. Additionally, some students expressed concerns about the inadequate correlation between the service-learning project and the content of the course. Also, students were not aware of the service-learning component when they registered for the class. As a result, this issue generated high levels of dissatisfaction among the class.

The following comments express the challenges these students faced:

- The course is in conversation and we didn't have conversations or speak in Spanish, the kids barely knew English! And we were teaching such basic things…it wasn't really beneficial to the class itself.
- However, I would like to have known about it before I registered for the class because of how much scheduling

goes into it. Also, our project I don't think was the most
fitting for our class.

• I also think we should have been aware of the service
component before we started the class.

Rewards

Despite the obstacles, students responded positively to the
integration of service-learning into the course as expressed in
their journals:

- I thought the component added to experience in the class
because we were teaching kids Spanish, and teaching
material to other people helped me in my conversation
skills.

- I really liked the service learning aspect of the class because
it gives us a chance to practice what we know.

- The service learning concept is great!

- I've really enjoyed this assignment because I got to do
several of my favorite things, teach, speak Spanish, and
work with kids.

- The teachers and staff at Marion were kind, caring and
considerate. They were also very involved with the
children and their activities. Every time we left the school
we got thank you's from everyone we saw. I really enjoyed
working at Marion Elementary.

Conclusion

Adding a service-learning component to Spanish courses at
Emory & Henry College was a challenging but rewarding
experience for the languages department. It was challenging
because such integration required intense preparation and time
commitment on part of the faculty. The Faculty was compelled to
deal with a variety of issues such as the selection of the site and
the logistics involved, ensuring the appropriate relationship

between the project and the course material, and dealing with the unknown and unexpected issues that surfaced throughout this process. The Appalachian Center for Community Service proved to be crucial to the success of this endeavor.

Undoubtedly, the benefits of integrating service-learning into Spanish classes offset the challenges. This service-learning benefited the community by fulfilling its needs. It also positively impacted the languages faculty at Emory & Henry College. Spanish language became alive by expanding one's teaching outside the parameters of the classroom. It connected faculty with members of the community as they work together for a common cause developing and fostering professional relationships and partnerships. Additionally, it provided a new field of research to those involved. More importantly, students participating in this pilot experience also benefited greatly by:

1. practicing the material learned in class thus making it more relevant

2. exposing them to a different method of learning

3. establishing a connection with their community

4. working in groups and dealing with different personalities

5. solving problems

6. exposing them to a different culture and people (depending on the project)

7. developing a special bond among classmates

8. helping others

9. promoting good citizenship

The languages department at Emory & Henry will implement again service-learning in languages courses during the 2010-2011 academic year.

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Student Perception of Professional Education Organizations

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Abstract:
This study highlights perceptions of undergraduate students in the education program at a private, religious university in Virginia. Teacher candidate responses to an online survey portrayed views on the importance of joining and participating in local and national level professional education organizations (n=57). The responses reflected candidates' perceptions of service, camaraderie, career preparation, and other opportunities that professional organizations seek to provide.

How long does it take to become an effective teacher? Stronge (2002) states that becoming an effective teacher is "a lifelong pursuit" (p. 64). Teacher preparation programs seek to provide opportunities for growth in knowledge, practice, and professionalism as they prepare students for the teaching profession. Dewey explains that the transition from college to the classroom must come after a teacher is prepared with a repertoire of strategies, skills, and experiences (as cited in Steffy, Wolfe, Pasch, & Enz, 2000).

Hart (2004) and Pajares (1992) assert that the beliefs held by pre-service teachers create "a powerful vehicle for providing effective teacher preparation" (as cited in Parker & Brindley, 2008, p. 2). According to Combs, Blume, Newman, and Wass (1974), evaluation of teacher preparation programs through feedback from learners is vital in order to improve future program decisions. The present study focuses on one area of interest and presents the question: Does the pre-service teacher ultimately believe that membership in an educational organization is beneficial in his or her lifelong pursuit of becoming an effective teacher?

At one private, religious university, the candidates for graduation from the School of Education are required to join and participate in at least one professional organization. The requirement is currently located on the Field Experience Summary (FES), which is a document kept by all education majors throughout their undergraduate careers to record undergraduate education experiences. The experiences are assessed for completion during the student teaching semester. Organizations may include Kappa Delta Pi (KDP), Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), and other reputable organizations (either on-campus or online). The purpose of the survey at hand was to explore student perception of this professional requirement.

Review of Literature

Professional education organizations provide numerous opportunities for teachers to increase in their professional knowledge, connect with local school systems, experience classroom settings, connect with the community, and engage with fellow students and practicing teachers. Organization members gain necessary skills for being effective teachers, practicing leadership, committing to service, and attending conferences and workshops to gain insight into the education profession (Kappa Delta Pi, 2010).

Field Experiences

Steffy et al. (2000) considers field experiences with partnering schools or in other settings to be "the most meaningful component of formal teacher education" (p. 35). According to Combs et al. (1974), student involvement should be "community-wide in scope" (p. 152). Therefore, as pre-service teachers participate in professional education organizations, they increase in their effectiveness by serving local schools and families who participate in community opportunities sponsored by professional organizations. Additionally, more field experiences allow pre-service teachers to be drawn to a specific grade level or age of children, thus increasing effectiveness according to the age with which teachers realize they work best (Combs et al., 1974).

Combs et al. (1974) says that teacher preparation programs should not only enable their students to gain knowledge, but they should also allow students opportunities to act on their knowledge. Teacher-preparation programs in the past completely focused on courses and the acquisition of knowledge, having been solely residential with no required field experiences. In contrast, Combs considers one of the least effective methods of teacher preparation to be telling students *how* to be teachers without *showing them* their need to be effective teachers. Educators who teach students in preparation programs "have long been convinced of the importance of involvement" (Combs et al., 1974, p. 36).

Professional Development

Seiffert (1999) proclaims that "professionalism is a process more than an outcome" (as cited in Helterbran, 2008, p. 126). When pre-service teachers participate as in professional education organizations, they engage in professional development. Their training in professionalism through membership in professional organizations is transferred directly into the classroom. In fact, research proposes that pre-service teachers who received professional development in a teacher education program will exhibit greater classroom success than those who strive to excel on their own (as cited in Steffy, et. al, 2000).

Portfolios

Many teacher preparation programs ask students to prepare portfolios to be shown to future employers. Portfolios help "build the level of self-knowledge and sense of responsibility needed" during the transition from student to teacher (as cited in Steffy, et. al, 2000, p. 38). More and more preparation programs are moving towards the usage of electronic portfolios, such as LiveText (Ntuli, Keengwe, & Kyei-Blankson, L., 2009). With the implementation of professional organization involvement into preparation programs, students gain professional practice and pictures that may be documented and later shown to employers. Organization involvement ultimately shows future employers that an aspiring teacher was committed to professional education prior to seeking school employment.

Benefits During the Teaching Profession

Professionalism does not stop at graduation from an undergraduate education program. How do teachers continue to grow? A principal named Janice Hogan says, "In order to grow professionally, it is important for teachers to participate in their professional organizations" (Hurst & Reding, 2009, p. 65). Hurst and Reding (2009) explain that being a part of a professional organization "is an excellent way to stay up to date in your field" (p. 65). Teachers are able to join organizations that deal directly with the subject they may teach. All subjects and areas of learning have similar professional organizations for the various fields of study in math, science, technology and even music. The organizations allow teachers to gain knowledge of the current developments in their area of study and practice.

Organizations host conferences and distribute journals that inform teachers of up to date research in their fields as well as enable them to implement new teaching methods, ideas, and strategies into their classrooms. Conferences held by organizations may last one or two days to one week. Teachers from across the nation and world may come to a chosen city to fellowship, learn with, and learn from fellow educators. Organizations may publish articles, newspapers, journals, or magazines that give excellent and practical advice for both

pre-service and practicing teachers. These publications may be distributed monthly, yearly, or on a seasonal basis (Hurst & Reding, 2009).

As members of organizations, in-service teachers receive professional development training that directly affects student success. According to Stronge (2002), there exists a positive relationship "between student achievement and how recently an experienced teacher took part in a professional development opportunity such as a conference, workshop, or graduate class" (p. 6). Therefore, student achievement is related to the professional training of in-service teachers as a result of organization involvement.

Some organizations also offer support or defense concerning unjust accusations or discrimination. An additional advantage is that some organizations may offer liability insurance for teachers as a benefit of membership (Hurst & Reding, 2009). Hurst and Reding (2009) encourage new teachers who start a teaching job to "ask teachers in your building or district what organizations they belong to and ask for information regarding these to help you decide which would be the best fit for you" (p. 66).

Schools of Education are responsible for effectively preparing and transitioning their candidates into the teaching profession. To assist in this endeavor, a specific School of Education at one university requires candidates to join and participate in at least one professional organization prior to their graduation from the teacher education program. Organizations may include Kappa Delta Pi (KDP), Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), and other reputable organizations (either on-campus or online). Teacher candidates in this program were surveyed to explore perceived satisfaction of this professional requirement.

Method

Participants

Four hundred five survey links were sent via email to teacher candidates actively enrolled in sophomore, junior, and senior level residential education courses at the university. Most education majors at the university do not join a professional

education organization until their sophomore year of college. Each student was pursuing one of the following Education licensures: Elementary Education Licensure, Secondary Education Licensure, or Elementary and Special Education Dual Licensure (see Table 1).

Seven professors at the university played a vital role in the implementation of the survey. Professors who taught students with the college status of sophomore, junior, senior, or student teacher received an email that contained a link to the survey and were asked to send the email to their students.

Survey

The survey included one question asking the type of licensure the participant was seeking, six scale-based questions, five open-ended response questions, and one yes or no question. Students answered the given a scale of one to five, one meaning Strongly Disagree and five meaning Strongly Agree. The scaled questions were as follows:

1. Is it a justifiable requirement to join a professional organization?
2. Did the organization you chose provide sufficient experiences for meaningful service and contribution?
3. Did the organization you chose provide learning opportunities?
4. Did you experience a sense of community and camaraderie as a result of your membership in the organization of your choice?
5. Did this camaraderie with fellow members encourage you to stay in your chosen field and improve your practice?
6. Do you believe you are better prepared for your profession as a result of joining the organization?

Open-ended question were as follows:

1. Describe your organization.

2. What is most beneficial about the organization?

3. What were the most meaningful experiences you had as a member of this organization?

4. What things do you wish were different about the organization?

5. Do you recommend that the Education Department keep professional organization membership a requirement in the future?   (Yes/No)   Why or why not?

Procedure

The survey was given through LiveText, an online accreditation management system the university uses as a technological means to develop, assess, and measure student learning (LiveText, Inc., 2009). Students were instructed to click the survey link provided in the email sent by professors. Participants were asked to complete the survey once for each professional education organization of which they were a member. Organizations may have required on-campus or online membership. Students were asked to complete the survey by Wednesday, December 16, 2009.

Results

Fifty-seven of 405 Education students responded to the survey. Excel was used to collect and interpret data. Table 1 shows the percentage and number of students in the sample of each type of education licensure offered by the university. Table 2 shows response percentages and number values of the sample (n=57). These numerical values were calculated based on the given scale to show how many students chose each level of agreement.

Scaled Questions

The following are the results of the scaled questions:

Results to Question 1 show that a total of 66% of the respondents indicated the university's requirement to join a professional education organization is justifiable (see Table 2).

Question 2 results show affirmative perceptions of organizational involvement and meaningful contribution to society (see Table 2). Service opportunities provided by professional organizations at the university promote contributions to others that were meaningful for the participants.

Results to Question 3 confirm that organizational membership does provide learning opportunities for teacher candidates (see Table 2). Students believe their organizations allow them to learn from the opportunities and events in which they participate.

As Table 2 shows, Question 4 results portray a mixture of responses regarding the community and camaraderie experiences of teacher candidates in relation to their organizational involvement. Over half of the respondents Strongly Agreed or Agreed and believed their organization provided community and camaraderie experiences. However, it should be noted that a significant percentage (23%) of respondents disagreed with Question 4.

The responses to Question 5 show that almost half of the respondents assert that camaraderie among members in their organizations encourage them to continue in preparing to be professional educators and become more effective at teaching.

According to the results of Questions 6, organization members acknowledge they are preparing for their future careers as teachers and believe their preparation through organizational membership is important (see Table 2).

Table 1

Licensure of Survey Respondents

Question: Which of the following denotes the licensure you are seeking?

	Percentage	Number of Students
Elementary Education Licensure	51%	29
Elementary and Special Education Dual Licensure	33%	19
Secondary Education Licensure	16%	9
Total	100%	57

Table 2

Scaled Question Responses as a Percentage and Numerical Value of the Sample

Question 1: Is it a justifiable requirement to join a professional organization?

	Percentage	Number of Students
1 Strongly Disagree	2%	1
2 Disagree	12%	7
3 Neutral	19%	11
4 Agree	40%	23
5 Strongly Agree	26%	15
Total	100%	57

Question 2: Did the organization you chose provide sufficient experiences for meaningful service and contribution?

	Percentage	Number of Students
1 Strongly Disagree	7%	4
2 Disagree	12%	7
3 Neutral	14%	8
4 Agree	39%	22
5 Strongly Agree	28%	16
Total	100%	57

Question 3: Did the organization you chose provide learning opportunities?

	Percentage	Number of Students
1 Strongly Disagree	5%	3
2 Disagree	7%	4
3 Neutral	9%	5
4 Agree	40%	23
5 Strongly Agree	37%	21
Blank (not answered)	2%	1
Total	100%	57

Question 4: Did you experience a sense of community and camaraderie as a result of your membership in the organization of your choice?

	Percentage	Number of Students
1 Strongly Disagree	9%	5
2 Disagree	23%	13
3 Neutral	14%	8
4 Agree	35%	20
5 Strongly Agree	19%	11
Total 100%	57	

Question 5: Did this camaraderie with fellow members encourage you to stay in your chosen field and improve your practice?

	Percentage	Number of Students
1 Strongly Disagree	5%	3
2 Disagree	18%	10
3 Neutral	28%	16
4 Agree	28%	16
5 Strongly Agree	21%	12
Total	100%	57

Question 6: Do you believe you are better prepared for your profession as a result of joining the organization?

	Percentage	Number of Students
1 Strongly Disagree	5%	3
2 Disagree	25%	14
3 Neutral	25%	14
4 Agree	28%	16
5 Strongly Agree	18%	10
Total	100%	57

Open-Ended Questions

The open-ended answer portion of the survey revealed various opinions regarding organizations and membership. The following discussion presents participant responses to the open-ended questions.

Question 1 of the open-ended portion of the survey says, "Describe your organization." Participant #6 responded with the following: "I am a member of KDP. This organization is for education majors who are given opportunities to learn and develop their professional career. We have been given opportunities to be involved around the community, and with different elementary schools." Participant #51 described his or her organization with the following: "PARC-Piedmont Area Reading Council. This is a group dedicated to implementing and providing up-to-date reading strategies and studies to equip educators to teach reading strategies to all levels of students in the Virginia Piedmont region." Both students appeared to have an accurate grasp of the purpose of their organizations due to their personal involvement.

Question 2 says, "What is most beneficial about the organization?" Participant #32 states, "I think that the information that the meetings give to future teachers in all educational levels is excellent. It gives great ideas for teaching, and allows candidates to see what teaching will be like and how to deal with certain situations."

Question 3 says, "What were the most meaningful experiences you had as a member of this organization?" Participant #46 shares, "My most meaningful experiences involved community work that I participated in, A Walk-a-Thon for a chair lift in a pool, Literacy Alive, Linkhorne's Fall Festival, donating books and school supplies to Bass Elementary. This organization prepared me and then offered opportunities to work with real students and truly see how effective I was personally. It also opened my eyes to how much I love teaching and brought out my passion for helping people." As seen here, personal experiences greatly impact organizational members.

Question 4 states, "What things do you wish were different about the organization?" Participant #55 responded: "The prices to join because they are very expensive for college students." Better organization and community among members were also desires of participants.

According to percentage results of Question 5 of the open-ended questions, more than half of survey participants said the Education Department should keep their professional organization a requirement in the future (see Table 3). One student who answered the open-ended portion of the question ("Why or why not?") said, "I think they should keep requiring it because it gives the future teacher a glimpse of what they will be expected to do when they are educators in the professional world." This student affirms the preparation he or she is receiving through organization participation.

Question 5 also revealed students in opposition to the Education Department's requirement for students to be organization members. The cost of organizational memberships was mentioned by several survey participants.

Table 3

Membership Requirement in the Future

Question 5: Do you recommend that the Education Department keep professional organization membership a requirement in the future? Why or why not?

	Percentage	Number of Students
Y (Yes)	61%	35
N (No)	37%	21
Blank (not answered)	2%	1
Total	100%	57

Discussion

Results showed an overall satisfaction with the Education Department's requirement for its majors to be a member of at least one professional organization.

Scaled Questions

The results to Question 1 (see Table 2) could be beneficial to faculty administrators in the university's School of Education. With the given results, leadership faculty members can view the perceived relevance of the Experience Summary requirements. They may decide whether the requirement to be a member of at least one professional organization should remain or be removed from the Field Experience Summary.

With over half of the respondents in favor of organizational membership, the department can more assertively justify why it requires pre-service teachers to be members of at least one education organization. Additionally, the university's on-campus education organizations may operate in greater confidence with the awareness that the majority of students believe the requirement to be a member of at least one organization is a justifiable requirement.

Question 2 shows that teacher candidates participated in meaningful experiences incorporating service and contribution (see Table 2). Organizations look not only inwardly towards its members, but outwardly towards others. For this reason, teacher candidates participate in events, activities, and efforts to serve others and contribute to their well-being.

In reference to Question 3, beneficial learning opportunities may come from field experiences with partnerships between organizations and the local schools or the local community (see Table 2). Continued partnerships based on service would be beneficial for the university's teacher candidates as well as local schools and the local community.

Question 4 reveals a noteworthy percentage of teacher candidates who disagreed with the amount of experience gained from organizational involvement (see Table 2). This significant percentage of disagreement may provoke the education organizations on the university's campus to provide more opportunities for fellowship and member interaction. Increased opportunities for gathering and interacting may promote community and camaraderie within the organizations.

Referring to the results of Question 4 and Question 5 (see Table 2), it may be beneficial for organizations on the university's campus to investigate whether camaraderie or other organizational aspects caused the encouragement. Organizations may then enhance the area(s) of cause to further encourage the continuation of teaching preparation and effectiveness.

It is interesting that 25% of the participants indicated "Disagreed" in response to Question 6 (see Table 2). It would be of great interest to ask students to name specific reasons for their acknowledgement of little to no preparation in regards to their organization involvement. Asking for detailed suggestions of how to effectively prepare pre-service teachers through organizational membership may be beneficial as well.

Open-Ended Questions

Students used affirmative descriptions of their organizations in response to Question 1. Teacher candidates mentioned professional development opportunities, teacher preparation, listening to speakers, as well as connecting and serving with peers

in the undergraduate education program. These descriptions reveal the impact organizations have in shaping aspiring teachers.

Responses to Question 2 included beneficial aspects of organizations. Beneficial activities for both for teacher candidates and the community were referenced. Encouraging speakers, website and mailing resources, and community experiences allow teacher candidates to experience the beneficial aspects of organizational involvement. For example, with KDP, students benefit from listening to guest speakers at monthly chapter meetings. Occasionally, panels of either student teachers or principals share wisdom they have acquired through personal experiences. Members learn and gain insight from hearing experienced educators such as these.

Question 3 responses reveal meaningful events that teacher candidates experience as organization members. Working closely with teachers, being role models to students, attending conferences, and making acquaintances in the field of education allow candidates to witness the significant impact organizations can have both personally and in the lives of others.

In response to Question 5 one participant affirmed the requirement of organizational involvement by referencing professionalism and future employers: "I believe it helps us as students and future educators to plan ahead. These organization[s] are going to mean a lot to our future employers. It will show them that even while we were in the process of becoming teachers we were taking ourselves seriously and presenting ourselves in a professional manner." This student considers job applications, interviews, and employment coupled with professionalism to be of great importance. Employers will look to see how teaching applicants have efficiently pursued preparation opportunity and ways to develop professionalism.

In contrast to the affirmative perceptions of professional organizations, responses to Question 4 portrayed negative aspects of organizations, or aspects teacher candidates wished were different. The following words were negatively referenced in the open-ended portion of the survey: fee, money, expensive, and time.

The term "fee" was negatively referenced four times, "money" negatively referenced fourteen times, and "expensive" negatively referenced eleven times. Most organizations require

membership fees to contribute to funding for organizational meetings, supplies, events, and conferences. Money may also be required to contribute to or participate in service projects. Giving money to organizations, in addition to paying for college, increases the financial strain of many teacher candidates.

In some survey responses, time was the main negative aspect. With the word "time" referenced negatively eleven times, it is evident that organization time commitments can greatly influence the limited amount of free time educations majors. The number of mandatory events required by organizations received several negative references. Fundraising activities, community service projects, monthly meetings, and organization conferences are simply a few events in which teacher candidates may be asked to or required to participate.

Therefore, revealed weaknesses, or negative aspects, of organizational membership at the university include fees and time. These word references may provoke the university's Education Department to ask organizations to investigate ways to decrease organization fees as well as evaluate the amount of time presently required for members.

Summary

The expected outcome of the administered survey was that students would see their membership and involvement in professional education organizations as both beneficial and meaningful. While student perception of the professional requirement of organizational membership showed various opinions, 66% of respondents believe the Education Department's requirement is justifiable (see Table 1) and 61% of respondents believe the Education Department should keep the requirement in the future (see Table 3). These percentages confirm that the Education Department's organization requirement is a justifiable requirement.

The university's future organizational endeavors may reflect the given survey results. With the addressed strengths, organizations may confidently continue to provide students with opportunities for meaningful service and community contribution. With the results of the survey, organizations may more purposefully spur their members into serving students in

local schools and members of the community, recognizing the value in member contributions. Additionally, organizations may receive assurance in their efforts to provide pre-service teachers numerous learning opportunities through field experiences, at monthly meetings, or through conferences.

With the weakness revealed from survey results, the organizations may consider and evaluate organization fees and time commitments. Reconsidering the number of activities or the number of required monthly meetings may allow students to more readily approve of requirements. Organizations may also think of ways to build camaraderie at chapter meetings. For example, by implementing games or team-building activities into chapter meetings and events, members have the opportunity to interact with peers.

The organizational benefits of service opportunities, experiences, professional preparation, community and camaraderie, and learning opportunities give the Education Department's organizations a firm foundation for their existences. While focusing on strengths and addressing weaknesses, the organizations may purposefully fulfill their individual missions. Ultimately, should membership in a professional organization be a requirement for college students pursuing teacher licensure? According to the administered survey results, membership in a professional organization should be a requirement for college students pursuing teacher licensure at the university. The benefits and effects are numerous.

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