A FACTOR ANALYSIS OF VARIABLES AFFECTING CTSO ADVISORS' SATISFACTION

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The purpose of this study was to determine what factors contributed to career and technical education teachers' satisfaction with their role as a CTSO advisor. Four hundred eighty seven advisors from FBLA, DECA, FCCLA, FFA, HOSA, and VICA/Skills USA participated in the study. A 45-item questionnaire was used to gather data about how teachers felt about their advising duties. Career and technical teachers showed a great deal of commitment and a positive attitude toward their responsibilities as CTSO advisors. It is clear that overall job satisfaction for advisors of CTSOs was motivated by personal satisfaction or recognition from others. Personal satisfaction was gained from helping students compete in CTSO events, participate in leadership activities and meeting, and contribute to school and community service activities. Recognition from peers, parents, and administrations also contributed to job satisfaction.

Career and technical student organizations (CTSOs) are an integral part of the overall curricula in many secondary programs. They provide educational and work experience for students while benefiting faculties, school administrators, and the community. CTSOs put into practice, within the classroom and workplace, experiences that develop positive personal attitudes and an appreciation of work ethic and productivity. A major factor which contributes to the success of vocational and technical education is the availability of CTSOs (Vocational Technical Education Today, 1994).

Recognized CTSOs serve more than 1.5 million students in career and technical education courses and programs (Reese, 2003; Cahill & Brady, 1999). CTSOs are an integral part of the instructional program in family and consumer sciences, business and marketing education, agriculture education, medical professions education, and trade and industrial education.

Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) is the organization representing students in family and consumer sciences. The mission of FCCLA is

> to promote personal growth and leadership development through family and consumer sciences education. Focusing on the multiple roles of family member, wage earner and community leader, members develop skills for life through character development, creative and critical thinking, interpersonal communication, practical knowledge and vocational preparation. (Family, Career and Community Leaders of America, Inc., n.d., p. 1-2)

Distributive Education Clubs of America (DECA) and Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) serve students interested in business and marketing. DECA "enhances the cocurricular education of students with interests in marketing, management and entrepreneurship" (Reese, 2003,

p. 5). FBLA's mission is "to bring business and education together in a positive working relationship through innovative leadership and career development programs" (Reese, 2003, p. 7).

FFA serves students in agriculture. The organization develops "their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agriculture education" (Reese, 2003, p. 9).

Health Occupations Students Association (HOSA) represents classes preparing students for careers in medical fields. "The mission for HOSA is to promote career opportunities in the health care industry and to enhance the delivery of quality health care to all people" (Reese, 2003, p. 6).

Vocational Industrial Clubs of America/Skills USA (VICA/Skills USA) offers opportunities for students in a range of technical classes such as automotive technology, culinary arts, cosmetology, electronics, computer drafting and more. The focus of the organization is "providing quality education experiences for students in leadership, teamwork, citizenship and character development" (Reese, 2003, p. 3).

Benefits of CTSOs

Gordon (1999) explained that CTSOs bring together students interested in careers in specific career and technical education fields and provides them with a wide range of individual, cooperative, and competitive activities that are designed to expand their leadership and job related skills. Teachers and administrators who participate in CTSO activities gain greater exposure to the work conditions and demands of business and industry (Miller, 1983).

Vocational educators have identified strong CTSOs as an essential part of high quality vocational education. Research indicated that participation in CTSO activities benefits career development and strengthens competitiveness necessary for employment in a high performance economy (Lankard, 1996).

Way and Kuram (1996) reviewed a decade of research on FCCLA (FHA/HERO). They found several studies related to benefits of participating in the organization. Meek's study (as cited in Way & Kuram, 1996) found that FHA/HERO provided specific benefits. "The greatest degree of agreement was that FHA/HERO increased self confidence, strengthened home economics skills, planning, and decision making skills, positive self-image, ability to handle competition, ability to work under pressure and exert leadership" (p. 306). Two studies conducted by Zapata and Cunningham examined self-esteem and FHA/HERO competitive events (as cited in Way & Kuram, 1996). "Participation in proficiency events is positively associated with self-esteem (even if not shown to produce it)" (p. 308).

Opportunities for leadership development are provided by CTSOs (Babb, 1988). CTSO members have a greater chance for leadership skill development than non-members (Spicer, 1982). Ricketts (1982) found that FFA members possessed higher leadership and personal development abilities than non-members. In addition, D'Haem (1994) stated that CTSOs are a positive avenue for developing leadership abilities necessary for success in the workplace.

Belonging to CTSOs have many other benefits. Constantine (1988) concluded that students belonging to DECA had more positive attitudes and values than nonmembers. Savini (1986) found that DECA members gain more understanding of human relations than others. A study conducted at Purdue University found that students participating in FFA are more active in school and community programs than the typical student (Reese, 2001). Barrick and Hughes (1994) found that vocational directors and supervisors felt that CTSOs developed students' leadership and social skills even at the middle school level.

Career and technical educators play an essential role in the success of CTSOs. They "devote countless hours of work and immeasurable amount of support. These dedicated teachers are making

a huge difference in the lives of their students, serving as teachers, mentors and role models" (Reese, 2003, p. 3).

Camp, Jackson, Buser and Baldwin (2000) stated "benefits alleged to accrue to students from VSO [CTSO] participation are myriad, ranging from improved self-concept to lifelong economic and social advantages" (p. 42). They found after an extensive review of the literature, that most evidence was anecdotal and recommended research to support such claims.

Job Satisfaction

The literature suggested that job satisfaction plays an important role in the attitude of the CTSO advisor. Job satisfaction can be defined as an overall feeling about one's job or career in terms of specific facets of the job or career. It can be related to specific outcomes such as productivity (Rice, Gentile & McFarlin, 1991). Job satisfaction is intrinsic to the work with which a person is directly involved (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959; Jayaratner, 1999). Reiner and Zhao (1999) concluded that there was a lack of consensus with respect to the principal sources of job satisfaction. They also indicated that the demographic attributes of individual employees were strongly predictive of job satisfaction experienced in the work place.

Administrative support, student behavior, and feelings of control were consistently shown to be associated with teacher job satisfaction. Teachers with greater autonomy show higher levels of satisfaction than teachers who feel they have less autonomy (National Center for Educational Statistics, 1997).

Teachers who have left teaching, ranked "the pressure of accountability (high-stakes testing, test preparation, and standards) as their number one reason for leaving, followed closely by increased paperwork, changing student characteristics, negativity and pressure from parents and the community, and tension between teachers and administration" (Tye & O'Brien, 2002, p. 26).

Bruening and Hoover (1990) stated that there was no difference between teaching areas in regard to job satisfaction. According to Ma & MacMillan (1999) workplace conditions positively affected teacher satisfaction with administration control being the most important. Some researchers stated that teachers who did not feel supported in their work may be less motivated to do their best work in the classroom (Ostroff, 1992; Ashton & Webb, 1986). A report by the National Center for Educational Statistics (1997) reported that teachers who received a great deal of parental support are more satisfied than teachers who do not.

Bartley and Sneed (2004) surveyed 291 middle and secondary public school family and consumer science teachers in a southern state. They found that 65.6% of the teachers were extremely satisfied with their teaching careers and 32.6% were somewhat satisfied. Only 2.1% were not satisfied with their work.

One of the factors that has received considerable attention nationally for job satisfaction is teacher salary. However, teacher satisfaction showed a weak relationship with salary and benefits (National Center for Educational Statistics, 1997). Lee (1972) similarly found that job context-related factors, such as salary, were not as important as job content-context factor satisfaction. Tye and O'Brien (2002) found that that teacher who had already left the teacher profession ranked salary considerations as last out of seven reasons for leaving the profession. However, teachers currently teaching who were considering leaving the profession ranked salary as the first reason.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine what factors contributed to career and technical education teachers' satisfaction with their role as a CTSO advisor. Based on a review of literature,

the researchers identified the following four areas of satisfaction--support, time, CTSO activities, and personal satisfaction. Sources of support included help received from state department advisors, national organizations, colleagues, parents, and school administrators. Time considered the amount of time required to perform the duties of an advisor. Activities focused on local, state, and national projects and meetings. Personal satisfaction examined recognition received from peers and parents as well as attitude toward the job of advisor.

Methods

Three career and technical teacher educators with experience in family and consumer sciences, agriculture education, business education and industry technology designed the 45-item questionnaire. All had at least ten years of teaching experience and served as advisors of CTSOs. The questionnaire was used to gather data about how teachers felt about their advising duties. It was based on a review of literature and an investigation of instruments used to evaluate job satisfaction. The questionnaire included 15 items for demographic information and 30 items related to the issues examined by this study. Participants were asked to respond to the 30 items on a 5-point Likert type scale using strongly agree as (1), agree as (2), neither agree or disagree as (3), disagree as (4), and strongly disagree as (5).

The instrument was field tested for content, format, and clarity by a group of upper division vocational teacher education students and in-service career and technical education leaders. After revisions were made, teachers in business and marketing education, family and consumer sciences, agriculture, health occupations and industrial technical education reviewed the revised questionnaire for clarity. These teachers were not included in the final study. The items on the final questionnaire included statements in the areas of support, time, CTSO activities, and personal satisfaction.

Advisors from FBLA, DECA, FCCLA, FFA, HOSA, and VICA/Skills USA participated in the study. The questionnaire was mailed to at least one CTSO advisor of each organization at each school in Arkansas. A total of 970 questionnaires were mailed to 195 FBLA advisors, 31 DECA advisors, 318 FCCLA advisors, 226 FFA advisors, 34 HOSA advisors, and 166 VICA/Skills USA advisors. After an initial and follow-up mailing 487 usable questionnaires were returned (50%).

Basic descriptive statistics were computed for all items. The 30 statements related to job satisfaction were factor analyzed to study the relationship between statements.

Results

Advisor Profile

Of the 487 respondents, 134 were business and marketing education teachers (28%), 175 were family and consumer science teachers (36%), 103 were agriculture teachers (21%), and 69 were technical teachers (14%). Advisors of DECA (13) were included in business and marketing and advisors of HOSA (18) were included as technical teachers because of the small number of teachers in those areas. For all respondents, the average number of years as a CTSO advisor was 13.7 years. Years taught were 0 to 10 years—158 (33%), 11 to 29 years—148 (31%), 21-30 years—141 (49%), and 31-40 years—32 (7 %).

The average number of hours spent advising the CTSO each semester was 73 hours. While advisors reported spending an average of 73 hours per semester advising CTSO clubs, one half of them devoted 40 hours or fewer to the task. For each club, FBLA/DECA advisors averaged 13.0 hours per semester, FCCLA advisors 14.1 hours per semester, FFA advisors 130.2 hours per semester and VICA/HOSA advisors 61.6 hours per semester.

Twelve percent (57) of the teachers were paid extra for advising CTSOs while 87% (424) were not. Thirty percent (145) of the teachers advised other student organizations while 68% (332) advised only CTSOs.

Forty three percent (209) of the respondents had advised CTSOs during student teaching while 54% (262) had not. Twenty-two percent (107) of the teachers worked as co-advisors while 77% (374) of the teachers were sole advisors.

Nine percent (46) of the teachers had a 9-month teaching contract, 19% (92) had 9.5-month contract, 43% (207) had 10-month contract and 27% (133) had a 12-month contract. Fifty-five percent (266) of the respondents had bachelor's degrees, 33% (160) had master's degrees while 11% (55) had other. Sixty-six percent (322) were female and 32% (156) were male.

This data revealed that CTSO advisors spent approximately 4 hours a week on CTSO activities, few received any extra pay, and most were the sole advisor of the club.

Club Profile

The size of CTSO's ranged from 4 members to 330 with the average being 52 and a median of 40. Business education (FBLA/DECA) average size was 62 members. FCCLA average size was 41. FFA average size was 66. VICA/HOSA average size was 33. Over the past 5 years, 33% (162) had increased in membership, while 30% (144) had decreased and 32% (154) stayed the same.

The majority of advisors (75%/363) reported that club activities were conducted both in and out of class. Some advisors (20%/96) conducted all activities out of class. Others (4%/21) conducted activities only in class.

The advisors showed a strong amount of agreement about enjoyment of their advising tasks. In ranking specific areas of their job as an advisor the total group selected school and community service activities as their most enjoyable (41.1%). The second enjoyable activity was preparing for competitive events (23.8%), third, traveling on overnight trips with students (15.6%), next, was training CTSO officers (7.6%), fifth was preparing for club meetings (6.6%) and sixth was fundraising (4.5%). The area that rated last was "other" (0.8%) which was a category for miscellaneous activities.

Factor Analysis

The 30 statements related to support, time, CTSO activities, and personal satisfaction were factor analyzed to look at the relationship between the statements and describe any underlying thematic structure. The factor analysis of the data did not support the four areas of job satisfaction. However, the analysis did suggest an alternative model. Nineteen of the items accounted for 37.364% of the variance. Two factors emerged which the researchers labeled as intrinsic and extrinsic after examining the statements. The statements are listed in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1

Factor Structure of Intrinsic Items for CTSO Advisors' Satisfaction

% Variance 28.72	
	Factor Loading
I receive personal satisfaction for my role as a CTSO advisor	.780
I enjoy advising a CTSO	.742
I feel students benefit from CTSO competitive events	.739
My CTSO members attend district and/or state meetings	.733
Advising my CTSO is the best part of my job	.723

I enjoy preparing my students for CTSO competitive events	.694
My CTSO members attend national meetings	.640
Sometimes I feel that being a CTSO advisor is a waste of my time	-.634
My CTSO is active in community service	.577
My CTSO is active in fund raising	.513
My CTSO participates in school service activities	.463

Table 2
Factor Structure of Extrinsic Items for CTSO Advisors' Satisfaction

% Variance 8.639	
	Factor Loading
I receive professional recognition from my peers for my role as a CTSO advisor	.645
I am satisfied with extra pay/stipend I receive as a CTSO advisor	.612
Parents recognize my contributions as a CTSO advisor	.515
When I was a new advisor, I received assistance in establishing and/or continuing a CTSO from the State Department of Education CTSO advisor/director	.445
I receive adequate information about advising from the State Department of Education CTSO advisor/director	.436
My school administrator's behavior toward my CTSO is supportative and encouraging	.420
I am able to complete all my CTSO paperwork during the school day	.408
Routine paperwork for my CTSO required by my school as well as the state and national associations take too much of my time	-.315

One-way ANOVA was used to compare the two factors with demographic characteristics. A significant difference was found for type of CTSO for both intrinsic ($F(3, 455) = 11.86$, $p < .01$) and extrinsic factors ($F(3, 437) = 6.59$, $p < .01$). Tukey's HSD was used to determine the nature of the differences. This analysis of the intrinsic factor revealed that FFA advisors ($M = 3.86$, $SD = 0.50$) and FBLA/DECA ($M = 3.85$, $SD = 0.47$) advisors had significantly higher means compared to FCCLA ($M = 3.54$, $SD = 0.62$)and VICA/Skills USA advisors ($M = 3.59$, $SD = 0.52$). The Tukey HSD analysis of the extrinsic factor revealed that means for FFA advisors ($M = 3.31$, $SD = 0.49$) were significantly higher than FBLA advisors ($M = 3.04$, $SD = 0.49$), FCCLA advisors ($M = 3.05$, $SD = 0.52$) and VICA/Skills USA advisors ($M = 3.07$, $SD = 0.53$).

A significant difference was also found on both the intrinsic factor ($F(2, 436) = 12.00$, $p < .01$) and the extrinsic factor ($F(2, 424) = 5.47$, $p < .01$) for membership changes. Tukey's HSD revealed that advisors with CTSOs which were decreasing in members over the past five years had lower means on the intrinsic factor ($M = 3.53$, $SD = 0.59$) and the extrinsic factor ($M = 2.97$, $SD = 0.50$) than those teachers whose CTSO membership stayed the same (intrinsic $M = 3.70$, $SD = 0.57$; extrinsic $M = 3.17$, $SD = 0.57$) or increased (intrinsic $M = 3.85$, $SD = 0.50$; extrinsic $M = 3.14$, $SD = 0.50$)

Another demographic item that revealed a significant difference on both intrinsic ($F(3, 453) = 5.49$, $p < .01$) and extrinsic factors ($F(3, 436) = 8.17$, $p < .01$) was length of contract. Those teachers with 10-12-month contracts (intrinsic $M = 3.87$, $SD = 0.49$; extrinsic $M = 3.27$, $SD = 0.52$)

had higher means that those with 9-month (intrinsic $M = 3.62$, $SD = 0.58$; extrinsic $M = 2.86$, $SD = 0.47$) or 9 1/2 –month contracts (intrinsic $M = 3.68$, $SD = 0.58$; extrinsic $M = 3.07$, $SD = 0.50$).

No significant differences were found when comparing the factors (intrinsic and extrinsic) and gender, pay for advising, level of education, and number of advisors.

Conclusions

Career and technical teachers showed a great deal of commitment and a positive attitude toward their responsibilities as CTSO advisors. It was clear that overall job satisfaction for advisors of CTSOs was motivated by personal satisfaction or recognition from others. Personal satisfaction was gained from helping students compete in CTSO events, participate in leadership activities and meeting, and contribute to school and community service activities. Recognition from peers, parents, and administrations also contributed to job satisfaction.

This study found that there were significant differences on intrinsic and extrinsic factor and type of organization, the changes in membership numbers and the length of teacher contracts. There was no significant difference when comparing the factors and gender, pay, level of education, or number of advisors.

FCCLA and VICA/Skills USA advisors scored lower on the intrinsic factors than FFA and business (FBLA/DECA) advisors. It appears that FCCLA and VICA/Skills USA advisors take less satisfaction in working with their organization that do teachers who advise FFA, FBLA or DECA. This may be due to the nature of club activities. FFA, FBLA, and DECA place greater emphasis on competitive events.

FFA advisors scored higher on the extrinsic factor than advisors of the other organizations. FFA advisors and FFA members generally receive public recognition for group and individual awards.

Advisors of organizations decreasing in membership scored lower on intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Although there are many reasons a club may decrease in size, loss of members would be make it more difficult to carry out club activities as well as raise funds for travel and club expenses. This may reflect on a teacher's sense of accomplishment.

Teacher with longer contracts gained more satisfaction on both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. A longer contract might allow a teacher to spend more time planning and conducting organization activities. Longer contracts would also allow extended club project and activities.

This study was conducted in a single state. A national study would provide a more comprehensive picture of the job satisfaction of CTSO advisors.

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USING CURRICULUM FRAMEWORKS TO IMPLEMENT REFORM

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Curriculum frameworks may be viewed as a vehicle for reform as state goals and student outcomes are aligned. Public input from business and industry leaders in the development process provides guidance to educators for selecting materials, developing curriculum, and incorporating technology. New frameworks describe the curriculum components, develop coherent instructional guidance systems, and address the curricular fragmentation of state education systems. The state-of-the art frameworks include a view of how students learn and become core documents to support integration of all components of the curriculum.

Environmental Scan

The nationally recognized shortage of Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) educators (Jackman & Rehm, 1994; Miller & Meszaros, 1999; Olson, 1990) even affects Idaho which boasts of two public and one private institution with FCS teacher preparation programs. Although most Idaho secondary FCS teaching positions are filled, several districts have mis-assigned teachers (Walker, 2001). Teachers certified in other areas assigned to teach a subject without the proper credentials are called "mis-assigned". When these individuals are assigned to teach FCS classes, the quality of the program is negatively affected. These mis-assigned teachers lack the requisite knowledge and skills to integrate the Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) program and the content knowledge necessary for a high quality program. Family and Consumer Sciences is the only professional-technical subject mandated by the Idaho State Board of Education. Thus, the quality of programs and lack of certified teachers is of concern.

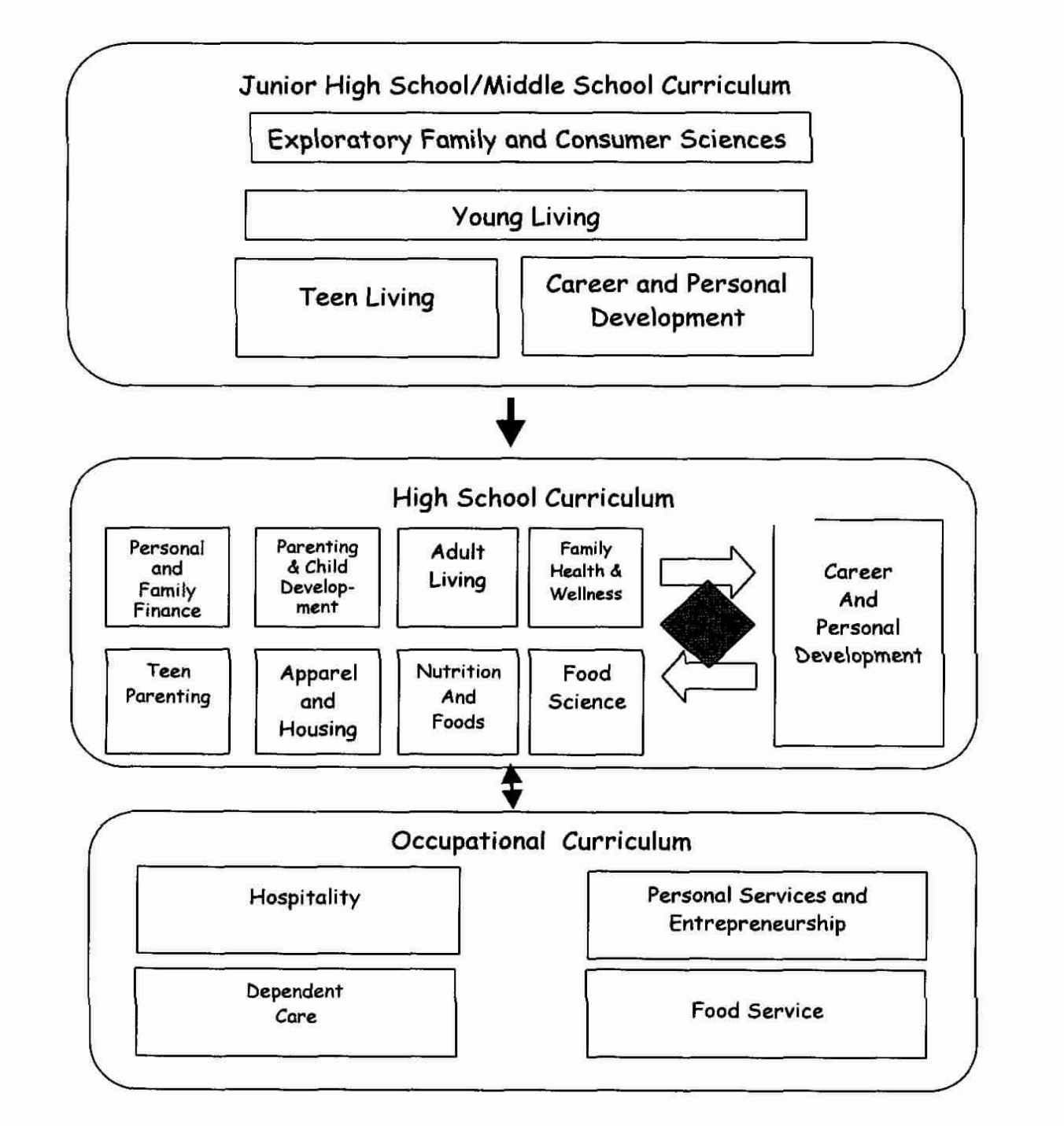
While the ongoing need for more FCS educators at the secondary level continues, Idaho FCS experienced a constant transition in leadership between 1995 and 2001. A succession of FCS Program Managers and FCS teacher educators accepted career-advancement positions. The universities, which offer FCS teacher preparation, were staffed with interim teacher educators. Thus, there was lack of a shared vision and leadership during a time when the FCS National Standards were introduced. With the United States now almost ten years into an era of educational reform, and the development of National Standards for FCS, the Idaho FCS curriculum needed to be updated to reflect reform efforts underway in education. Previous FCS Curriculum efforts occurred before 1996 (Vail, 1995). With mis-assigned teachers, newly graduated teachers, and teachers returning to the profession, it is imperative the FCS State Curriculum Frameworks be designed to assist teachers to transmit the Family and Consumer Sciences instructional program consistent with the intended vision and mission of Family and Consumer Sciences.

State of the Curriculum

Between 1993 and 1995, twenty to thirty FCS teachers and FCS teacher educators participated in three summer institutes to develop a conceptual framework for the Idaho FCS Curriculum. A final task of this institute was to conceptualize a flow chart of course

progressions for sixth through twelfth grades. This course progression provided options for a variety of career paths. See the Idaho Program Planning Guide illustration below.

Idaho Program Planning Guide

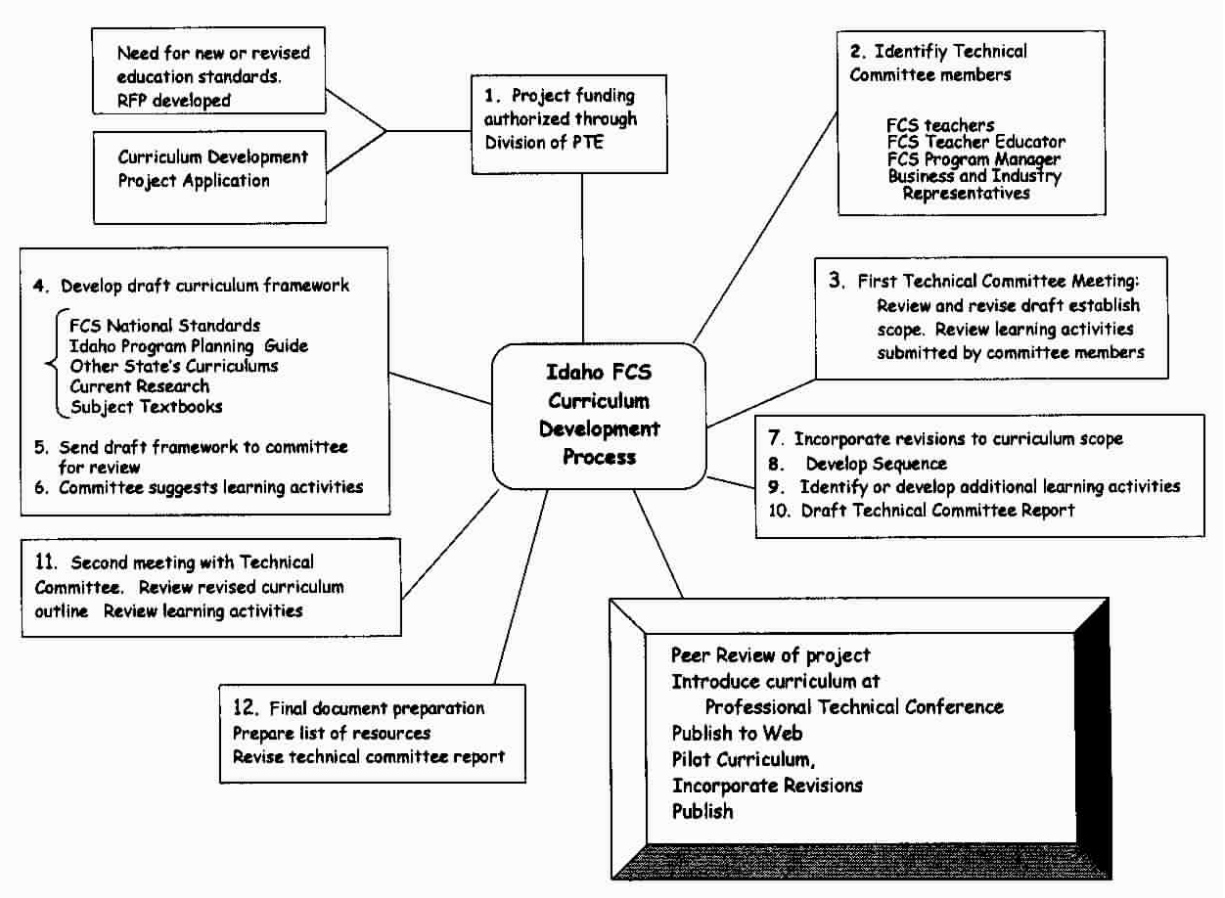


Reconceptualizing the FCS Curriculum

When it became evident during the fall of 2000 that the University of Idaho, the land grant institution for the state, would soon have a tenure track professor as a permanent FCS teacher educator, it was time to focus on the FCS Curriculum Framework. The FCS Program Manager from the Division of Professional-Technical Education in cooperation with the University of Idaho implemented an effort to begin an update of the secondary FCS curriculum. (Fox, 2001). This effort would align the curriculum with the National Standards for FCS, the Idaho Academic Achievement Standards, and incorporate computer technology and project based learning. A long term (3 to 5 years) goal is to provide professional development opportunities for teachers to implement the critical science perspective to better equip students to use the process skills (Walker, 2002).

Efforts were made to locate a publication describing these kinds of efforts. A professional librarian at the University of Idaho, with Family and Consumer Sciences expertise, did a search of the literature going back to 1990. The descriptors a) Family and Consumer Sciences, b) Home Economics, c) program planning, and d) curriculum were used. None of the returned citations provided a model or discussion to guide the process. After developing two projects during Spring 2001, the following model emerged.

Idaho FCS Curriculum Framework Development Model



As the model depicts, the Division of Professional Technical Education issues a Request for Proposals (RFP). When a project proposal is accepted, the project director and Program Manager identify potential committee members, including volunteer FCS teachers and business and industry representatives. Funding from the Division of Professional Technical Education pays travel costs of committee members to attend two or more committee meetings, but not the expense of a substitute teacher if one is required. A portion of the funds is allocated to purchase resources and pay project costs such as temporary clerical help and copying costs.

The project leader develops a proposed curriculum framework which is mailed to the committee members for review before the first meeting. A curriculum model proposed by Finch and Crunkilton (1999) guides the development of the draft framework.

I. Philosophy and Goals of the Institution
II. Students Served
III. Instructional Support Staff
IV. Curriculum Arrangement
V. Employment Setting
VI. Other Constraints
VII. Content Coverage
    a. Vocational and Technical
    b. General Education
    c. Co curricular Activities. (Finch and Crunkilton, 1999, p. 72)

The National Standards for Family and Consumer Sciences provide the mission and vision for the Idaho FCS Program. A review of the National Standards defines the basic content of the framework for each the curriculum framework (NASAFACS, 1998). The previous program-planning guide, *Idaho Family and Consumer Sciences Program Planning Guide*, is referenced and curriculum materials from other states are reviewed. Recently released FCS textbooks and a review of literature is conducted.

At the first meeting, the technical committee discusses needs and concerns regarding the curriculum framework and what the ideal classroom situation would be. These discussions become the basis for the Technical Committee Report, which defines the grade level of the intended students, the qualifications for the instructional staff, and the sequence for the content. These discussions also articulate the workplace learning, and classroom requirements for space, equipment and related facilities necessary for a quality instructional program. Specifying the workplace learnings expected to occur when implementing the program identifies other constraints for management by the instructor. The framework indicates time allotment for the course as a one or two semester, or three-trimester program. The content coverage becomes the sequence, or a proposed course outline. The committee members also propose the amount of time each content area should receive over the duration of the course.

During this all day meeting, the technical committee revises the draft framework. Learning activities and additional teacher resources are proposed. The project director incorporates changes in the scope of the curriculum and identifies a minimum of 20 appropriate activities that will support student learning. A draft of the complete technical report is made which incorporates suggestions for classroom facilities, computer technology and other variables that will enhance the delivery of the curriculum.

At the second committee meeting, scheduled several weeks or months after the initial meeting, the finalized curriculum framework and the draft technical report are reviewed. Revisions may be suggested for the sequence of content, the learning activities are analyzed for correlation with learner outcomes, and modifications may be suggested. A list of resources including print and web sites is developed. Following this meeting the document is formatted according to specifications of the RFP.

New curriculum frameworks are introduced as drafts to the FCS teachers at the summer Professional Technical Conference. The curriculum is piloted for a year before final adoption. Suggested changes are evaluated and may be incorporated. The final version of the curriculum is posted on the World Wide Web in Adobe Acrobat format. This document can be obtained at the Family and Consumer Sciences node on the Idaho Division of Professional Technical Education website.

Education Reform

With the emphasis on academic standards and high stakes testing (Amrein & Berliner, 2002), many Idaho school districts ask teachers to identify the ways in which their discipline reinforces the academic areas, particularly math, science and reading. A general session on cross-referencing the FCS standards was held during the 2001 Summer Professional Technical Conference followed by a work session at the conference. Participation in the work session at the conference was limited because of space restrictions. To enable additional work to be done, a teacher inservice was scheduled to facilitate cross referencing the FCS curriculum with the Idaho Achievement Standards.

The cross-referenced curriculum matrixes were posted to the Family and Consumer Sciences Education web page at the University of Idaho so that all teachers could access them. FCS teachers were cautioned to review their own programs to ensure that they were reinforcing the identified academics in their classrooms, since all FCS secondary schools in Idaho are encouraged to customize the state's proposed FCS curriculum with input from their local advisory board and the needs of their community.

One of the six Professional Technical districts in the state adopted the Vogler Curriculum Pedagogy Assessment (CPA) model in academic year 2001-2002. This software helps teachers standardize and implement the Professional Technical curriculum within their district and facilitate cross referencing to Idaho Achievement Standards. Eight basic concepts guide the CPA model:

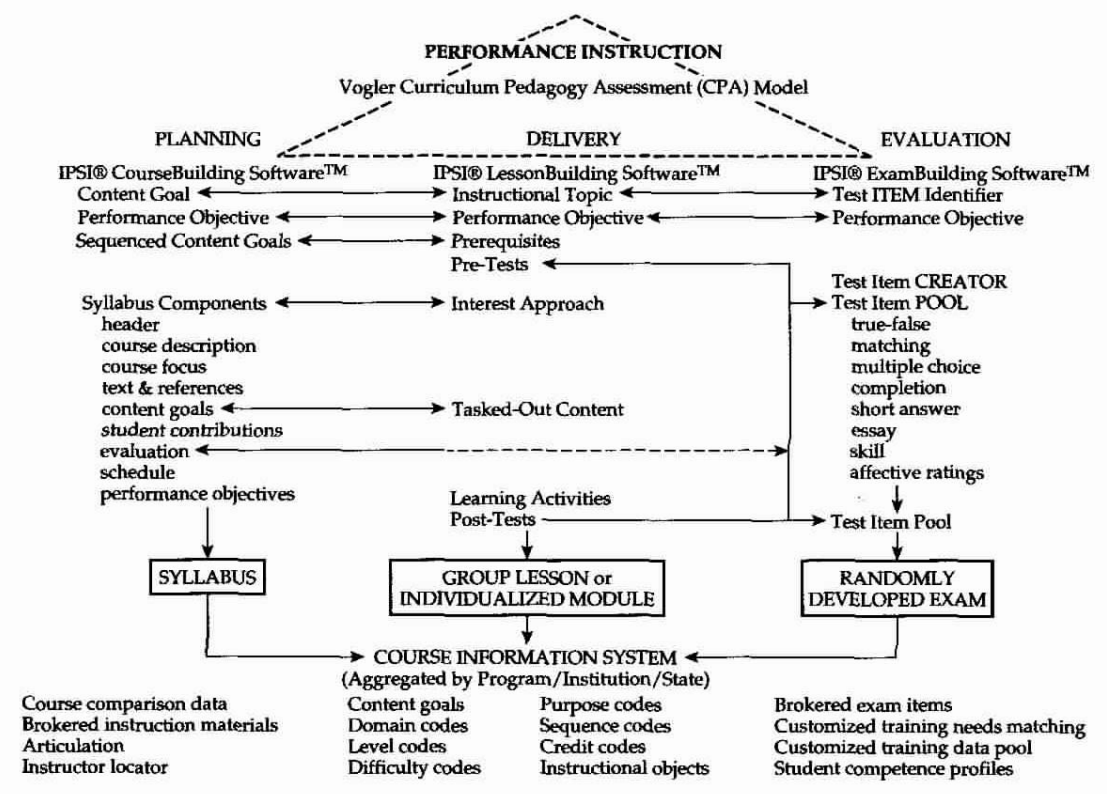
1. The knowledge, skills, and affect required to exit a course are communicated in advance.
2. Course content drives the model. As a result, what is learned and what is taught are systematically identified.
3. The faculty member who delivers and evaluates the instruction is centrally involved in planning the instruction, thus maximizing the opportunities for successful curriculum implementation.
4. The student is the target for content planning, delivery, and evaluation of instruction.
5. Each content goal is analyzed by the instructor for domain, level, frequency, difficulty, purpose, and preferred sequence. This analysis creates a check-and-

balance system to determine what, why, where, and when content is included or excluded from a course.

6. Content action verbs are carefully selected and manipulated to insure that planning, delivery, and evaluation on instruction is aligned. As a result, what is planned is taught and what is taught is evaluated.
7. Each content goal requires approximately three hours of learning time invested by the student. This results in creation of
   (a) a direct match between content goals and performance objectives;
   (b) a direct match between the content goals and the lecture, lab, or clinical topics;
   (c) a situation that facilitates sharing of instructional materials and evaluation items.
8. Micro-decisions made about course content create macro-based data that can be used to describe and prescribe the instructional system. Because these data can be aggregated by program, institution, and state, instructors are able to share instructional planning data, instructional materials, and test items (Vogler, 1995).

These eight concepts are incorporated into the CPA Model below.

Technology to Facilitate Developing Curriculum Frameworks



A dedicated software package, the Instructional Performance System (IPSI) Suite software supports this model. This software uses an expert system to assist in linking the course objectives, delivery and evaluation, and the Idaho Achievement Standards. A series of three workshops were offered free of charge to Professional-Technical teachers to train them to use the

software. Each participant was provided a free copy of the ISPI software and accompanying manuals which retail for approximately $200. Participants could opt to receive graduate credit at a reduced fee. Professional-Technical teachers in that district receive stipends for each professional technical course they convert to use the IPSI software. Family and Consumer Sciences teachers were among the Professional-Technical programs represented at the workshops and at least two courses were in the process of preparation by FCS secondary teachers who are part of a Technical Academy consortium within the Professional-Technical district.

At the 2002 Professional Technical Conference, the Division of Professional Technical Education announced that all curriculum development funds would be channeled to put all professional technical programs into the IPSI coursebuilder portion of the software during September, October and November 2002. Teachers would be provided training at a two day workshop and paid a stipend to input their course(s) (Waite, 2002).

Although the IPSI software has been available for approximately eight years, the current version is still cumbersome to use. It requires approximately 50 hours of training to be able to understand the theoretical basis and begin using the software. Access to technical support from someone who has a great deal of experience with the software would facilitate successful use. This author has deemed it unreasonable to expect pre-service teachers to learn to use the software within the constraints of the present course load limits. The theoretical foundation of the CPA model has merit, and will be incorporated in the FCS pre-service teacher preparation curriculum classes, because it is pedagogically sound.

It is difficult to determine how using the ISPI software with the FCS curriculum development projects would facilitate the benefits that can accrue when the instructor aligns the planning, delivery and evaluation of their course content. Using the IPSI software is a process whereby teachers aligns their content and evaluation with their identified objectives. Unless a strictly mandated uniform curriculum is required to be taught, the alignment process done by the individual teachers provides professional development for each teacher who uses it, but doesn't provide a product that can be adopted successfully unless each lesson and test is taught across the curriculum.

Another software package, EdVision, is used by at least one school district in Idaho. The EdVision software also aligns the curriculum with state standards. By having the local school district use the same software package, the district can insure the alignment and articulation of the district's curriculum. The author has not had opportunity to use the EdVision software so cannot comment on the usability.

Conclusions

The design of a state curriculum framework affects the content of an FCS program. The Idaho Division of Professional Technical Education reimburses school districts based on the FCS programs offered to the secondary students. Districts that continue to offer FCS courses that are primarily "stitching and stewing" are not reimbursed for those courses or for classes offered to students below ninth grade. The FCS curriculum frameworks serve as a resource for mis-assigned teachers, and preservice and inservice education, and provide information on curriculum for parents and the public. The continued identification of Family and Consumer Science departments as Home Economics indicates need for an Implementation Guide for Family and Consumer Sciences which could be distributed to secondary school administrators, curriculum directors and as an additional resource for preservice and inservice education. An

evaluation of the use of the IPSI software to align the curriculum needs to be made and continued effort needs are needed to develop more interconnected concepts of curriculum components to guide systematic improvement.

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FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES TEACHERS: LEVEL OF PREPARATION TO TEACH PREGNANT AND PARENTING TEENS

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The purposes of this study were to determine family and consumer sciences (FCS) teachers' level of preparation for teaching parenting and employability skills, and the effect of years of teaching experience on their perceptions of their level of preparation to teach parenting and employability skills. A total of 309 (45%) participants responded to the questionnaire developed from a review of literature and the parenting curriculum entitled Preparation to Teach Pregnant and Parenting Teens. Overall, teachers felt well prepared to teach subject matter included in parenting education. In addition, they felt well to very well-prepared to teach employability skills. Teachers with 21 to 30 years of teaching experience differed from other teachers on their preparation in nutrition, management, and practicing good work habits (employability skills). Teachers with 21 to 30 years of teaching experience also achieved the highest overall mean and thereby, felt better prepared to teach pregnant and parenting teens, and employability skills than other teachers in this study.

Teachers are increasingly challenged by educational reform initiatives and new legislation to improve quality of teaching and address needs of diverse student populations. An educational reform initiative in family and consumer sciences (FCS) was the implementation of programs or content that focus on parenting skills. The 1976 Vocational Education Amendment that identified parenting, nutrition, and consumer education as required subjects for funded programs in FCS and became the impetus for the development of programs in parenting/parenthood education. A decade after the amendment was passed Jensen (1986) determined that many FCS programs throughout the nation had initiated teen pregnancy and parenting programs. Today, there are hundreds of programs in public schools for pregnant and parenting adolescents in several states (National Institute on Early Childhood Development, 1999). Some states have taken the lead in developing parenting courses. For example, in Ohio, the in-school program for pregnant and parenting teens known as GRADS (Graduation, Reality, and Dual-Role Skills) is offered in more than 300 school districts. The GRADS program in Lawrence County Vocational School in Chesapeake, Ohio has received much attention and is considered an exemplary program (Smith, 1998). Additionally, Colorado is noted for the Teen Parenting program at Fairview High School in Boulder (Smith). These are two examples of leading and noteworthy programs among many other FCS programs for parenting and pregnant teens.

Parenting education is a course designed for teens to study the skills of planning for and being a parent. According to Thomas (2000), there are two major assumptions that undergrid most parenting education programs. The first assumption is that parents influence their children's development in significant ways. Effective parents are believed to minimize the overall potential for human suffering by providing environments that enable their children to become emotionally mature adults. The second assumption is that good parenting skills are learnable and teachable. Positive parenting education enhances the quality of parenting. In addition, exposure of parents and future parents to parenting education reduces the occurrence of child abuse.

Therefore, the focus in parenting classes is on the teenager, his/her perspective on values, relationships, what it means to be a parent and decision making relative to his/her own life. The unique problems which teen parents face are emphasized in order to help teens cope realistically and plan for the future. In addition to developing personal and parenting skills, courses in parenting education also place emphasis on employment skills. Attention to employment skills are geared toward keeping teens in high

school and enhancing their abilities in the workforce. Zellman, Feifer, and Hirsch (1992) investigated 71 teen parent programs, and found the design of parenting courses was consistent among programs. That is, the emphasis of the programs was on educational goals, parenting outcomes, and employment outcomes.

The ultimate goal of parenting programs in Georgia is to retain the teen parents in school and enable them to acquire knowledge that will not only help them earn a living but also become good parents. Cooke (1990) declared that teaching parenting is a responsibility which FCS educators need to be prepared to do well. Family and consumer sciences educators cannot meet the challenge of assisting pregnant and parenting teens if they do not feel prepared to teach the subject matter related to parenting and employability. This study explored the level of preparation FCS teachers had for teaching parenting and employability skills and the effect years of teaching had on their perceptions of preparedness.

Review of Related Literature

Few studies were found on how prepared teachers felt to teach either generally or specifically to teach career ant technical education content. Only one study dealing with the preparation of teachers was found that included FCS teachers. Virtually no studies were found on how prepared teachers felt to teach pregnant and parenting teens. This review reports the level of preparation felt by teachers from a national study of all teachers, from two studies of CTE teachers, and one study of FCS teachers.

In an effort to improve the quality of teaching in the 21st century classroom, the U.S. Department of Education (1999) examined the quality of teacher preparation in public schools. Results indicated that teachers felt either moderately or somewhat well prepared for most classroom activities, and less than half of the America teachers reported feeling very well prepared for most classroom activities. For example, only 36% felt very well prepared to implement state or district curriculum and performance standards, 41% indicated they were very well prepared to implement new teaching methods, and 28% perceived they were very well prepared to use student performance assessment techniques.

Two researchers, Gbomita (1999) and Burrell (1993), queried career and technical education (CTE) teachers about implementing curriculum and standards. In Gbomita's study, 79% of Pennsylvania CTE teachers felt well prepared or very well prepared to implement the state or school district curriculum and performance standards. Additionally, 97% of the teachers reported feeling well prepared or very well-prepared to teach in the occupational field in which they were certified or licensed. Burrell (1993) examined the preparedness of CTE teachers in Ohio for teaching mainstreamed at-risk learners. Burrell focused attention on the need for training. Findings indicated that relating math and science, developing youth organizations, developing communication skills, and visiting with families were significant areas of need for Ohio CTE teachers. Pregnant and/or parenting teens are included in the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act of 1998 as student who are academically disadvantaged and therefore, at risk for failing or dropping out of school. As students from special populations increasingly enroll in career and technical education classes, it becomes important to assess the preparedness of teachers to appropriately work with a diverse student population.

Norman-Nunnery and Way (1987) surveyed secondary FCS teachers to determine the relationships among teacher certification requirements, teachers' professional preparedness, and student outcomes. Findings also indicated that the teachers' overall perceptions of their preparedness did not differ significantly in relation to demographic variables such as age, race, education, socioeconomic status, teaching experience, or occupational teaching experience. Norman-Nunnery and Way's findings paralleled those of a study by Butcher (1998) concerning preparation for teaching in occupational areas. Teachers participating in Butcher's investigation reported feeling fairly well prepared for their occupational teaching responsibilities.

In a qualitative investigation, Pillow (2002) spent days in classrooms with female adolescents who were pregnant and attending classes in their high school. Her findings revealed several major factors that strengthen the importance of FCS teachers being well prepared to work with pregnant and parenting adolescents in regular school settings. Among her findings, she noted that students felt more relaxed and accepted in FCS classes, students expressed that they felt comfortable talking about their pregnancies in

FCS classes (although they did not feel that way in other classes) they expressed more independence and stronger messages of self-esteem in FCS classes, and teachers were observed to engage in different pedagogical strategies to encourage student participation.

As a more diverse student population needs the content and skills presented in secondary FCS courses, teachers are increasingly challenged to meet the needs of these students. As a result, FCS teachers not only need to be exposed to the pedagogy that prepares them for a wide range of student needs, they must also feel that they have been adequately prepared to deliver content related to parenting education.

Conceptual Framework

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) was created in 1987. The organization strives to strengthen the teaching profession and to improve student learning and is comprised mainly of teachers. NBPTS's mission is to advance the quality of teaching and learning by maintaining high and rigorous standards, providing a national system to certify teachers, and advocating related education reforms (NBPTS, 2003). The conceptual framework for the study was the core aims/standards from NBPTS. The five core propositions of NBPST are: teachers are committed to students and their learning; teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students; teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning; teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience; and teachers are members of learning communities. The second core propositions, teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students forms the conceptual foundation for this study. Although NBPST is for exemplary teachers, all teacher education programs and teachers should strive to obtain standard number two.

According to the U.S. Department of Education (1999) report on teacher quality, as a result of reform initiatives teachers must meet classroom requirements that many have not been adequately prepared for during their pre-professional training. On the other hand, Jensen (1986) claimed that FCS professionals are uniquely qualified to work with pregnant teens because of the focus of their education. In most teacher education programs, preservice FCS teachers are required to take courses including content in human sexuality, relationships, pregnancy and childbirth, nutritional needs during pregnancy, and childbirth and parenting; thereby, preparing them to teach pregnant and parenting teens. Consequently, FCS teachers may have been prepared to satisfy the educational initiative concerning Parenting with emphasis on employability skills as well as the NSPST core proposition of knowing their subject matter.

Purpose

The primary purpose of this study was to determine teachers' level of preparation for teaching parenting skills, and employment skills. A secondary purpose was to determine the effect of years of teaching experience on the level of preparation for teaching parenting skills and employment skills.

Method

The population consisted of 760 FCS teachers in Georgia. A total of 309 or 45% of the participants responded. The majority, 280 or 90%, of the participants were women and most were white, 242 or 78%. The participants ranged in age from 23 to 63 with a mean age of 43.

The questionnaire entitled *Preparation to Teach Pregnant and Parenting Teens* was developed by the researchers from a review of literature, contained 18 items on a Likert type scale and addressed the teachers' level of preparation for teaching parenting education and employment skills. The items related to preparation for teaching the major areas in the parenting curriculum which includes: (a) child growth and development, (b) parenting skills, (c) nutrition, (d) management skills for the development of home and work**,** (e) balancing work and family commitments, (f) job search skills, and (g) work maturity skills. The questionnaire consisted of six response categories. Respondents used the 6-point scale ranging from

1-not at all prepared to 6-very well prepared to express their level of agreement. The scale was anchored at each point. The anchors and values are not at all prepared = 1, poorly prepared = 2, fairly well prepared = 3, prepared = 4, well prepared = 5, very well prepared = 6. Based on Litwin (1995) and Nunnaly (1978) estimations, a score of .70 or higher on the Cronbach's alpha suggests good reliability. For this study, the overall instrument showed a Cronbach's alpha score of .84.

Procedures

Data were collected using a mailed questionnaire. A mailing list of all FCS teachers was obtained from the Georgia Department of Education. A cover letter and questionnaire were mailed to all 760 FCS teachers. The first mailing resulted in 240 responses. In accordance with Dillman (1978), a follow-up postcard was sent two weeks later to 520 teachers to request that they complete the survey. Two weeks later a second questionnaire was mailed to teachers who had still not responded. The response to the second mailing resulted in 69 returns, giving a total of 309 or 45% respondents.

Means, standard deviations, t-tests, and the planned comparison approach were used to report findings. Mean ratings of 1.0 to 1.50 represent not at all prepared, 1.51 to 2.50 poorly prepared, 2.51 to 3.50 fairly well prepared, 3.51 to 4.50 prepared, 4.51 to 5.50 well prepared, and 5.51 to 6.0 very well prepared.

Findings

Table 1 shows teachers' level of preparation in the subject matter on parenting education. On the subject matter in the Georgia's parenting education curriculum, teachers felt *well prepared* to *very well prepared* to teach. Mean scores ranged from 5.5 to 5.1 with nutrition having the highest and balancing work and family having the lowest score, respectively. The overall mean for the scale in Table 1 (child growth and development, parents skills, nutrition, management skills for the homemaker/wage-earner, and balancing work and family commitments) was $M = 5.3$. Hence, teachers felt *well prepared* to teach parenting education.

Table 2 shows teachers' level of preparation in teaching employment skills. Mean scores ranged from 4.6 to 5.5. The overall mean for the scale on employment skills was 5.21; overall means for job search and work maturity skills were 5.23 and 5.19, respectively. Therefore, teachers felt *well prepared* to teach employment skills.

Teachers varied in their years of teaching experience. Eight teachers reported 1 year of experience while two reported 36 years of teaching experience. In order to better understand the effect of teachers in various stages of their careers, teachers were sub-grouped according to number of years of teaching experience. This grouping yielded the following categories of years of teaching for the participants: 1-10, 11-20, 21-30, and 31 - 40. On the Certified Personnel Data section of the Georgia Public Education Report Card, teachers are grouped in ten-year increments for years of experience (Georgia Department of Education, 2003). Teachers in this study were categorized accordingly.

Frequencies for years of teaching experience were disproportionately distributed among the four groups (see Table 3). The category representing 11-20 years of teaching experience was the largest group, ($n = 115$). The second largest group (102) represented participants who had taught 1-10 years, while the lowest count ($n = 13$) was reported for the 31 to 40 years of teaching.

Table 1
Level of Teacher's Preparation for Teaching Parenting Education to Pregnant and Parenting Teens

Statement	*M*	*SD*
I feel prepared to teach pregnant and parenting students about:		
Child growth and development	5.28	1.02
Parents skills	5.21	1.03
Nutrition	5.48	0.80
Management skills for the home & work	5.29	0.86

Balancing work and family commitments	5.19	0.99

Note. Overall mean for the 5 areas is 5.3.

Table 2

Level of Teacher's Preparation for Teaching Employment Skills to Pregnant and Parenting Teens

Statement	*M*	*SD*
I feel prepared to teach pregnant and parenting teens concepts relate to job search skills:		
Preparing a resume	4.79	1.23
Searching for available jobs	5.56	0.80
Complete a job application	5.43	0.83
Interview for a job	5.50	0.81
Handle job offers	5.51	0.82
Prepare for the world of work (i.e. what motivates workers, decision making)	4.61	1.33
I feel prepared to teach pregnant and parenting teens the following work maturity skills:		
Present a positive image (grooming, dress, self- confidence, etc.)	5.06	1.33
Exhibit positive work attitudes (social skills, creativity, taking pride in one's work)	5.03	1.13
Practice good work habits (attendance, thoroughness, safety practice)	4.87	1.18
Practice ethical behavior (integrity, respect for property, follow company rules)	4.91	1.14
Communicate effectively (oral, written on verbal, listening)	5.50	0.80
Accept responsibility (use initiative, problem solving, manage personal responsibility)	5.50	0.82
Cooperate with others (work in teams, work under supervision)	5.54	0.80

Table 3

Effects of Years of Teaching Experience on Level of Preparation to Teach Pregnant and Parenting Teens

Variables		Nutrition		Management		Work Habits	
Years	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
1 - 10	102	5.35	.87	5.12	.86	5.59	.70
11 - 20	115	5.47	.79	5.26	.87	5.39	.87
21 - 30	70	5.74	.60	5.60	.74	5.74	.69
31 - 40	13	5.46	.87	5.42	.85	5.55	.78
Missing	1						
Total	301						

The planned comparisons approach was used to determine if teacher groups were different on years of teaching experience and the areas included in parenting education. Rather than testing whether several populations have identical means, the planned comparisons approach determines whether one population mean differs from a second population mean or whether the mean of one set of populations differ from the mean of a different set of populations (Olejnik & Hess, 1997). Analysis indicated no

significant difference in child growth and development, parenting skills, and balancing work and family commitments and any teacher group. However, a significant difference (see Table 3) was noted on nutrition **(***M* = 5.48, *SD* = 0.80**),** *t*(296) = -1.167, *p* = .028) and management skills for the home and work (*M* = 5.29, *SD* = .86), *t*(297) = -1.242, *p* = .010). The significant difference occurred on nutrition, and management skills for the home and work between teachers who had taught 1-10 years and teachers who had taught 21 to 30 years. Teachers who had taught 21 to 30 years felt more prepared to teach nutrition and management skills for the home and work than teachers with 1 to 10 years of teaching experience.

Employment skills revealed a significant difference on practice good work habits (*M* = 4.87, *SD* = 1.18), *t*(296) = 1.910, *p* = .004). The significant difference occurred between teachers who had taught 11-20 years and teachers who had taught 21 to 30 years. Teachers who had taught 21 to 30 years felt more prepared to teach work habits than teachers with 11 to 20 years of teaching experience.

Conclusions and Discussion

Five major findings emerged from this study. First, teachers felt *well prepared* to *very well prepared* to teach parenting education to pregnant and parenting teens. These findings are similar to those of the US Department of Education (1999) and Gbomita (1999) studies. Teachers who participated in those studies also felt fairly well to very well prepared to implement state curriculum standards. It is important for teachers to be knowledgeable about concepts and competencies that blanket the profession. Knowledgeable teachers can positively affect student learning. Students in parenting programs, who may face greater challenges, due to their circumstances can benefit greatly from these teachers. This is encouraging since findings from these studies relate positively to NBPTS' second Core Proposition, teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.

Second, teachers felt *well prepared* to *very well prepared* to teach employment skills to pregnant and parenting teens. Zellman, Feifer, and Hirsch (1992) survey of 71 teen parent programs reported that schooling and parenting goals were considered critical in all programs whereas, employment goals were considered far less important in most. According to the teachers in this study, almost equal emphasis is placed on employment skills as parenting skills. Therefore, this finding is noteworthy. Emphasis on employment skills is important since a goal of the program is to increase immediate and/or future employability. Placing a significant emphasis on employability can have an accumulative effect; that is, increased employability skills will increase economic possibilities which lead to self-sufficiency. The parenting status of female teenagers can have a powerful impact on their career choices. Brown and Barbosa (2001) found that career goals of teen girls who come from low-income families were confined to the experiences of their relatives or friends. It is projected that exposure to the content in FCS classes related to employability would broaden students' perceptive and changes of wider career choices.

Third, teachers were different with respect to years of teaching experience on nutrition and management skills for home and work. Teachers with 21 to 30 years of teaching experience felt more prepared to teach nutrition and management skills for home and work to pregnant and parenting teens than teachers with 1 to 10 years of teaching experience. Fourth, teachers were different with respect to years of teaching experience on employment skills (practice good work habits). Teachers with 21 to 30 years of teaching experience felt more prepared to teach good work habits to pregnant teens than teachers with 11 to 20 years of teaching experience. Fifth, of all teachers, those with 21 to 30 years of teaching experience achieved the highest mean rating and thereby, felt more prepared to teach pregnant and parenting teens than other teachers in this study.

Although there were fewer teachers in the 21 to 30 than in the 1 to 10 and 11 to 20 years of teaching experience groups, in the last three conclusions they consistently scored themselves higher in their feelings of preparedness. As teachers mature in the profession, they are more confident in their ability to deliver the subject matter. The researchers feel that this could be the result of these teachers taking advantage of professional development through their schools, counties, or universities. We also feel that it is parallel with teachers keeping abreast in the field by attending conferences, reading professional journals and taking enrichment classes. As Pillow's study indicated, FCS teachers do indeed

have a profound impact on the in-school experiences of students who are pregnant. It is imperative, therefore, for secondary teachers to have the knowledge and skills that will help to feel confident when working with this specific population of students.

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THE TEACHING EXPERIENCES OF NEW FCS EMERGENCY PERMIT TEACHERS

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This qualitative study examined the teaching experiences of new Family and Consumer Sciences teachers with emergency permits. Data collection consisted of in-depth interviews with 9 new FCS emergency permit teachers (EPTs) either in person or by telephone. The interviews were audio-taped, transcribed, and analyzed using the constant comparison method. Findings reveal individual student behaviors and discipline procedures, as well as classroom and program management were the primary problems encountered by the EPTs. Other problems were an inability to organize resources, plan curriculum, and assess student learning. They felt overwhelmed and experienced frustration, fear, nervousness, isolation, insecurity, and exhaustion. Attending credential classes after teaching all day caused frustration and additional pressure. Mentors, departmental colleagues, principals, and other faculty members provided support, and self-confidence increased as the school year progressed. Most EPTs attributed their success to determination and personal abilities, and all would make the same decision to teach as an EPT if given the opportunity.

The field of Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) is facing a large number of teacher retirements and a shortage of new teachers. With fewer students in Family and Consumer Sciences Education (FCSE) programs, there are not enough teachers to fill the vacancies when they occur. These realities, along with a rise in the number of individuals who are ready to make career changes from industry to education, have created a need for an increase in the hiring of FCS emergency permit teachers (EPTs) - individuals who want to teach but are not yet credentialed.

As new FCS teachers take emergency permit teaching positions, they begin to openly discuss with their university instructors and classmates the job-related problems and concerns they are experiencing. Receiving a monthly paycheck is viewed as a valuable benefit to these new teachers; however, the problems they encounter as new teachers who are not yet trained seem overwhelming to them.

Attrition rates for new teachers are highest within the first three to five years of teaching (Berry, 2001; Chapelle & Eubanks, 2001; Turley & Nakai; 1999; Whiting & Klotz, 2000), but attrition rates for alternatively certified teachers (including emergency permit teachers) are even higher. These studies suggested a need to know more about the teaching experiences of emergency permit teachers as they struggle to balance full-time teaching, college coursework, and home life.

The FCS credential program coordinators are concerned with the classroom experiences of new, non-credentialed teachers. Will new FCS EPTs burn out and leave the profession sooner than their traditionally prepared counterparts? Are their students learning? Will negative teaching experiences have long term effects on their teaching habits? There is limited research available on the teaching experiences of EPTs and none is reported in the field of Family and Consumer Sciences.

Review of Literature

Since the 1990s there has been a shortage of teachers across the nation. According to Whiting and Klotz (2000), statistics indicated that by the year 2008, 2.2 million teachers will be needed to fill open teaching positions. Teacher shortages can be attributed to increased enrollments due to population growth, decreasing teacher education undergraduate majors, and attrition due to retirement and leaving the profession (Bradshaw, 1998). Although qualified teachers are needed to teach every subject some areas are facing increased shortages at alarming rates. A study conducted by Lucke (1998) revealed a significant foreign language teacher shortage. In a study of students with disabilities, Ludlow and Wienke (1994) found that the shortage of educational personnel to serve them in the nation's schools is nearing crisis proportion. Current and continuing shortages of Family and Consumer Sciences educators have created a crisis for many states (Bull, Uerz, & Yoakum, 2000, Jackman & Rehm, 1994; Mimbs, 2000; Travers, 1994). Mimbs' (2000) study on the retention of certified FCS teachers in a large Midwestern state found 77 open FCS teaching positions for the 2000-01 school year, with many more unreported.

The teacher shortage across the nation has led many states to adopt non-traditional certification procedures for entrance into the profession. The traditional route for teacher certification requires the completion of a four-year baccalaureate degree and completion of a state approved teacher education program, which includes student teaching in addition to other requirements specified by the college's approved program (Bradshaw, 1998). A method of entrance into the profession or requirement for licensure for those who are not traditionally trained as teachers is commonly referred to as alternative certification.

Many states offer alternative and emergency certificate programs as a means of solving the teacher shortage problems; however, programs vary from state to state. Some states have various programs that lead to obtaining a teaching credential. In 1993, Bradshaw reported that all states offered alternative licensure programs (Berry, 2001).

Alternative and emergency certificated teachers are typically assigned to a fully licensed and experienced mentor and participate in a shortened program of course work and professional development related to pedagogical theory and application concurrent with employment (Chappelle & Eubanks, 2001; Neumann, 1994). Alternative certification programs may include course formats comprised of evening, weekend, and summer classes with training that lasts from four to six weeks (Berry, 2001; Chappelle & Eubanks, 2001; Lee, 1998; Neumann, 1994). Alternative certification differs from emergency certification in that under certain circumstances, schools are permitted to hire teachers without proper certification on the basis of completing certain requirements in a specified timeframe. Emergency permit certificated teachers complete regular certification requirements through night and summer courses at institutions of higher education while teaching during the day (Chappelle & Eubanks, 2001; Neumann, 1994).

Attrition rates of teachers can be attributed to an increase in issues related to classroom management, discipline, and feelings of being overwhelmed. Although the literature on attrition rates of first year or beginning teachers varies, the findings are disconcerting. Attrition rates are highest within the first three to five years of teaching (Berry, 2001; Chapelle & Eubanks, 2001; Turley & Nakai, 1999; Whiting & Klotz, 2000). A statewide evaluation conducted by the California Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment program (Mitchell, Scott, Hendrick, & Boyns, 1998) found that over fifty percent of classroom teachers quit the profession within two years. Attrition rates for alternatively certified teachers are even more distressing. Neu and Hale (2000) stated that 40 percent of EPTs leave the profession within the first five years. Berry

(2001) found that 60 percent of teachers who enter the profession by alternative routes leave within the first three years as compared to 30 percent of traditionally trained teachers. Other researchers indicate that alternatively licensed teachers may leave the first year of teaching (Wayman, Foster, Mantle-Bromley & Wilson, 2003). For example, Berry (2001) stated that fifteen percent of alternatively licensed teachers in New York quit two months into the school year.

Literature specific to the area of teaching within one's subject matter expertise revealed that teachers with greater subject-matter knowledge have less anxiety on matters related to instruction (Wayman, Fosler, Mantle-Bromley & Wilson, 2003). Some states, however, may not require demonstration of subject matter proficiency when issuing emergency teaching permits, instead allowing EPTs to fulfill that requirement within the timeframe of their permit, which is usually five years.

Even if teachers who are prepared through alternative certification or emergency permit programs may be proficient in the subject area they teach, the literature revealed that they lacked basic pedagogical skills. Studies indicated that coursework related to teaching methods and theory was necessary for acquisition of pedagogical skills and knowledge (Bradshaw, 1998; Neumann, 1994; Otoya, 1992). Traditionally certificated teachers get the opportunity to develop, refine, and experience these skills first hand through student teaching (Neu & Hale, 2000); alternatively certificated teachers however, bypass the opportunity to experience student teaching and may lack knowledge related to teaching, and emergency permit teachers often begin teaching before they have acquired that knowledge through classes in pedagogy.

Previous studies on new teacher induction and alternatively certified teachers report student behavior and classroom management as the primary concerns and frustrations of EPTs (Nakai & Turley, 2003; Neumann, 1994). Neumann's study on the experiences encountered in the first five months of teaching by emergency certificated teachers in a rural town in California revealed that 52 percent of the respondents (n = 55) reported frustration in the absence or inadequacy of training in classroom management, discipline, and teaching methods. Additionally, Wayman, Foster, Mantle-Bromley, and Wilson (2003) stated concern regarding the differences that existed in the areas specific to pedagogy and instructional preparation between traditionally and alternatively licensed teachers. Studies specific to this area have concluded that alternatively certified teachers are less prepared in pedagogical skills. According to Nougaret (2002), traditionally licensed teachers significantly and substantially outperformed alternatively licensed teachers in all domains assessed.

Turley and Nakai's (1999) study revealed that in addition to the struggles EPTs encounter with their students and teaching in general, they may also encounter a lack of collegiality, as EPTs reported a lack of respect from other teachers due to their licensure status. Communicating with parents, and working with students who had special needs caused concern and frustration for several teachers, and added to their daily workload. Newmann (1994) found these to be commonly voiced concerns of EPTs. Similarly, Nakai and Turley, (2003) found that foregoing the opportunity of learning from a cooperating teacher and observing through participation are disadvantages of EPTs.

Some school districts provide new teacher support programs. For example, California designed the California Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment program (BTSA) in 1992 to ensure that first year teachers with pre-service training and alternatively certified teachers receive adequate support through their first two years of teaching (Mitchell, Scott, Hendrick, & Boyns, 1998). The state of Connecticut also has a similar program called the Beginning Educator

Support and Training (BEST) program. This program is designed to "help beginning teachers strengthen their knowledge of subject matter and of instructional strategies, enhance their understanding of students as learners, and begin a career of lifelong learning and professional growth," (Christie, 2001, p. 491).

Studies indicated that there seemed to be a difference between those teachers that work with a mentor and those that did not. Turley and Nakai (1999) reported that EPT participants in their study experienced a lack of close mentoring and feedback from a veteran teacher - drawbacks of working as EPTs; however, traditional student teachers reported close mentoring as one of the advantages of pursuing the traditional route. Respondents in Nakai and Turley's (2003) study mentioned they would have liked the help of mentors on a daily basis when confronted with curricular decisions.

Previous studies related to beginning teachers and mentors reported positive feelings toward mentoring. In a phenomenological study conducted by Montgomery (2000), cooperating teachers described a professional relationship by providing support, direction, or guidance related to teaching. Garza (2001) reported that the feedback from mentors was more validated by university supervisors than by performance assessment instruments. Current and previous studies strongly recommend mentoring programs for newcomers into the field either by traditional or alternative programs (Chapelle & Eubanks, 2001; Fox & Duck, 2001).

Turley and Nakai (2003) found that despite the difficulties, frustrations, and endless complaints due to their own lack of preparation reported by EPTs, many still fail to see the value of professional preparation. In their 1999 study, Turley and Nakai quoted one EPT who viewed student teaching as a waste of time. Turley and Nakai's (1999) comparison study on pre-service students who completed their preparation by way of traditional student teaching or emergency permit student teaching also found that EPT pre-service students would complete their field experience the same way if they had to do it all over again, despite the reported drawbacks of EPTs.

There has been little or no research on the effects that EPTs have on student learning. Researchers in the area of education have expressed concerns related to the lack of pedagogical skills and theoretical methods that are vital for the transference of knowledge (Berry, 2001; Chappelle & Eubanks, 2001; Neu & Hale, 2000; Turley & Nakai, 1999; Wayman, Foster, Mantle-Bromley & Wilson, 2003; Whiting & Klotz, 2000). Neumann (1994) proposed that it was not unreasonable to believe that students taught by EPTs may be harmed in some way. Neumann (1994) recommended that students and parents alike should be notified when instruction is carried out by an uncertified teacher, and also suggested that citizens, in light of the situation, may obligate legislators to find solutions.

Method

The purpose of this study was to investigate the teaching experiences of Family and Consumer Sciences Education (FCSE) students who were hired as FCS teachers with emergency permits. By learning more about their teaching experiences, university teacher preparation programs and school districts can identify the problems and work together to improve the EPT experience, thereby decreasing the likelihood of teacher attrition. Research questions guiding this study focused on identifying the perceptions of the new FCS EPTs in order to gain a clearer picture of what teaching is like for new FCS teachers who have not completed all the program requirements for a preliminary teaching credential in California.

Specific research questions were:

1. What were the day-to-day experiences of the emergency permit teachers?
2. How were the experiences of the emergency permit teachers similar or different?
3. What were the emergency permit teachers' perceptions related to their own job performance?
4. How were their perceptions concerning job performance similar or different?

A phenomenological perspective was used to gain the data necessary for this study. After an extensive review of literature related to new teacher induction and emergency permit teaching, a questionnaire was developed to guide the in-depth interview process. The 27 open-ended questions focused on the teaching position; support received; problems, successes, and feelings experienced; recommendations made by EPTs; and demographic questions. Interview questions included:

1. How did you decide to take a teaching position before finishing the credential program?
2. What kind of support or resources did you have or use when you started your job?
3. What was your first day of teaching like?
4. What were the concerns or problems you experienced?
5. What were the successes you experienced during your teaching?
6. Do you believe the student learning was affected by the fact that you were not a credentialed teacher yet? Explain.
7. In reflection, if you could re-do your decision to take an emergency permit job, would you? Explain.
8. Would you recommend emergency permit teaching for other FCSE students? Why or why not?
9. What recommendations would you make so that emergency permit teaching could be a more satisfactory experience?

The participants of this study were nine FCSE students enrolled in the FCS teacher credential program in a California state university in the academic year of 2000-2001 who had been teaching with emergency permits for at least one semester. In order to qualify for employment with an emergency permit in California, individuals were required to hold a baccalaureate degree, pass the California Basic Education Skills Test, be enrolled in a teacher credential program, and take at least six units of class credits per calendar year until completion of the credential requirements.

Each of the participants was interviewed; eight of the interviews were conducted on the telephone by the researcher and one was conducted as a personal interview held at a location that was suitable to both the participant and the researcher. The interviews lasted approximately one hour in length. The audiotaped interviews were transcribed into Word document data for analysis. To ensure validity, an FCSE colleague checked the transcript printouts against the tapes for accuracy. The data were then read and analyzed by the researcher to determine themes.

Results

Demographics

Of the nine female emergency permit teachers EPTs in this study, three were married and six were single or divorced. Of the three who were married, one had children, and of the six who were not married, three had children. Three of the EPTs were in their 20s, three were in their 30s, and three were in their 50s. All of the EPTs in this study had prior work experience of some kind. Six of the EPTs had some form of paid teaching experience, which may have included day-to-day substitute teaching, long-term substitute teaching, teaching in a regional occupational program, or teaching at the community college level; however, three of the nine EPTs had no paid or unpaid teaching experience.

Themes

The following themes were discovered: the EPTs' positions, problems, feelings, support, successes, job performance, and recommendations for others.

The Position. The majority of the respondents indicated they made the decision to take an emergency permit job before completing the credential program because of financial considerations. Other reasons included having a teaching opportunity in the city where the husband had taken a new job, feeling ready to teach, and not being able to advance to student teaching due to an unmet subject matter requirement.

The new EPTs had varying lengths of time to plan for their classes when hired. Three teachers had two to three days to prepare, five had one to three weeks to prepare, while one had two months to prepare. The majority of the EPTs used materials from their credential classes and textbooks from their new departments as resources for planning lessons. Other resources included lesson plans from colleagues in their departments; materials collected from cooperating teachers during early field experiences; support from classmates, university professors, teacher friends; and past experience. One EPT spent many hours throughout the school year sorting though and examining stacks of extremely outdated and unusable materials, equipment and supplies stored in her department, only to find few items that could be relevant and useful. Four of the EPTs did not have an FCS colleague in their department, four had one other FCS colleague in their departments, and one EPT had two FCS colleagues.

Except for one EPT who was hired on a part-time basis including a coaching duty, all other EPTs taught either five or six classes per day. They each had two or three different class preparations (e.g., Foods I and Foods II) and one planning period, with the exception of one full-time EPT who sacrificed her planning period for one semester of her first year in order to take on a coaching responsibility in her school.

The contexts surrounding their hiring and initial weeks of employment were quite varied. One EPT was required to begin the school year teaching her classes in the teacher's lounge until remodeling of her classroom could be completed. Because keys could not be obtained, another EPT was not able to acquire access to her classroom or planning resources during the entire summer before she began her job. In addition, she was not informed by the principal as to what her teaching load would be until two days before the semester began. An EPT who replaced another EPT (who was released from her position mid-year) had only two days to access the room, textbooks, and other resources before the second semester began. Another EPT began her position mid-semester, taking over after a long-term substitute had been released from the position.

Reflections on their first days of teaching elicited a variety of responses—from a day that went "very well" to "the kids were out of control" to a day filled with nervousness, cracking voices, and tears. Several of the EPTs remembered the first day as a series of "getting-to-know-you" activities; yet others recalled an exciting day, but a continuous struggle to figure out routines and procedures. One EPT described her first day the following way:

> I was higher than a kite! [I was] nervous, hyper, excited! [I was] trying to understand the bell schedule and how to take attendance, remember names of students, faculty, administrators, how to do copies. I didn't sleep for three days before or after.

For the EPT who began her position after a long-term substitute had been released, the first day of teaching was quite different, as she described:

> It was hell. It was awful because I had taken over from a substitute….a substitute had been running my class until I could take and pass the CBEST. There was no orderliness in the classroom—none. Gum [was] everywhere…candy wrappers. Kids were running wild.

About half of the EPTs felt they were well informed about what to expect before accepting their teaching positions. One teacher said, "I wasn't surprised or disappointed or let down. I think I went in with my eyes open." Another EPT described her mixed feelings in the following way:

> I guess I was informed, but kind of not really, because the things that were overwhelming where the everyday mechanics of the particular school, what is unrelated to teaching, like the administrative things, the paperwork and bureaucracy of everything. I think another home economics teacher at the school you are teaching at would be more beneficial because you would actually have a partner. A lot of people were very helpful, but it wasn't like I was teaching next door to someone in the same department, where it would have been a whole lot easier.

Another EPT explained her mixed feelings, stating,

> I was naïve about the amount of work involved in being an emergency permit teacher. I didn't know about the educational system in general, as opposed to the health care system; knowing the classroom responsibilities was okay, but I had to deal with drawing a line between students' thinking I was a friend or a teacher. And coaching…all that made it more difficult.

One EPT believed she was not given enough information about what it would be like. She stated, "[The university faculty] did not tell us—they lied. They didn't tell us how hard…how hard it would be."

Problems. The majority of new EPTs cited individual student behaviors and issues related to discipline as the two most common problems they encountered. One EPT who had

completed a long term substitution position at another school prior to her current employment described the discipline concern she had at her new job:

> Discipline in the classroom was a big issue…establishing my authority. What I was used to [was] a little talking. It does not bother me. Raising my voice and yelling and getting angry are not in my personality and I found myself having to do this and that was the biggest thing. The worst part about it was that [yelling and getting mad] was what the kids responded to.

Another EPT had similar concerns with student behaviors and discipline, as she described,

> I didn't feel prepared to handle a student that just didn't seem to respond to [my talking with him]. Sometimes I would hold a student after class to talk and say, 'This is what is going on,' and 'What can we do to work it out?' I just didn't know what to do next—when to write a referral, what to write a referral for. How terrible an offense does it have to be? Is disrupting my class enough to send them out? Those kinds of things took a long time—probably through the second semester to really figure out what to do [and when to do it].

Other problems encountered were inability to plan lessons, difficulty in planning effective lessons, no knowledge of grading, difficult relationships with mentors, lack of subject matter knowledge, and figuring out how to work with a variety of students who had special needs. The overwhelming amount of time required outside of the school day resulted in problems with lesson planning for one EPT, as she reflected,

> I never wrote up a lesson plan this year, except for my school evaluation. That was it. I knew teaching was going to be difficult, I knew that. I was dreading it because I knew it was going to be a lot of work, but I didn't quite realize that it would be a job that I would do at school from early in the morning and spend hours after work and then come home and sit at the computer for four more hours.

Another EPT had difficulty making decisions related to planning and managing her curriculum. She recalled,

> No boundaries were established. I would answer anything [students asked] so I didn't know if I was teaching the content correctly or if I wasn't. Students complained about the work amount, so I adjusted. All the students wanted to do was cook. I felt I had to give up a lot of my control in the class in order to have the students comply. I felt I could be getting them to do more. There was always 15-20 minutes of down time. I knew I could be doing more…better.

Another problem area for several of the EPTs was grading and how to weight various components of assigned student work. One stated, "I had no understanding, completely no understanding of grades and how to do projects on point scale values. How do you even give something 30 points? How do you weight them? [I had learned] absolutely nothing anywhere along those lines that helped with any of those things." Another EPT voiced a similar reaction,

stating, “I did not know how to grade or what to grade them on, and I think that is still [a problem for me]. How much emphasis should I put on something?”

Working with so many students who had special needs caused a great deal of frustration for one EPT, as she reflected,

> I didn’t know the kids were going to be like that. I guess I expected them to be a little more attentive. I expected some attentiveness. I didn’t know I would have as many special needs [students] and so many different levels of special education and English language learners. I didn’t know there would be that many [students like that] in home economics classes. I didn’t know they would just dump everybody there. I didn’t know there would be so many social behavior issues.

Several EPTs talked about the difficulty they had in working closely with FCS colleagues, who also served as their mentors. One EPT described her situation in the following way:

> Working with someone as close as I worked with….there was a lot of strain mid year. Then it kind of let out toward the end. I think it was because I kind of just started going off on my own, where she kind of wanted to keep me under her wing and then you know, just working side by side with some organization and …sharing a desk with her…that’s where the frustration came in.

In order to complete credential requirements, it was necessary for all but one of the EPTs to teach during the day and attend university classes at night. Most of them viewed taking credential classes while teaching as a problem, some using the words “horrible,” “frustrating,” and “too much pressure” to describe the situation. One EPT described it as “one more obligation adding to an already big load.” Two other EPTs, however, found the classes to be quite beneficial. One said, “I think it impacted my life in a very positive way because I could take what I learned and actually go and apply it the next day. I think that it was the best thing ever.”

Most EPTs spoke about an experience that was described as their lowest moment, one that usually symbolized a “breaking point” of some kind. Four EPTs told about specific incidents involving student behaviors that led to extremely emotional reactions and self-doubt concerning their career choice. One described a situation involving student behavior and parent reaction in the following way,

> I got so frustrated with kids talking in my class that I basically kicked four kids out of my class. Another kid thought it was okay to start laughing out loud so I kicked him out as well. That afternoon I called his house and his mom told me that because I was having a bad day I did not need to have her child kicked out of class…That was the one point where I actually was in tears at school. It just kind of shot me down. It was not only disrespect from the kids but from the parent as well, and that was really hard to take.

Another EPT described her lowest moment in the following way:

> I had to teach the first couple of weeks in the teacher's lounge…it was awful. I must say it was echo-y and loud and it was temporary and the students did not take it [well]. I felt very out of control one day. Someone put a newspaper in the microwave and turned it on. Luckily I smelled smoke before it burst into flames. It was pretty obvious they felt they could do things like that. I was really depressed and questioned if I was doing the right thing. I pretty much cried all the way home. I didn't know if this was right for me.

Three EPTs indicated that being so drained from the amount of time and work they put in to their jobs had caused them to eventually become physically ill and miss work. Eight of the nine EPTs indicated the concerns experienced in the first half of the year seemed to lessen as the year progressed.

Feelings. A wide range of feelings were described by the EPTs in the initial stages of their teaching. In the beginning, negative feelings such as frustration, nervousness, fear, isolation, exhaustion, a lack of confidence, and feeling overwhelmed dominated their psychological well-being. Only six of the nearly 50 feelings described in the initial stages of their teaching were positive emotions: excitement, happiness, satisfaction, fulfillment, pride, and determination. Four of the EPTs described no positive feelings whatsoever when asked how they felt in the beginning. As the year ended, the negative feelings had lessened for the majority of the EPTs, giving way to increased confidence and a higher comfort level with their jobs. One, however, remained continually overwhelmed, and another who mentioned numerous positive emotions in the beginning described only negative feelings as time went on. Another EPT was just glad the experience was over because she had already decided not to return to teach at that school. One EPT in a single teacher department described her feelings as she began teaching in the following way,

> It was very overwhelming. I felt out of place. I very much felt like an outsider. A lot of it was feeling like an outsider and feeling very alone. [I was] the only home economics teacher and being a first time teacher like that…and being on my own. It was a little overwhelming with planning on my own and not having any input from anyone else.

Another EPT echoed the same feeling of isolation,

> There was one time when I almost started crying at the end of the day just because I was frustrated with [the students]. The assistant principal came in and it was hard because I did not have any other teachers to talk to. No one else taught home economics there and I was the only teacher and the kids were misbehaving completely.

The psychological effects of teaching on an emergency permit took their toll on these new FCS teachers. One EPT recalled that she was fearful of what parents might say to her if she called home about the students' behaviors. She reflected, "I think that because I was so young and I don't have a full credential that I did not want parents to

put me on the spot." One of the EPTs who was in her 50s was also concerned about how people perceived her. She said, "I wanted people to think that I was not new. I did not want the students to think that I was new at this. I wanted them to get excited about it, to want to be there." Several EPTs mentioned they found themselves defending themselves and their profession when confronted by their co-workers.

Successes. The vast majority of the EPTs' successful events or experiences were related to positive changes in student behavior, an increase in student learning, and positive feedback received in a variety of ways from parents, students, and administrators. Many of the EPTs told about the sense of accomplishment they felt as they watched their students' learning increase and their behavior improve, including content skills and social skills. One EPT recalled the fulfillment she felt because she was able to help a 19-year old autistic student to make progress in her class. Another EPT told about an English language learner in her class who finally became confident enough to ask a question aloud, speaking in English. Her entire class applauded, which caused the teacher to feel a moment of success and gratification. Another EPT told about a student teenage mother who wanted to drop her child development class because she "did not see the point." With the EPT's encouragement, the student stayed in the class and ended up earning the Home Economics Medal of Merit that year because she became an exemplary student who volunteered her time outside of class to help other students.

When another EPT was asked about success in her teaching, she found it difficult to even associate the word "success" with her teaching. She struggled with the idea of how "success" as a teacher would be identified as she responded, "I have no idea. I don't even know. What kinds of success? They made their aprons…they actually finished a sewing project…they were able to cook. I don't know. I don't know…"

Support. Departmental colleagues, principals, and other teachers in the school were mentioned by a majority of the EPTs as sources of support, as well as parents and university personnel. One EPT recalled the support of her colleague and mentor, "She was always there with kind words and she never made me feel stupid. She would tell me things that I did not know." Another EPT described the support she received from her mentor teacher in the following way:

> My support teacher was across the hall from me and part of what I liked so much about her was that she was really friendly and that was a really big deal—that I could have someone right across the hall, that I could go to [her] and ask basic questions about school policy and scheduling and that kind of thing. That was a big deal.

Another EPT, however, recalled the lack of support she received from the FCS colleagues in her department, saying,

> I think I would have appreciated or could have really used somebody to talk with me everyday to just kind of go over what's going to happen at school every day, this is how to do grades, anything, lesson plans.

Principals offered support in different ways. One EPT recalled that her principal would stop by her room to see how she was doing and if the students were treating her well. Many of the EPTs stated that other teachers in their schools would share with them positive comments

they heard about their teaching and their classes. Parents would also share positive comments with the EPTs about changes they had observed or experienced with their own children as a result of their teaching.

Job Performance. The EPTs were asked to rate their own job performance on a scale of one to ten, with 1 being "Not Effective" and 10 being "Very Effective." Scores ranged between 4.5 and 8.0, and the median score was 6.5. All the EPTs in this study believed that their students were not negatively affected or harmed as a result of being taught by non-credentialed teachers, and all stated different reasons for their beliefs. In spite of the fact that she saw her youth as a negative factor when she began teaching, one EPT came to view her young age as an asset that helped her to relate to her students, perhaps better than an older new teacher may have been able to do. Another EPT admitted her lack of subject matter expertise in one particular area, but justified it with the belief that she knew more than her students knew about that subject. Another EPT rationalized that her students' learning ability was very low and that they would not have learned any more if she had been fully credentialed. Several EPTs, however, indicated they believed traditional student teaching would have made them better teachers. One of these teachers went on to describe her feelings about being credentialed, stating,

> I think the credential is over rated. [When I began teaching] I had all my credential classes, except for student teaching, so I don't think their learning would have changed. If I had student taught before I began, that probably would have been a plus. But…in my opinion, you could forego 90 percent of [the credential classes]. I would rather spend the money and put my time into shadowing a teacher in my field. I think there is a huge waste of time and money in credential classes. The methods classes for home economics were great and maybe the one on discipline. The multicultural and reading classes…I would put them at the bottom. I just think that it would be so much more valuable to shadow a teacher that teaches in your field. I feel that so strongly.

Generally, the EPTs attributed their success of surviving emergency permit teaching to their determination and personal abilities. One EPT indicated that the only thing that got her through the experience was the knowledge that it would end, because she was not planning to return to that job. All of the EPTs indicated they would make the same decision to take an emergency permit job before completing their credential program requirements if they were given the opportunity again.

EPTs' Recommendations for Others. In spite of the fact that almost all the EPTs would have made the same decision to teach on an emergency permit if given the opportunity to do it over, all of them advised that taking an emergency permit job is not for everyone. They recommended individuals should only consider it if they are confident and determined, and have some prior teaching experience, a broad subject matter expertise, and an FCS colleague in the department, as well as no coaching responsibilities. Other recommendations included having the ability to be flexible, realistic, multi-tasking, and self-controlled.

The themes that resulted from the student teacher interviews reflect a broad array of experiences which will in essence, provide the foundation upon which these new EPTs will base their teaching careers. It is important for educators to try to understand these experiences and to use the information to inform and improve the teacher education program.

Discussion

Results of the study indicate that the FCS EPTs were not fully prepared when they took their jobs. This can be attributed, of course, to the fact that they had not yet completed their credential coursework, including student teaching; however, administrative situations in some schools also affected new EPT success. The results also suggest that when emergency permit teachers are hired late in the season, receive their teaching schedule at the last minute, and are asked to teach in unsuitable environments, their success will be affected.

Other contextual factors created challenging environments for teaching and learning, but perhaps could not be avoided. Several of the teachers in this study began their new jobs teaching classes that had, up to the day before, been taught by several long-term or day-to-day substitute teachers. In addition, some EPTs began their positions in mid-year or even worse, mid-semester; and some began their teaching in departments where the former teachers had taught for 30 plus years. Each of these situations sets up very difficult challenges for the non-credentialed newcomers to teaching, and perhaps more so in FCS because of the heavy lab component of many programs.

Accessing teaching resources did not seem to be a problem for these EPTs; however, organizing them into usable resources posed problems for many of them. In some cases, teachers had difficulty in deciding what to teach and how to teach it. Several teachers stated they did not know how to set up grading policies, how to grade and weight assignments and projects, or how to maintain records. Curriculum planning and student assessment are integral elements of the professional education classes required for the credential; therefore, new EPTs should have this knowledge before taking a teaching job. Although teachers who are prepared through alternative certification or emergency permit programs may be proficient in the subject area they teach, the literature reveals that they lack basic skills related to pedagogical skills.

The overwhelming nature of a full-time teaching job was evident by the problems discussed by the respondents in this study. The new EPTs who did not have a planning period or who taught classes outside of their subject matter expertise experienced additional difficulty and frustration. The issue of subject matter competency seems to be a critical factor in predicting the new EPTs' levels of frustration and feelings of being constantly overwhelmed.

Student behaviors and discipline issues were the most commonly reported concern of the EPTs. These issues are often reported in studies on new teacher induction, and previous studies on alternatively certified teachers report student behavior and classroom management as the primary concerns and frustrations of EPTs.

In addition to the lack of a credential and pedagogical knowledge, the EPTs in this study seemed to also be at a disadvantage over traditionally prepared new teachers psychologically. This study revealed that when the EPTs began teaching, they lacked confidence in their abilities and did not want students, teachers, or parents to know they were inexperienced, non-credentialed teachers. This may be due to their insecurities of being young or just new to the profession. Not surprisingly, some teachers in other content areas are not knowledgeable about the FCS profession, and therefore cause additional stress and frustration for new EPTs who feel they need to continually defend their profession and their purpose.

Communicating with parents, and working with students who had special needs caused concern and frustration for several teachers, and added to their daily workload. These experiences are usually modeled in the student teaching semester by cooperating teachers; therefore, emergency permit teachers have no experience with these situations, except for what they may have encountered in their early fieldwork hours.

Beginning teachers often felt overwhelmed due to the challenging and rigorous nature of the job; however, these feelings seem to be intensified for EPTs who teach all day and take credential classes at night. In order to facilitate this transition many teacher education programs, as well as alternative and emergency certificate programs have incorporated mentoring into the program. Some school districts also provide new teacher support programs. However, it should also be noted that some of these programs place on the new EPTs an additional load of having to do assignments and attend workshops and others seminars.

Almost half of the new teachers worked in single teacher departments. This study reveals that this can be both a problem and a supporting factor for new EPTs. Many of the teachers spoke of isolation and a lack of collegial input and feedback. They desired a colleague for these reasons.

The new EPTs in this study who had colleagues referred to them as valuable sources of support; however, several of the same teachers described the conflict with their mentors that resulted from sharing space and having differences in teaching philosophy and teaching style. This may suggest that those who serve as mentors to EPTs may not be trained to serve in that role. Another reason for mentor problems may stem from an absence of compensation for those who mentor EPTs. This may cause mentors to resent having the extra responsibility, which may in turn, result in conflicts with the new EPTs or no mentoring at all.

The FCS EPTs in this study identified both general and specific examples of student successes, which they believed were major indicators of their own successful teaching. The EPTs in this study believed they were fairly effective teachers, attributing their success to their own determination and abilities. Although some believed student teaching would have made them better teachers, all believed that not having the credential did no harm to their students. Perhaps the introduction of emergency permit teaching inadvertently communicates a message that willingness and determination make a good teacher, thereby discounting professional preparation. In spite of the overwhelmingly negative descriptions of their experiences, most EPTs believed they would do it the same way if given the chance to re-do their decision to teach with an emergency permit; however, they cautioned others to be completely informed about it before doing so. This may indicate that they not only struggled throughout the process, but more importantly, that they perhaps had learned many valuable lessons and were willing to persevere in order to be good teachers.

Recommendations for Practice

Program coordinators in university teacher preparation programs should inform all FCSE students and prospective EPTs about the reality of the demands, the potential classroom diversity, the possible isolation, and the overwhelming amount of work they will have as they complete credential classes while teaching full time. Program coordinators cannot control who the mentor teachers of EPTs will be, as they are assigned by the school administrators, but they can advise the EPTs that there may indeed be incompatibility issues related to personality or teaching style; therefore, the importance of developing and using skills for honest, open communication should be emphasized.

Even though prospective EPTs are not required to possess subject matter competency, the findings of this study suggest some problems could be eliminated for new EPTs if they were required to be subject matter competent in their discipline before taking the job. The 2002 No Child Left Behind Act addresses this issue by requiring all new teachers hired on or after July 1, 2002 in the core academic subject areas as EPTs (now hired as “interns”) or with a credential

have to prove subject matter competency upon being hired. However, it should be noted that some states are applying the legislation across all content areas, which would include FCS. Program coordinators should offer the program's library of secondary textbooks as a resource for individuals who are preparing to take the subject matter test and should encourage individuals to take courses at the community college to gain knowledge and skills in the content areas they need to strengthen.

Program coordinators can ensure high quality early field placements for the students as they proceed through their program so that they can observe excellent classroom management and instruction and learn by working only with exceptional master teachers. Program coordinators should advise less experienced, less confident, less capable FCSE students not to take emergency permit teaching jobs, but encourage them instead to complete the credential program first.

School administrators should inform new EPTs of their teaching load and should provide access to their classrooms as soon as possible. They should continue to ensure that EPTs have at least one planning period per semester. Taking extra-pay duties, such as coaching, is not recommended for EPTs, especially if it eliminates a planning period.

Knowledge of curriculum planning and student assessment is also essential for quality instruction; therefore, administrators should ensure that EPTs meet with their mentors prior to the beginning of school to learn basic strategies for lesson planning and assessment. Mentors should be trained, paid, and required to check in with their EPTs on a weekly basis to answer questions and to provide encouragement.

School administrators should have an orientation session to inform new EPTs of the school's daily routines and student disciplinary policies. New teacher support groups should be established in the schools so that EPTs and master teachers can role play teacher/student, teacher/parent, and teacher/teacher scenarios in order to practice and develop good decision making skills related to classroom management and communication techniques.

There has been little or no research on the effects that EPTs have on student learning. As the emphasis on meeting standards and increasing student achievement continues, the effects of non-credentialed teachers on student learning should be investigated.

Although findings from this study cannot be generalized to the general population, this study has provided insights on the teaching experiences of new FCS EPTs. The findings are supported by previous studies that suggest non-credentialed individuals will continue to take teaching positions as EPTs, even when they are aware of the overwhelming nature of the job. In order for the teacher shortage to be efficiently addressed and new teacher burnout to be minimized, steps should be taken at the university and secondary school levels to ensure that EPTs are properly informed and advised, appropriately hired, and effectively supported.

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WHAT OUR STUDENTS HAVE TAUGHT US ABOUT CRITICAL THINKING*

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Six critical thinking lessons learned from students of a family and consumer sciences class on family social issues are shared here. They are: 1. It is more difficult than both students and instructors thought. 2. Students perceived the environment in which they practiced critical thinking as non-ideal. 3. Class members helping each other were an essential part of the learning process. 4. Personalizing issues had both positive and negative affects on learning. 5. Role play was a particularly important activity for expanding students' viewpoints. 6. Individual self-assessment of their own criteria for learning frustrated many students. As an overall assessment, students reported that the skills they had polished were going to be useful for them outside of class. Reflection on these lessons can expand the critical thinking process as educators endorse helping students use critical thinking in deciding what to believe and how to act.

According to Norris and Ennis (1989, p. 1), critical thinking is "reasonable, reflective thinking that is focused on deciding what to believe and do." It fits well with aspects of critical pedagogy directed toward social change. Thus, critical thinking is a process that many educators believe is important for students to learn so that they can be informed participatory citizens. Ideas for helping students learn to think critically are common in the literature, although what really happens in classrooms with this type of teaching/learning has not often been reported from the students' perspectives. This article shares student perspectives from a class that attempted to expand students' thinking about family social issues.

In a formal study of one college class (Smith & Kienzler, 2003), 18 undergraduate sophomores, juniors, and seniors (including four adult students 25 or over) provide insights into learning the critical thinking process. Half of the students were taking a required course; the other half had selected the course as an elective. The class encouraged students to practice applying the critical thinking process to personal, family, and social issues, e.g. living together before marriage, sharing beliefs contrary to those of their families, and gay rights. Students selected issues on which to present opposing views, to role play related scenarios, and to form appropriate questions to evaluate the process. Data on their critical thinking processes were collected from transcriptions of video tapes of all class periods, student journals, and student class work. Data were analyzed by two researchers using ethnographic case study methodology. Findings revealed a number of lessons for other critical thinking teachers to contemplate.

One, critical thinking is hard--harder than students or teachers expected (Brookfield, 1994; King, 1992). One student verbalized this insight at the end of a period focusing on extensive, involved discussion about teaching sexuality in the classroom. When asked if it would be interesting to continue this discussion, her answer was no. Her justification was that she had already thought so hard she had a headache. Another student in a different class period said:

> Others of us have a tough time with that [critical thinking]. . . . We should help each other, go the extra mile and help each other. . . . That's why we're in this class, to learn how to do it, and we should go out of our way to help each other. Because I'm having a tough time with it, and I see other people are too. (Tape 15, pp. 2-3)

Instantly, another student agreed. This student added: "It's something that needs a lot more than one course and a lot more hours learning. . . . There are techniques in it that are very hard" (Tape 3, p. 3).

One of the major reasons critical thinking is hard is that it requires students to work on two kinds of learning, both content and process, at once (e.g., Huba & Freed, 2000, p. 215-16). The content was often illusive, depending on the perspective (economic, social, political) being applied to the issue. There was no single source dealing with the content from all perspectives of the issues. Students had to be willing to find content in magazines, books, web pages, and through personal contacts. It was hard for them to consider content for multiple sides of a given issue; students were familiar with taking only one stance on an issue. Even assigning facts to the pro and con sides of the issue was not easy. One student says, "I did not read the 'yes' [side of the] issue so I wouldn't get it confused with the 'no' [side of the] issue" (Tape 14, p. 16).

The textbook for the process (Browne & Keeley, 1994) was a standard text written on a freshman level, and students thought the process described was quite simple until they tried to practice it. With some practice, they were able to hone the skills of defining issues, clarifying terms, identifying assumptions of others, and evaluating. However, the skills of questioning one's own assumptions, of gathering adequate evidence, and of constructing a persuasive rationale remained somewhat elusive to many, even by the end of the semester. Beliefs, which are hard to change (Douglas, 2000), also played a role. Too often class discussions would turn away from examinations of assumptions and consequences to statements of "I think/I feel" involving previously held unexamined beliefs and ideas.

> It's very easy when presenting an argument to say I feel or I think. But when you do that you weaken your argument and it doesn't come across presenting a side of an issue. It sounds like you are presenting more your feelings. And that's what we're trying to overcome in this class. And what is a fact and what is an opinion. (Tape 28, p. 2)

Students found trying to articulate their view in successful communication, combining both content and process together into one successful package, a momentous task. Even when they did accomplish this task they frequently did not recognize their accomplishment and were still prone to ask, Did we do it correctly? In a specific class period requiring them to role play being the teacher and answer common student questions about the critical thinking process, they managed process and content very well, but they failed to appreciate their own performance and tried to return to the standard teacher-as-authority practice. Students made this point clearly in their comments on feedback:

> Student 4: "I would be more intimidated by what you [professor] had to say than by what my peers had to say."
>
> . . .

> Student 14: "Because you have to grade. We're not going to put the grade on the GPA on her. You are. That's why she's more interested in what you have to say." (Tape 28, p. 10-11)

Although evaluation of self and others had been emphasized throughout the semester, evaluation by the teacher was still seen as more important than their own or peers' evaluations of their work.

Two, students had to learn to work in what they considered a non-ideal environment for classroom work. Students came with a common opinion of what would be an ideal environment: it would be one in which the group held similar opinions, were all interested in the issue discussed, and had adequate time for leisurely discussion. However, in reality finding an issue of equal interest to all was impossible for them. Furthermore, personality differences in non-ideal groups made sharing opinions difficult, but they also taught students to produce even when involved in an uncomfortable social setting.

Sometimes that setting was uncomfortable indeed. One student reported, "When we do group work, I'm not comfortable with the people in my group. . . . I don't enjoy it" (JournalStu3, 3/22). Students learned to confront non-ideal situations, including students who did not think as they did, with an open mind:

> Well, I'm starting to feel more comfortable with this class. YEAH!! On Monday I had my one-on-one discussion with [my partner]. In the first place, this was the only subject [my partner] wanted to do it [presentation] on [Is the Greek system a positive?] I felt somewhat awkward because she is in a sorority [writer is not] and I didn't want to offend her with my argument. I don't think this affected me too much. . . . I really tried to keep it as objective and unemotional [as possible]. (JournalStu11, not dated)

Part of the non-ideal environment is awkward time constraints such as inconvenient ends of class periods and mid-term tests. This constraint taught students time management skills needed to work around timing obstacles:

> I do hope I can manage my time well so that I can pay full effort and attention on the assignment. . . . It [antecedent not clear] may cost me more time when we now have to work in pairs since I have to start my research again. (JournalStu5, 3/20)

Dialogues take time to develop. Students had to learn that dialogues also could not be exactly recreated; class period ends cut them off at inconvenient points, and frequently students were not interested in returning to the thought-provoking stances that were being successfully developed during the preceding period. However, they often left the classroom still discussing the topic among themselves. These time constraint issues reflect some of the constraints of standard academic terms, with their set number of minutes in each period and set number of weeks in each term. More creative work is needed in academia on ways to make this structured environment more learning friendly.

Three, this particular kind of learning is not something students can do by themselves; they need classmates to facilitate the process. One student said, "Finding the evidence and deciding how good the evidence is can be difficult. It's easier to find evidence and

decide its value in a group because others can bring insight to the value of evidence" (JournalStu3, 2/15).

Students commented on multiple occasions that this was a class they could never make up if they missed it, unlike their other classes where they could just borrow notes or read the book.

> I mean [other classes] are not totally like this class. But if you're not here there's no way you can be doing the process, make the process up. You're missing out on that. That's not something you can go study and be able to catch up on. It's something you have to be here and experience to gain the knowledge of. (Tape 27, p. 1-2)

This commitment to participate can facilitate cooperative learning, where students actively help each other learn. Cooperative learning requires engaged persons who are willing and able to challenge each other to create new understanding. All members of the community are important; class attendance is important. This cooperative learning community is particularly suited to problem-solving tasks with more than one feasible solution (Lenning & Ebbers, 1999).

Four, students needed to get past their personal discomforts for the best learning to occur. In the beginning some were uncomfortable speaking their minds on personal topics: "My husband of nineteen years left our marriage about four years ago, so thinking about marriage success and failure is hard to look at objectively" (JournalStu6, 1/23). Some were not comfortable with the expression of multiple viewpoints: "[S]ome people [are] not giving others the chance to be right. This is especially sad in this class where we should be able to explore ideas and keep our minds open to new possibilities" (JournalStu18, 2/8). Others were uncomfortable not being sure of where the dialogue would go. They had to learn that they could not control a discussion: "Today my group was in charge of leading the discussion; it still didn't flow very well…then to have to call on your peers as fellow members of the class is very difficult for me" (JournalStu12, 1/30).

Part of the discomfort involved is that critical thinking is frequently emotional (Ben-Ze'ev, 1995), challenging personal beliefs or habits. Persons feel strongly about their beliefs and stubbornly resist new information that would mean changing them (Douglas, 2000). But, emotions and personalization are qualities which students thought were inappropriate for the classroom. A student commented in her journal that dialogue in public was difficult for her because she kept tearing up:

> Many times I never do state my feelings because I'm concerned of being WRONG [sic] or made a fool of for what I believe. Because of my emotional self I do find it hard to be wrong or proven not so correct. . . . I just struggle with showing BIG emotions when being wrong. . . . When talking in class though, in my pair discussion, I felt safer stating my side [without] facing embarrassment of possibly tearing up like I do quite often. (JournalStu1, 3/29)

On the other hand, personalization allowed them to tell their real-life stories and relate personal experiences which helped them connect to the issues being discussed.

Five, role playing was valuable for taking pressure off the student, because the viewpoints were stated as those of characters, not students. Furthermore, role play used to

enhance critical thinking can broaden students' knowledge and acceptance of others' views**.** Students in this class watched a video that showed two students doing role plays of sensitive issues, such as sex education in school and stepchild-parent relations, and another student asking questions of the role players after the scenarios. When the class did their own scenarios they took the task seriously and developed scenarios that stimulated the rest of the class to ask questions. There were no journal entries or class comments on the tapes that indicated negative feelings about the role plays.

In this class, characters for role playing came from short stories on family issues or students' personal experiences. Playing a role, students could say things they would not say as themselves; they also learned to appreciate different viewpoints:

> I feel the role playing is becoming quite beneficial. It's getting people to ask the right questions and look at issues through other people's eyes. It's surprising when playing another role you really "get into" it. I feel I'm actually this person who I'm playing. . . .It also is making us look at the issue and define people's true motives and feelings. We're becoming more of a "critical thinker"! (JournalStu11 4/19)

Literature furnishes a number of other examples of role play possibilities, e.g., simulated situation (Mindich, 2000) and designated roles for a question and answer session after role play (Devet, 2000). The regret was that the semester ended before the full potential of role playing could be reached in this class.

Six, self-assessment is hard--even harder than anticipated. Traditional grading usually involves external validation and competition among the group members. Getting students to be comfortable with their own learning, and to provide their own validation, was very difficult (Huba & Freed, 2000). When given the opportunity to set their own critical thinking objectives and the objective criteria for measuring achievement of those objectives, students floundered. This individual responsibility for learning did not fit with their preconceived notions of how grades are determined. Even setting the objective was difficult for them.

> I must admit the first couple of weeks . . . were somewhat stressful in the sense of me not quite grasping what was expected of me in this class. It wasn't until I realized that it wasn't about what [the teacher] wanted from me but what I wanted to learn from the class [that the stress stopped]. (SelfevalStu11, no date).

> [We] are going to have a lot of trouble with all this freedom. We are so programmed to do what our superiors want from us, to be totally free to do our assignments as we like is almost more difficult than if we had been given strict guidelines (JournalStu18, 1/24).

The difficulty with measuring their own performance is voiced as a frustration with success that is not measured in the traditional areas of reading, note taking, and parroting back information. Students who were successful in traditional academic venues such as large lectures and multiple choice tests were resentful of their ineptness with the new skills required in this critical thinking class.

One interesting aspect of assessment that both professors and students learned is that all efforts to do critical thinking do not have to be successful for students to learn: "Frustration is not

always a bad thing" (JournalStu15, 2/22). As one student pointed out, her group should have done more research on the issue they were presenting, but their failure to do so gave her the real life opportunity to present her perspective of the issue under real life exigencies which generally do not encourage a trip to the library. Presentation of a flawed argument gave them an opportunity to view the weaknesses of their argument and improve next time:

> [Student name] did a good job with her evidence. She may have been a bit more prepared than I was. Next time I am going to make a list or write a short paper [before a presentation]. I need to be better organized (JournalStu13, n.d.).

Although they may have had difficulty in assessing themselves, students felt free to assess the course. After getting off to a shaky start in which they frequently wrote about feeling lost, most students were convinced of the value of critical thinking by the end of the course.

> I was not raised in an environment that analyzes reasons. I think I was raised by my parents more with the goal of understanding things than questioning them. This course has opened a new world to me. One that I would like to explore more thoroughly. (SelfEvalStu15, 5/3)

> I think I've learned a lot more than I ever anticipated in this class. I even overcame some of my shyness and reluctance to speak. I think I gained a lot of positive things from this class, and things I can implement [in] other parts of my life. (SelfevalStu16, 4/30)

Recommendations

The six basic insights from students on learning the critical thinking process lead to the following classroom recommendations. All of these recommendations are to supplement, not replace, basic core knowledge necessary for informed dialogue on the issue.

Perhaps the most important insight is that since critical thinking is hard to learn, students need continual opportunities to practice. Students can practice finding the assumptions in textbook chapters or newspaper articles. When students encounter opposing views on complex family and social issues, they can practice expanding the two views to multiple perspectives to avoid labeling one perspective right and the other wrong. Students can examine the evidence and argumentative progression in relevant editorials. They can write five-minute papers practicing some of the above skills in writing. Finally, they can write weekly learning journals to document their own learning.

To provide a more learner-friendly environment, teachers can investigate the possibilities of longer class periods: two 75-minute periods instead of three 50-minute periods, or even a 150-minute period once a week, in which a variety of activities are used to provide active learning in the classroom. Ideally, critical thinking skills will become second nature and students will practice them in environments outside of the classroom--when they watch television, go to the movies, or dialogue with roommates, friends, and family.

Because critical thinking is best learned in a group environment, students need continual opportunities for cooperative learning. In addition to special group projects, which seem widespread in our classrooms, students could experience frequent partnering or small groups to process problems presented in the lecture or textbook. These cooperative experiences are good

ways to vary student experiences in large lectures. Furthermore, they can help students move past personal discomforts by sharing their thoughts with just a few students at a time. Students can "hide" their response within that of the group. They can also learn to value and respect themselves and each other as they open up to others' thinking. More opportunities for role playing could also stimulate this kind of learning.

Students need new opportunities for self-assessment. Term papers, oral presentations, and group projects should be accompanied by students' evaluations of the work's strengths and weaknesses based on identified criteria. At least one project in each course could allow students to set their own goals and assessment criteria, including an argument for the importance of the criteria chosen. Final course evaluations of teachers should be accompanied by final self-evaluations of the student's own efforts and growth from the course.

Critical thinking is not a process used only occasionally, but a complete way of thinking. Making it a basis of every course could facilitate more questioning attitudes, logical thinking, and clearer communication by students and teachers alike. We invite you and your students to try the process more often, making critical thinking the main road in the education journey instead of the road less traveled.

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