

EDUCATION: PATHWAYS TO SUPERIOR CONTENT KNOWLEDGE IN  
PRESERVICE TEACHERS

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## ABSTRACT

This research addresses lack of student teaching preparation. There is strong evidence that beginning teachers are not trained to adequately teach students due to their lack of preparation/content knowledge. The purpose of this study is to examine the experience of beginning teachers to try to understand why student teachers are not prepared for the 21<sup>st</sup> century class. It also addresses how to improve the student teaching experience at all levels of teacher preparation in the elementary, middle, and high school settings.

The literature revealed key findings which included the following: teacher preparation institutions need to transform their programs to reflect the realities of 21<sup>st</sup> century schools, pre-service teachers should be exposed to the intense work of the typical classroom teacher over a much longer period of time, and colleges need to ensure that cooperating teachers are models of best practice.

This study takes the qualitative approach, using interview protocol. Participants included an elementary school teacher in Northern California, and one student teacher enrolled in an undergraduate program in teacher preparation at a private university in the greater San Francisco Bay Area. Also a superintendent of a local school district in Dayton, Ohio participated in the study. A university professor involved in teacher education was also interviewed for this study.

Results indicated that more time in the classroom would result in an improved level of a teacher's confidence. Coursework at the university level needs to parallel the same content learning in the K-12 school. Finally, an individual's personality is a strong

factor in success in teaching. A teacher with superior content knowledge goes unnoticed without an engaging personality.

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## **SECTION I: INTRODUCTION**

### Statement of the Problem

Teachers should have superior knowledge in their subject. Teachers should not only have superior knowledge of their subject but also have enough experience teaching content to students. How is it possible to measure if a teacher can be successful? The only way that a teacher's ability can be measured is by evaluating how successful a teacher is in the classroom.

There are many approaches to teaching a subject to students, but that does not mean every way is successful. In today's society we are amazed as we see so many children not prepared for jobs in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

The research reports that there are unqualified teachers in many school settings (Chesley & Jordan, 2012). The teacher preparation universities are not hands on, but many faculties do not let the students demonstrate their superior content knowledge by giving them more time in the classroom to help prepare them to teach. However, much research indicates that there are successful ways of preparing a student teacher in building superior content knowledge by having a longer period of time to practice in the classroom setting (Chesley & Jordan, 2012).

### Significance of the Study

This paper is important for understanding that we need to have successful student teachers with superior content knowledge using successful teaching methods to produce successful students.

### Purpose of the Study

Understanding how important it is to be prepared for teaching in the 21<sup>st</sup> century can help faculty and student teachers improve teaching and learning in the classroom. If teachers are well prepared with a high level of content knowledge, then students will be better prepared academically. Consequently the purpose of this paper is to enlighten professionals in learning successful teaching methods, which help improve teaching skills in student teachers. The purpose of this study is to identify successful practices in universities that build successful student teachers.

### Background Information

The article *What's Missing from Teacher Prep* showed the lack of preparation of educators in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Chesley & Jordan, 2012). Many educators believe that student teachers should spend more time in the classroom, more than other experiences outside the classroom, as in lecture classes and observations. A traditional way of teacher preparation involves having more instructional classes to teach student teachers how to be successful in the classroom. The important factor here is that student teachers need more time in the classroom, actually watching successful teachers, and practicing successful ways to teach students.

Should we still stand by the traditional way of teaching? Chesley and Jordan (2012) point out how teachers are not being prepared to be successful. The researchers claim that student teachers struggle in the first few years of teaching. The main problem indicates that new teachers have not had sufficient hands on experience in actually teaching, early in their training. Additionally, Chesley and Jordan state that universities

are not performing their duties as mentors or preparing student teachers for what they will face in classroom.

### Research Questions

This paper addresses successful pre-service models and successful practices for student teachers. The research questions are:

1. What are the benefits of having successful teaching preparation that includes more teaching time?
2. How do learning successful teaching methods increase student performance in learning? How does this help the student teacher?
3. What ways can teacher preparation benefit students with low performance in the classroom? If you are better prepared to teach when you are student teaching how does this connect to improved student learning in any setting, low or high performing schools?

### Definition of Terms

#### Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK)

TPACK has lessons on video, showing student teachers how to be superior in teaching different subject. This gives student teachers a reference point for them to apply to their own training.

- Focuses on technological knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and content knowledge.

The main purpose of the TPACK would examined, and show the importance of technological for teachers.

### Teachers in Residence - (TIR)

The idea behind teachers-in-residence is to bring public school classroom teachers to campus to offer their “real-life” expertise to aspiring educators and to various university projects and collaborations. In turn, the teachers in residence return to their classrooms with new leadership skills and insights into the academic underpinnings of education.

### Student Teacher –

Student Teacher: for this study, the person interviewed was a senior in a 4-year Liberal Arts program with a focus on beginning teacher preparation. The student will be a student teacher in one year.

## SECTION II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this research is to identify successful pre-service models and successful student teaching experiences. Learning successful methods helps teachers be better prepared to manage a classroom. These studies show if the teacher is better prepared for the classroom, then students are more successful in learning. The first section, Teacher Preparation, reviews two studies that prepare teachers for the classroom. These studies show the effective use of classroom management using a variety of teaching methods. The next section, Virtual Learning, presents a study that explores the effectiveness of virtual learning via Internet, where pre-service teachers can see videos of successful teaching practices. The review concludes with a summary of key findings.

### Teacher Preparation

The purpose of teacher preparation is to prepare teachers for the type of classroom in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. These two studies show that there is no such thing as being over prepared. Teachers with more hands on experience have confidence in their ability to teach, and in turn, students learn the material.

#### *Pre-service Teacher Preparation*

Chesley and Jordan (2012) led two formal focus groups in order to find out how to help prepare teachers for the classrooms in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. They reported that teachers struggle in their first few years in the following areas: manage student behavior; motivate students; plan for short-term or long-term instruction; distinguish an objective from an activity; and overcome their insecurities about differentiating lessons to meet a range of student needs.

Chesley and Jordan's (2012) main point was that many new teachers are not prepared for classroom teaching. First, teachers lack the understanding of how to be successful in a 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom. Also, the researchers stated that universities are not performing their duties as mentors, preparing student teachers for what they face in the real classroom. For example, student teaching programs have few or no standard activities or goals; therefore, the quality of student experiences depends entirely on the knowledge and skill of their cooperating or mentor teachers. Third, student teachers do not have goals while teaching. Teachers mainly focus on lesson planning and in-class assessments. Fourth, teacher preparation institutions need to transform their programs to reflect the realities of contemporary schools.

To conduct their study, Chesley and Jordan (2012) asked teachers how prepared they thought they were prior to being a teacher. They formed two formal case studies with at least 30 teachers in each group. The first case study group consisted of teachers with the experience ranging from three months to three years of experiences. The next group consisted of well-experienced teachers who were qualified, trained mentors for new teachers. The findings from both groups showed the limitations in teacher preparation programs.

The results of the new teacher focus group indicated that teachers were not prepared for the task at hand. Knowing that teachers are not fit to teach, but are teaching is a big problem. Not only are the students suffering, but also teachers can become mentally frustrated, unable to do their job. One of the most important findings has shown that

...Recent graduates of teacher preparation programs were highly critical of professors who have not been in a public school classroom for 20 or more years, they stated that these professors had ‘a credibility gap’” They believed that student teaching, rather than the lessons they experienced in university classrooms, was the most effective component of their pre-service learning (Chesley & Jordan, 2012, p. 42).

The researchers concluded that a teacher preparation institutions need to transform their programs to reflect the realities of 21st century schools. Researchers suggest that teacher candidates should begin their clinical preparation for teaching in the second semester of their freshman year with actual classroom observations and experiences.

Pre-service teachers should complete 48 hours in directed observations and practicum experiences each semester. Colleges should design directed observations that assign cohorts to a specific school for a clearly articulated purpose. K-12 schools and universities must join forces to re-create teacher preparation and ensure that every classroom has a teacher who possesses a clear understanding of excellent professional practice and can apply it from day one. Pre-service teachers should be exposed to the intense work of the typical classroom teacher over a much longer time. Colleges need to ensure that cooperating teachers are models of best practice

### *Technology in Education*

Dilworth, Donaldson, George, Knezek, Searson, Starkweather, Struchens, Tillotson and Robinson (2012) describe another area teachers are not prepared,

technology in the classroom. Many experienced teachers have not taken the time to learn about technology that is available in the classroom to help them teach.

The purpose of this article is to describe the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK), program the authors designed to assist teachers to learn to use technology and explain the success of the program. The purpose of the TPACK program is to help prepare teachers for the technology in the classroom in the 21<sup>st</sup> and to help educate teachers to understand and use technology in the classroom. TPACK focuses on technological knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and content knowledge.

TPACK is a framework to understand and describe the kinds of knowledge needed by a teacher for effective pedagogical practice in a technology enhanced learning environment. In TPACK framework it argues the effect of technology integration for teaching specific content or subject matter requires understanding and negotiating the relationships between these three components: Technology, Pedagogy, and Content

TPACK consists of 7 different knowledge areas: (I) Content Knowledge (CK), (II) Pedagogical Knowledge (PK), (III) Technology Knowledge (TK), (IV) Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK), (V) Technological Content Knowledge (TCK), (VI) Technological Pedagogical Knowledge (TPK), and (VII) Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPCK).

The TPACK framework is becoming increasingly popular as an organizing frame for the development of educational technology professional development programs for teachers. The use of TPACK in this way has created a need to be able to measure teacher TPACK. TPACK framework does not necessarily mean that new technologies must be

introduced, but instead relating creative ideas to using the technologies already available to educators.

Dilworth et. al. (2012) concluded that a good way to improve teacher knowledge of and ability to use technology is to use a program such as TPACK. The authors also suggest that more “study is needed on how explore how emerging technology can be integrated into teacher” preparation programs (p.13).

TPACK is a framework that can be used by beginning and experienced teachers. This framework allows pathways to superior content knowledge.

### *Voices*

In the last article Sandoval-Lucero, Shanklin, Townsend, Davis, and Kalisher (2011), examined the experiences of beginning teachers from three preparation models; traditional, professional development school, and teacher-in-residence, regarding their perceptions of their first years of teaching.

Sandoval-Lucero, et.al. (2011) created this case study because they believe that teachers are not well prepared for teaching. The researchers decided to use the three-preparation model stated above to find out which model is best suited to prepare quality teachers. The main concern is how increasingly students have rejected traditional teacher training in which candidates receive pedagogical foundations followed by supervised student teaching, in favor of alternative pathways to teacher certification.

The researchers see alternative pathways as a problem because, in pathways all the skills that are needed to be a quality teacher will not be introduced the proper way for the student teacher.

If the proper method is introduced to the student teacher, they do not have enough practice time to master effective teaching methods.

As stated in the article

.... a survey of 2,956 teachers in New York City with four or fewer years in the classroom, Darling-Hammond (2002) found that graduates of professional preparation programs felt more prepared to promote student learning, teach critical thinking, understand learners, and develop instructional leadership than teachers without formal preparation (Sandoval-Lucero, et.al. 2011, p 3).

The researchers tested their ideas on beginning teachers from all three-teacher preparation pathways. The case study used 36 elementary and middle school teachers from urban and suburban areas in the Western United States. All were new teachers. All taught in schools connected with universities.

A methodological decision was made to interview participants referred to as Teachers in Residence (TIR) while they were still "in" their program rather than waiting until they had completed the two-year program. Our decision was based on the fact that even in their first year, like those from other training programs, TIR's were in charge of classrooms and held accountable for children's progress measured by standardized tests.

Sandoval-Lucero, Shanklin (2011), had to find out if the ability of these TIR's to work well with students from the moment they were put in charge of a classroom needed to be examined. The reasoning was to learn

whether they were equally capable of working well with students as other beginning teachers (Sandoval-Lucero, et.al. 2011, p. 4).

The researchers used interviews with 13 open-ended questions. The questions used were topics that included "...teaching, assessment of preparation, influences on practice, testing and accountability, self-evaluation of effectiveness, beliefs about teaching, and plans for the future" p. 4. The team developed more specific questions in specific areas.

Findings indicated that traditional pathways were successful. The case study findings supported that TIRs prepare student teachers to have more content knowledge compared to other pathways. The evidence also shows that all three pathways were deficient in many areas. All three pathways showed that teachers were still lacking in content knowledge. This evidence supports the fact that beginning teachers are not ready for the classroom.

In conclusion, the study has shown that the way a teacher is prepared does indeed make a difference. A traditional pathway of student teaching prepares students more for what they will be facing in the classroom. The study also adds important understandings in six areas: teaching can be learned versus being a natural ability, preparation for a range of careers within education, the importance of teacher beliefs to the formation of teacher efficacy, the benefit of a theoretical base for teaching, paramount issues related to classroom management, and finally, a lack of emphasis on curriculum standards for beginning teachers.

Together, the findings of this study suggest that building principals, especially those with highly mobile teaching faculties and student bodies, ought to focus upon

creating healthy learning communities within their schools where beginning teachers receive quality mentoring and other forms of professional development. Such environments can help ensure that all beginning teachers, regardless of the way that they are prepared, receive the support they need. This helps them to continually offer better instruction to students in the initial years of their careers and to gradually become more effective teachers. When beginning teachers receive the support they need to make this happen, they may feel more satisfied with their work and are more likely to be retained by the profession.

### Summary

In all three articles, the researchers found vital evidence supporting the importance of teacher prep to build content knowledge in beginning schoolteachers around the country. Chesley and Jordan (2012) found that universities are not performing their duties as mentors or preparing student teachers for what they would be facing in the real classroom. Dilworth et al. (2012), describe another big area teachers are not prepared for, and that is technology in the classroom. Many experienced teachers have not taken the time to learn about the technology that is available in the classroom to help them teach. Sandoval-Lucero et al. (2011) presented that out of all three preparations pathways traditional pathways were successful. Sadly, the researchers also found that all three pathways were proven to be deficient in many areas. In which has proven beginning teachers are not ready for the classroom.

Overall, the evidence showed that many teachers are deficient to teach due to the lack of preparation. The key findings in all research were we as a country have to

understand that our traditional ways of teaching are not preparing student teachers for the classroom.

## SECTION III: METHODS

### Research Design

This thesis uses the qualitative approach in order to obtain information. This study focuses on three research questions.

#### *Questions for Undergraduate Students*

The questions ask the following for Dominican Undergraduate Students:

1. *As a student teacher do you feel your getting enough hands on experience to be a successful school teacher?*
2. *What skills do you possess to make you be a good teacher?*
3. *Where do you think universities can improve in student teaching prep?*

#### *Questions for P.E. Teacher, School Superintendent and University Professor*

The questions for the superintendent and the university professor ask:

1. *Do you feel you are Superior in content knowledge of education and why?*
2. *At the time that you applied for this position, did you feel well prepared for the job and why?*
3. *As a teacher how did you conduct yourself to maximize student learning?*
4. *How can universities help improve student teacher prep?*

In order to acquire more information regarding this topic, three articles were obtained. Each article shed new light on the subject, giving the thesis a bulk of information. The researcher interviewed an undergraduate student teacher. Separate questions were directed towards P.E. teacher at a middle school in the Marin District, a professor at Dominican University and a superintendent of a school district in Ohio. Using two interview protocols, information regarding participants' past, present, and

future regarding their teaching career were discussed. The interview format was in a sample of convenience. The researcher came in contact with the student observer, P.E. teacher and the professor through class association. The researcher came in contact with the superintendent due to a lifelong mentorship between them. I interviewed each participant in a separate office beside the student observer. I interviewed the person in their living quarters. Each interview last about thirty to forty-five minutes.

## SECTION IV: FINDINGS

### Student Teacher #1

*As a student teacher do you feel your getting enough hands on experience to be a successful schoolteacher?*

No, I feel like for the most part the teachers that I have observed usually have me do busy work. Occasionally, they will have me work with students in a small group or individually by reading to them or quizzing them. Also, I have been left in the room once alone with the students while the teacher ran out quickly; I read a chapter from a novel to the whole class briefly before the teacher returned. That was the only true hands-on experience I have encountered in two years of student teaching. Because of my lack of hands-on experience I do not feel as prepared as I'd like, so that is why I personally have to decide to set my sites on teaching in a different area: basketball.

The second question asks: *What skills do you possess to make you be a good teacher?*

I am very organized. I have always believed that having a neat and organized classroom can lead to a more positive learning outcome for the students. Also, I am great with detailing topics for children to understand more clearly, such as complex ideas that some children cannot grasp right away. In a way I think in a complex way that I think would help children grasp material easier.

The third question asks: *Where do you think universities can improve in student teaching prep?*

I think that universities can offer more classes based on what to expect going into the profession. We hear all the time about what should be taught, however, if we do not

have the hands-on experience we need to be able to relate the standards we want to address with the knowledge that the students need to grasp, we will not be prepared to go out in the classroom and stand alone and get our teachings across in a concise manner. Also, as a male doing a thesis on male teachers in elementary school, I was curious as to why there is not a class offered for upcoming teachers about how is behaviorally okay to act around students. Males must be cautious as teachers so a class that teaches us what is acceptable would help keep males interested in teaching and make schools a safer environment. He also thinks they need to have more hands on experience.

#### P.E. Teacher

The first question asks: *Do you feel you are Superior in content knowledge of education and why?*

Yes, I feel that I'm superior in content knowledge because of the programs that I have come through to get me where I am today. The main reason I feel superior in content knowledge in education is I continue to improve my program. I have been teaching for over 34 years and I'm never satisfied.

The second question asks: *At the time that you applied for this position, did you feel well prepared for the job and why?*

Yes, course content wise from my college program prepared me well. I went to Cal State Hayward for my undergrad and went to San Jose State for my credential. Given the experience from both programs I felt confident and qualified for my job. I knew going in it wasn't going to be easy but I knew I could make a difference.

The third question asks: *When you were a teacher how did you conduct yourself to maximize student learning?*

There is so many ways a student can learn; the key is finding what ways works best for the student. You have to be able to explain/teach in a verity of ways. One teaching method might work for you entire class beside two students; Are you going to give up on them, no. You have to find what works for them. What helps me be able to have many teaching techniques was I volunteer for the special Olympus. Having to teach kids motor movement that we take for granted but explaining and showing them every movement over and over again until they could get it. That's what I call teaching to its core. When you get that down you have a base to start with.

The fourth and final question asks: *How can universities help improve student teacher prep?*

University needs more hands on experience in the classroom. The more you get to experience the classroom settings, more confident you will get. Universities need to add non-related subject matter into the course work. As a teacher you need to become familiar how students learn not only in your subject but verity of subjects. Student teachers need to do more course work they don't know so the more boarders their knowledge will be.

Also, your supervisor should be willing to let the student teacher go off and explore different teaching methods. Having a strict by the book supervisor could restrict the student teacher from growing. We all learn from each other, supervisors can learn a lot from a student teacher and vise versa. Almost the same way teachers learn from students they teach.

### University Professor

The first question asks: *Do you feel you are Superior in content knowledge of education and why?*

I define superior content knowledge with very strict limitations. I have been in the teaching profession for over 40 years, as a classroom teacher in two countries, as a consultant in several settings, and as a university professor for a long time. In each setting it took time to develop superior content knowledge. I was a teacher working with children with special needs. I taught English as a second language in New York, Connecticut and Japan. In each setting I had to learn the content of instruction and I had to learn approaches to teaching. Each aspect took time; practice, learning from both my successes and failures. There is no substitute for excellent training, and no short cut to gaining experience in teaching, whether the students are children or adults.

Gaining superior content knowledge is not a finite entity. In my case, I can say that I have superior content knowledge on teaching adults, in the specific area of educational research. My previous experiences were valuable and enriching, but I no longer consider that I have superior content knowledge on working with children with special needs or teaching English as a second language. Experience, knowledge, application, and practice are dynamic. One maintains superior content knowledge only as one continues to grow through training and experience.

The second question asks: *At the time that you applied for this position, did you feel well prepared for the job and why?*

At the time I began teaching at the university level, I felt quite prepared for the job. I had received a master's degree and a certificate in teaching students with learning disabilities. I had spent time teaching elementary and middle school students, adults who were learning English by taking evening classes. Also I spent a year teaching English in Tokyo, Japan. My students were elementary, middle, high school and college age. I also taught adults in private settings and the upper management of the largest publishing house in Tokyo.

Returning to the United States, I continued teaching at a variety of levels in Connecticut and New York. When I moved to San Francisco, I was hired to teach at an elementary school and at a university.

My background in school, teaching in settings in the United States and in Japan provided me with both formal and informal preparation to feel confident in teaching others.

The third question asks: *When you were a teacher how did you conduct yourself to maximize student learning?*

I worked with a group of professionals who always made opportunities available to me to develop and polish my teaching ability. In terms of maximizing student learning, I quickly learned that I needed to break down chunks of information into small steps, teaching and modeling how to teach others, as I learned how to explain and demonstrate new ways of encouraging learning in the classroom. This was important to me because I realized that students had to feel successful in learning small pieces of information in a sequence, in order to develop confidence to put the small pieces together to form the big picture. I have learned

how to talk students through the complex process of putting their ideas down on paper, and developing a research project that serves as an example of their scholarship.

The fourth and final question asks: *How can the universities help improve student teacher prep?*

For the many years I have been teaching in this program, the key component that stands out all the time is the extensive opportunity that student teachers get by working in classrooms, first as observer, then as beginning teacher, and finally as a student teacher. This experience, time in the classroom, actually putting all the information into practice is an effective way to help new teachers become skillful teachers.

#### Superintendent

The first question asks: *Do you feel you are Superior in content knowledge of education and why?*

I am very capable regarding the content knowledge of education. In education there are so many ever-changing trends that it is impossible to be superior in every aspect. But, information is so plentiful and accessible, that whatever you do not know or are not familiar with, is easy to find.

The second question asks: *At the time that you applied for this position, did you feel well prepared for the job and why?*

I received my Master's and Ph.D. from the University of Dayton. Their program was very thorough and rigorous. However, within a week after my appointment, the Auditor of the State of Ohio placed our district in a state of fiscal emergency. There are

no preparation programs that can get a person ready for a state takeover after just a week on the job. If I would have had normal appointment, I feel that my experiences as a teacher, curriculum supervisor, test coordinator, and principal helped to prepare me for the position of an urban school superintendent.

The third question asks: *When you were a teacher how did you conduct yourself to maximize student learning?*

I was a mathematics teacher. I have always had a strong command of math content as well high pedagogical skills. Additionally, I believed strongly in the educability of all children. Possessing all of these skills as well as having a passion for helping students becomes successful learners, were keys to me being a successful teacher.

The fourth and final question asks: *How can universities help improve student teacher prep?*

Great question! In my view, keeping current with ever-changing trends and providing legitimate field experiences will help colleges and universities improve teacher preparation.

#### Finding One

The first finding was pre-service teachers needing more hands-on experience in the classroom. People who were interviewed brought this up because they did not feel confident within themselves when they started teaching. For example, they expressed the feeling that they did not really know how to teach when they began their student teaching assignment. Another reason that student teachers brought this up was that the course material was their main focus. They were doing assignments for professors, not spending more time in classrooms.

### Finding Two

The course material in university classes sometimes does not match what is going on in the schools. The student teachers and the superintendent brought up that the k-12 schools and the universities are not together. What students are learning in university classes is not carried over to the K-12 classroom. What prepares us in our coursework to prepare student teachers for teaching? Student teachers in the university class are learning things that do not necessarily match what is going on in the K-12 school. The great example from the interviews was that there is not a class on behavior, especially for a male teacher.

### Finding Three

The question about how did student teachers and others conduct themselves to maximize student learning was hard for people to answer. This may be something that they do not think about on a day-to-day basis. Every answer from the professor, superintendent, and PE teacher stated their background and what they do exceptionally well, such as breaking down information for students, knowing mathematics content, or just being a great motivator. That is how they answered the question. The answer I was looking for was traits of their personality. If the student perceives the teacher's personality as positive, the student is more willing to listen and learn from the teacher, compared to just superior content knowledge.

### Summary of Findings

In conclusion all findings hint to several important factors. Time in the classroom is critical for student teachers to become successful teachers. Time in the classroom helps student teachers to be confident within themselves to teach. When student teachers first

step in the classroom, they feel unfit to teach. Their confidence is low. The only way to build confidence is for student teachers to have more time in the classroom, practice working with children, and more experience in lesson planning and delivering instruction.

University coursework for student teachers has to correspond to what students are learning in the K-12 classrooms. If what student teachers are learning at the university does not correlate to what students are learning in the classroom, how can student teachers develop superior content knowledge? University and K-12 schools have to engage with each other to maximize student teacher proficiency in teaching.

We have the time in the classroom; we have the coursework material matching what is actually going on in K-12 classrooms, now we have the personality. There is no way a teacher can have superior content knowledge in every aspect of teaching. What a student teacher has in terms of superior content knowledge, they must also have a personality that engages student. The feeling when people first meet is the perception of how good a teacher will really be. Students do not know what the teachers really know. It is how the student perceives the teacher, what the student looks for in a teacher, which determines good, bad, or great.

## SECTION V: SUMMARY

### Discussion

#### Comparison To Findings of Previous Research

Information from the interviews confirms what is found in the research. The specially designed student teacher programs that had students in classrooms often were more successful in building teachers with superior content knowledge compared to traditional programs.

The question what are the benefits of having successful teaching preparation that includes more teaching time was answered; by learning successful methods helps teachers be better prepared to manage a classroom. These studies show if the teacher is better prepared for the classroom, then students are more successful in learning. Also the interview participants all stated that more hands on experience results in more confidents for student teachers.

The question how learning successful teaching methods increases student performance in learning was answered best by the P.E. teacher; there are many ways a student can learn; the key is finding what ways works best for the student. We as teachers must become flexible, the more flexible we become will result in superior content knowledge. This will help student teacher because it is giving them knowledge that the teacher needs to figure out how each student learns.

The question what ways can teacher preparation benefit students with low performance in the classroom; the system TPACK helps student teacher in that situations. TPACK is a framework to understand and describe the kinds of knowledge needed by a teacher for effective pedagogical practice in a technology enhanced learning environment.

Additional question; If you are better prepared to teach when you are student teaching how does this connect to improved student learning in any setting, low or high performing schools? This was answered best by the professor: You have to work with a group of professionals who always makes opportunities available to develop and polish your teaching ability.

#### Limitations

The study was not broad enough to include interviewing many people. Things may vary depending on location. Since my research study took place in one university and two K-12 schools there are too many factors that were not reached. Also there were not enough student teachers, and other professionals. An important factor that was not discussed is diversity. Another limitation was time. There was not enough time to collect sufficient information from others.

#### Implications

According to my interviews, universities need to regroup and rethink the approach to student teacher preparation. There are a lot of factors that have not been met while student teachers are being prepared for teaching.

#### *Practical Implications*

From the interviews teachers are more prepared with longer time in supervised practice in working in schools. This helps build the student teachers confidence as they prepare for their own classroom in the near future. It is vital for hands on experience for student teachers. Building student teacher confidence gives them a better comfort level once he or she is hired to teach in a school district.

Another important issue is the need to build a close relationship between the university and the schools. This would build rapport between the two, how a student is progressing in his or her field. Also the course content from the university would relate a lot better with the student teachers in the classroom since both university and school would be working hand in hand with each other.

#### *Research Implications*

Since we want to improve or methods of improving how we teach pre-service teachers, we need more studies on the effectiveness of different models of teaching. This would increase the success rate, as producing teachers with superior content knowledge.

#### CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, to reach superior content knowledge in pre-service teachers we need to rethink the approach of teaching. There should be more hands on experience for the student teacher. It gives pre-service teachers confidence to feel in charge and in control as a result of their superior content knowledge when they step in their classroom. To help pre-service teachers master teaching methods, University pre-service curriculum needs to match the K-12 curriculum. Without proper teaching methods class management will be hard to maintain. Personality is key to per-service teacher. No matter what teachers can do exceptionally well, the way their personality is perceived by students is the best way to maximize student performance. If the student perceives the teacher's personality as positive, the student is more willing to listen and learn from the teacher, compared to a teacher just demonstrating superior content knowledge.

### About the Author

I became interested in this topic because my first day in my liberal studies class, I thought to myself how can I become the best teacher I can be. I thought why isn't there a manual to instructed me on the do's and don'ts of becoming superior in content knowledge. Since I am currently in the process of receiving my dual credential, multiple subject and single subject in P.E. in health, I want to help pre-service teachers in my situation to have a guide for their future.

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## APPENDIX

### Questions for Student Teachers

The first question asks the following for Dominican Undergrad Students: *As a student teacher do you feel your getting enough hands on experience to be a successful school teachers?* The second question asks: *What skills do you possess to make you be a good teacher?* The third question asks: *Where do you think universities can improve in student teaching prep?*

### Questions for the University Professor, School Superintendent and Physical Education Teacher

The first question for the superintendent and the university professor asks: *Do you feel you are Superior in content knowledge of education and why?* The second question asks: *At the time that you applied for this position, did you feel well prepared for the job and why?* The third question asks: *When you were teacher, how did you conduct yourself to maximize student learning?* The fourth and final question asks: *How can universities help improve student teacher prep?*