



# **From Students to Teachers: Transforming Preservice Teachers' Views of Themselves through Early Field-based Experiences**

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# **Students into Teachers: Transforming Preservice Teachers' Views of Themselves through Early Field-based Experiences**

## **Abstract**

This session will present the results of a pilot study that investigated the effectiveness of tutoring experiences on the focus, confidence, and self-perceived efficacy of preservice teachers in a university-based teacher preparation program.

Subjects were preservice teachers in two EC-6 math and two EC-6 reading methods courses who tutored kindergarten through fifth grade public school students for at least two months.

Quantitative and qualitative measures indicated growth in the self-reported confidence and readiness-to-teach of subjects after the tutoring experiences, as well as growth toward thinking of themselves as teachers rather than students.

It should be the goal of teacher education colleges to help prepare the novice and assist the advanced beginner to become a competent teacher. (Berliner, 1988)



# Rationale

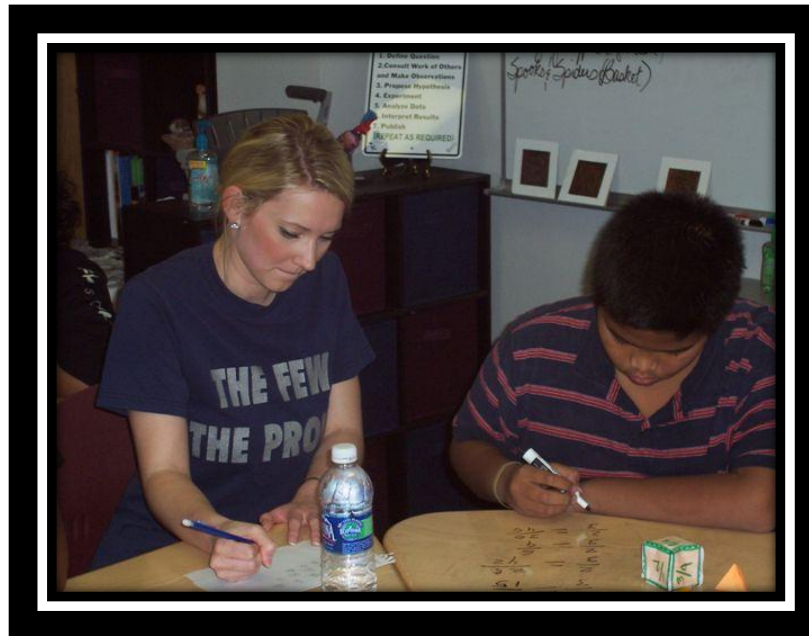
- During their education coursework, preservice teachers must acquire the skills and attitudes of a professional educator
- Texas has mandated limited-credit-hour undergraduate programs
  - State mandate of no more than 120 hours credit hours in undergraduate degree programs,
  - Students entering college with many hours from dual-credit programs in their high schools
  - Results in some very young teachers-to-be

# Rationale

- To deal with this shortened time frame for teacher preparation, teacher preparation programs need methods that will help preservice teachers acquire the attitudes and assume the responsibilities of professional educators more quickly.

# Purpose of the Pilot Study

Study the effects of field-based experiences on confidence, readiness, and professional maturity of preservice teachers



# Purpose of the Larger Study

- To examine changes in quality of their pedagogical skills when preservice teachers are required to spend more time in direct work with K-6 students and less in direct learning of pedagogical theory.



# Literature Review

Confidence in their abilities helps preservice teachers students undertake the many complex roles of teachers:

- Students will take on tasks where they feel very confident yet may avoid those in which they do not feel such self-assurance. (Pajares, 2002)
- Teacher candidates should be purposefully aware that the actions they decide to use in teaching situations come from specific thought processes related to their own feeling about their capability of success. (Bandura, 2001)
- Teacher candidates should feel that they have the ability to produce desired effects with their actions or else they will not feel compelled to act. (Bandura, 1986).



# Literature Review

Field experiences help preservice teachers gain confidence and move from thinking of themselves as students to thinking of themselves as teachers:

- Preservice teachers need more opportunities to solidify theoretical knowledge through direct work with students (Darling-Hammond, 1999)
- With opportunities to practice the theories they were taught in their teacher education courses, beginning teachers developed expertise. (Berliner, 1988.)
- Through field-based experiences, preservice teachers gained confidence and understanding of the rigors that teaching does and will require of them, (Fang & Ashley, 2004.)

# Subjects

- 39 preservice teachers
- in 4 teacher preparation courses
  - 2 sequential reading methods
  - 2 sequential math methods
  - Preservice teachers tutor K-6 students in both reading courses and in the 2<sup>nd</sup> math course; some students in the 1<sup>st</sup> math course had tutored while taking the 2<sup>nd</sup> math course previously.

# Measures

- Beginning and End of Course Surveys in all classes
  - 3 classes: Responses scored on 10-point scale
    - Confidence about teaching in general and in specific content areas
    - Self-perceived location on student-to-teacher scale
  - 1 class
    - Readiness to teach and assess reading (responses scored on 5-point scale)
    - Self-perceived expertise in teaching (3 point scale)

# Procedures

- Administer surveys at beginning and end of courses for courses with tutoring
- Administer surveys at end of course in course with no tutoring

# Data Analysis

- Pre- and post- mean scores on confidence/ readiness scale
  - for subjects have tutored
  - for subjects have not tutored
- Mean differences in pre- and post- scores in confidence for subjects who tutored during course
- Mean scores on student-to-teacher/teaching expertise continuums
  - for subjects have tutored
  - for subjects have not tutored

# Results: Confidence in readiness to teach

Pre-tutoring and post-tutoring mean raw scores

“How confident are you about teaching in general?”

“How confident are you about teaching reading/math specifically?”

	All (who tutored) n=31		1 <sup>st</sup> reading course n=8		1 <sup>st</sup> math course n=15		2 <sup>nd</sup> math course n=10	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Confidence in teaching	6.6/10	8.3/10	7.3/10	8.5/10			6.1/10	6.6/10
Confidence in teaching subject	6.7/10	8.2/10	5.7/10	7.7/10	6.4/10 * 7.7/10**		8.2/10	8.6/10

\*no tutoring experience

\*\*with tutoring experience in another course

# Results: Confidence in readiness to teach

Individual differences between pre-tutoring and post-tutoring mean raw scores

All (who tutored)	1 <sup>st</sup> reading Course (post - pre)	2 <sup>nd</sup> math course (post - pre)
Confidence in teaching	+1.2 (1.8)	+3.0
Confidence in teaching subject	+1.5 (2.2)	+1

# Results: Confidence in readiness to teach (2<sup>nd</sup> reading course)

Pre-tutoring and post-tutoring mean raw scores  
(4 point scale)

“How prepared do you feel you are to teach or assess reading?”

1-----2-----3-----4  
Not at all                  Somewhat                  Adequately                  Well  
prepared                  prepared                  prepared                  prepared

Prepared to Teach <i>n</i> =10		Prepared to Assess <i>n</i> =10	
Pre	Post	Pre	Post
3.3/4	3.9/4	3.3/4	3.8/4



# Results: Student-to-teacher transition

## Mean scores

‘Circle the number that represents where you feel you are on the “Student-to-Teacher” scale.’

1---2---3---4---5---6---7---8---9---10

I feel more like a  
student

I feel more like a  
teacher

All (who tutored)	1 <sup>st</sup> reading course	1 <sup>st</sup> math course (no tutoring)	2 <sup>nd</sup> math course
7.8	8.3	6.8*	8.0
		8.3**	

\*no tutoring experience

\*\*with tutoring experience in another course

# Results: Student-to-teacher transition (2<sup>nd</sup> reading course)

Pre-tutoring and post-tutoring mean raw scores  
(3 point scale)

“Describe yourself as a preservice teacher.” (Detailed descriptions provided to subjects.)

1-----2-----3  
Emergent/ Developing Proficient  
Novice

Level of Self-perceived Proficiency	
Pre	Post
1.6/3	2.3 /3

# Qualitative Results (2<sup>nd</sup> course)

- 4 case studies
- Two 18-30, Two over 31
- From each age group, one emergent/novice and one developing
- Years of Experience
- Solicitation VS loner
- State of Mind
- View of Children

# Conclusions from the Pilot Study

1. Students in courses that included field experiences:
  - Grew in their confidence about their readiness to teach in general
  - Grew in their confidence about their readiness to teach the specific content of the course
2. Students who take or have taken courses that included field experiences perceive themselves as being closer to a teacher than their counterparts who have not taken such courses.

# Conclusions from the Pilot Study

3. How students rate themselves makes a difference.
4. Over reliance on class management may lead to missing seeing success of the elementary student.

# Changes /Additions for formal study

- Use additional descriptors for student-to-teacher scale to improve reliability
- Collect pre-tutoring data on perception of location on student-to-teacher scale
- Correlate age of student to scores
- Use external data from cooperating teachers to validate measures based on self-reported characteristics

# Further study

- Why do some students consider themselves more ready to teach than others?
- Do younger or older preservice teachers benefit more from field-based experiences?
- Will PDS and Student Teaching cooperating teachers find these preservice teachers to be more ready to teach and better teachers?
- Will the time spent in field-experiences interfere with preservice teachers' acquisition of pedagogical knowledge and their scores on certification exams?

# Food for Thought

- Are you finding your preservice teachers are younger than a few years ago?
- What has been your experience with field-based experiences and student maturation?
- Have you tried any other techniques to prepare young teachers-to-be for the profession?



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