

Contribution of Research

From Candidate to Professional: Examining the Change in Teachers' Perceived Preparedness

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the perceived preparedness of pre service teachers and their actual preparedness after teaching fulltime. Survey research was utilized to determine the preparedness and efficacy in the early years of teaching. This research will provide data to institutions so that they may discover what has proved useful to their graduates as well as improve training of future teacher candidates. The paper concludes with suggestions that further studies can provide data to institutions so that they may discover what has proved useful to their graduates as well as improve training of future teacher candidates.

Keywords: teacher education, self-efficacy, teacher beliefs, expectations

Education in America has always been an important part of society and that importance continues today. Learning expectations are higher than ever before, as individuals need more knowledge and better skills to achieve success (Darling-Hammond, 2023). In order to build successful educational systems and produce intelligent graduates, schools must have highly qualified teachers (Lee, 2018). School systems across the nation are crying out for prepared teachers who are capable of producing successful lessons and greater student achievement (Greenberg et al., 2013).

Novice teachers new to the profession are experiencing circumstances they cannot handle well due, in some ways, to lack of training and preparation (Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017). This deficiency not only affects the teacher and his/her decision to remain in the profession; children are also negatively affected and do not receive an excellent education from untrained instructors (Blazar & Kraft, 2016). Our children deserve quality, caring teachers that have received appropriate preparation, and we need to ascertain if our teacher education programs are adequately preparing these future teachers to provide instruction for all levels of children. The belief of this preparedness is important because confidence is a predictor of teacher effectiveness and commitment (Darling-Hammond, 2012).

Teacher Preparation

Teacher education has become more important in the United States due to the higher testing standards required of the students so we need to raise both the quality and quantity of the teaching force (Greenberg et al., 2013). The traditional way to train teachers was through the nation's higher learning institutions. However, new private organizations are taking college graduates, providing a very short, intensive training, and then putting them into the nation's schools as teachers. Universities across America need to respond to the call for quality teacher preparation programs (Woong Lee, 2018). and make the great change or they will quickly become obsolete (Levine, 2011).

It is important that university teacher preparation programs make sure they are enrolling the best students and training them to be excellent candidates ready to teach. First year teachers are facing isolation and burnout in increasing numbers and many of these rookies are leaving the profession (Hultell et al., 2013). Teacher education programs must prepare the new educators so they can successfully complete their first year of teaching and stay in the profession. The goal of a teacher education program should be to produce teacher graduates who are confident in their abilities to use innovative instructional techniques, teach diverse populations, and provide a positive learning environment for their students.

There are universities answering the challenge of change, and their teacher candidates are more prepared and ready to teach when they graduate. The faculty at a southwestern university chose to transform the program into a 21st century teacher preparation organization that blends theory and practice, integrates academic and field experience learning from the beginning, and makes sure students are taught pedagogy as well as content (Levine, 2011). The university standards for acceptance into and completion of the teacher education program were raised like other successful program that produce quality teachers in other countries like Finland and Japan (Levine, 2011). The goal of this university's teacher education program is to produce first year teachers that break the mold reported by the National Council on Teacher Quality: "The heart of the matter for the field of teacher education is that students taught by first-year teachers lose far too much ground. And it's not just the students who suffer. First-year teachers deal with so much anxiety and exhaustion that many just crash and burn" (Greenberg et al., 2013).

The scores of teacher candidates on the SAT and certification qualifying tests has steadily improved over the past eight years (King & Hampel, 2018). These new teachers must learn to be experts in different fields and prepare to handle the challenges of classroom management in many different settings (Martin, 2021). Teacher candidates need learning experiences that are innovative and effective while being able to put what they learn into practice during their education (Woong Lee, 2018). These students must develop pedagogical skills, instructional strategies, classroom management techniques, innovative uses of technology, and learn to effectively instruct challenging and exceptional students (Greenberg et al., 2013). These well-developed and research-based programs are necessary to educate the future of our nation and the world (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020).

Teacher Beliefs and Expectations

Teacher candidates enter their preparation programs with years of experience in the field as a student. This is termed "apprenticeship of observation" (Lortie, 2002) where students develop their ideas of teaching and learning from years in the classroom. It is believed that when an effective teacher models instruction well, the observer (or student) develops a stronger self-efficacy (Gale et al., 2021). Research shows that the more the

student identifies with their teacher, the stronger the impact on the efficacy of the student. Experiences in the early years of schooling inform the beliefs of children who desire to become teachers. As a result of these experiences, young teachers may teach using the same instructional models they saw demonstrated in their own years in school (Smagorinsky & Barnes, 2014).

Students develop strong beliefs about teaching and learning from their own time in schools before they begin a teacher preparation program (Lortie, 2002; Smagorinsky & Barnes, 2014). A person's beliefs in one's abilities influences their drive and effort in meeting challenging situations and has a direct result on how hard the person will try to overcome barriers (Bandura, 1977). What is learned in these early years has great influence on how well the teacher candidates process their teacher preparation coursework and experiences (DiCicco et al., 2014; Thompson et al., 2013).

Teacher beliefs are developed through observations, personal experiences, and the preparation received in teacher education programs. Those beliefs that are developed during years in the classroom as students may be the most powerful in the formation of teacher candidate beliefs (Lortie, 2002). It takes many years of experience to develop expertise as a teacher. Teacher candidates learn a great deal of formal knowledge in their preparation programs including content knowledge, pedagogy, and classroom management (Poole & Russell, 2015). New teachers should begin with a basic knowledge and an understanding of teaching and learning that comes from their preparation program. Building on their training, teachers then go through the process of constructing new knowledge and skills as they gain years of experience (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020) and become master educators.

Teacher candidates can underestimate how difficult teaching can be as a profession (Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017). Many beginners enter the profession with great expectations about how they will change the lives of their students, but they underestimate how difficult it is to manage the work load and still enjoy their job (Hultell et al., 2013). It is sometimes a painful reality when new teachers learn that the job may be more challenging than they thoughts and that the

students are difficult to teach (Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017). When these beginning educators overestimate or underestimate their actual abilities, it may lead to how much effort they are willing to put into their job (Hultell et al., 2013). Therefore it is important to examine the feelings of self-efficacy in novice teachers new to the profession to estimate their success.

Teacher Self-Efficacy

Albert Bandura (1977) introduced the concept of self-efficacy and described it as “beliefs in one’s capacity to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments” (p. 3). This theory has to do with perceptions of efficacy, not actual efficacy (Barni et al., 2019). In his theory, Bandura (1977) said, “A capability is only as good as its execution. The self-assurance with which people approach and manage difficult tasks determines whether they make good or poor use of their capabilities. Insidious self-doubts can easily overrule the best of skills” (p. 35). When applied to the field of education, there has been research that investigates how teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs are related to their teaching methods and the success they achieve in the classroom (Gale et al., 2021). Teacher self-efficacy is defined as a teacher’s belief in his or her ability to complete the steps required to accomplish a particular teaching task in a given context (Guskey, 2021).

Many studies have found that teacher self-efficacy beliefs increase during university teacher preparation and the first year of teaching because these perceptions are more pliable early in the teacher’s career (Gale et al., 2021). This fact makes the first years of teaching very important in the development of a solid sense of efficacy for the teacher that can last throughout a career. Teacher self-efficacy perceptions can become self-fulfilling prophecies either confirming or disputing abilities and this is important because it can determine if a teacher is willing to take on challenging students or difficult situations (Guskey, 2021). Jamil et al. (2012) states, “Among new teachers who have spent little time in the classroom, self-efficacy is likely driven by a combination of factors, including experiences and skills in the classroom, knowledge of content and pedagogy, attitudes, and personal dispositions” (p. 120).

The importance of teacher self-efficacy is clear, but what about the benefits of a high level of perceived ability?

Teachers with a high sense of efficacy who are in their first years of experience rated their preparation as excellent and the challenges of instruction as not very difficult (Gale et al., 2021). Teachers new to the profession with a greater sense of self-efficacy are more likely to be successful, be more committed to the job (Guskey, 2021) and stay in the teaching profession (Jamil et al., 2012). They are open to new, innovative ideas and more willing to experiment with different instructional methods to meet the needs of even the most challenging of their students (Guskey, 2021). When a teacher has an increased perception of efficacy, they are more successful at planning, organizing, and inspiring learning (Barni et al., 2019).

Not everyone agrees that a high sense of efficacy is good for a beginning teacher. Some studies have shown that when a teacher doesn’t have a strong belief in their capabilities, it can motivate them to learn and improve their instruction or to look for someone to work with to help them to be more successful (Thomson et al., 2022). It may be hard for a beginning teacher to change feelings of self-efficacy during the stress of the first year (Barni et al., 2019). However, most new teachers have overestimated their abilities and even Bandura (1977) says that can be very beneficial for them because it motivates them to work hard and not give up when facing tough situations (Gale et al., 2021).

Summary

By evaluating the preparedness of a beginning teacher, it can be determined if this educator feels ready to face the challenges of their first year. However, few longitudinal studies have been done to determine the preparedness and efficacy in the early years of teaching (Gale et al., 2021). The present study was designed to explore the feelings of preparedness of pre-graduate teacher candidates before they entered the profession compared to feelings of preparedness of post-graduates after gaining teaching experience in the field. In light of the literature, the feelings of preparedness of pre-graduates in a university teacher education program will be much higher than feelings of preparedness after they have at least one year teaching experience. It is expected

that after gaining teaching experience, many teachers will feel they were less prepared when they graduated college than they first thought.

This study was used to answer the research questions:

1. What is the perceived preparedness of pre-graduates and post-graduates from a university teacher preparation program?
2. What was the degree of change of that perceived preparedness from pre-graduate to post-graduates?

Participants

The participants for the proposed study were selected from teacher education graduates from a major southwestern university. There were one hundred sixty three graduates invited to participate in the survey. Of these invited graduates, fifty-five agreed to take part in the research study. The graduates who agreed to participate completed the teacher education program and had one to five years teaching experience. This sample was selected because of access to the data of the state's education agency survey (used as the pre-survey) teacher candidates complete when they graduate from the teacher education program at the university. The department also maintained communication with their graduates and these graduates were comfortable in helping the program by providing their reflections and feedback.

The survey completed by the pre-graduates was done in connection with the state's education agency therefore individual demographic data was not available. However, the completed surveys of the post-graduates provided information about the grade level and type of school district where each taught. 56% of the post-graduate participants worked in PreK-5th grade schools while 34% were secondary educators. In this post-graduate group there were 5% who taught all-levels and 5% who were special education teachers. Current teaching assignments of the post-graduates included 16% in rural districts, 53% in suburban schools, 29% in urban districts and 2% taught in an inner city district.

Study Design

Surveys have been used in many studies to evaluate the training and preparation of teachers (Marbach-Ad & McGinnis, 2008; Ottenbreit-Leftwich et al., 2012). Survey research, by definition, is the use of questionnaires to collect data about the characteristics,

experiences, knowledge, or opinions of a sample of population (Gall et al., 2006). The reason for using surveys in this research study was to understand the feelings of preparedness of teacher candidates when they graduate and to investigate if those feelings grow or diminish after teaching experience. Comparing the pre- and post-survey results would indicate any changes in beliefs about how well the university prepared the graduates for the classroom (Fletcher et al., 2013).

Every graduate of a teacher preparation program in this southwestern state must complete an exit survey upon certification. This graduate survey is entitled *Educator Preparation Program Candidate Exit Survey* and was created by the state's education agency's Education Certification and Standards Advisory Committee. This survey used a Likert scale (Batterton & Hale, 2017) for answering the preparedness questions. The answer choices for the questions were as follows: well prepared-4, sufficiently prepared-3, not sufficiently prepared-2, and not at all prepared-1. Scores measuring the perceived preparedness of the teacher candidates are sent to each teacher education program.

For this research study, the exit surveys of pre-graduates of the university teacher education program were used as the pre-survey. Because this survey was done in connection with the state's education agency, researchers were unable to match specific participant's results from the pre-survey to the post-survey. Researchers made sure to use data for the pre-survey from the years that the participants graduated from the university teacher education program to support their findings.

The post-graduates were invited by email to complete the online post-survey created and implemented following the Tailored Design Method (Dillman et al., 2014). The participants completed an online survey that was created using Qualtrics to replicate the survey on teacher preparedness that each pre-graduate completed to fulfill graduation requirements. The post-survey used the same exact questions using Likert scale measures from the pre-survey regarding preparedness. Graduates were emailed an explanation of the research study and how it was used in the research study. It was also explained to each participant that he/she had the right to refuse to

participate in the survey. Students confirmed their consent to be involved in the research by completing the survey. Confidentiality of their identities and of their responses to the survey was also maintained. Once the time for gathering data was completed, it was analyzed and conclusions drawn. All data collected were kept in a password-protected online file as well as in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher's office.

Data Analysis

The non-equivalent group design was used for this research study because of the pre-survey and post-survey measures completed by intact groups, not randomized samples. Paired sample *t*-tests were used to compare the means between the two related groups on the same dependent variables. The survey looked at feelings of preparedness of both groups in the following areas: classroom environments, instructional techniques, teaching students with disabilities, working with English Language Learners, and using technology for instruction. The means for responses from both pre-graduates and post-graduates were analyzed.

Results

For the purposes of this study, the results from the *Educator Preparation Program Candidate Exit Survey* of the pre-graduates were compared to the results of the Qualtrics online survey of the post-graduates. A combined mean rating score was calculated for each question. The mean was computed by assigning a value to each response: well prepared-4, sufficiently prepared-3, not sufficiently prepared-2, and not at all prepared-1. The first part of the survey asked questions about how well prepared the teacher

Table 1

Classroom Environment	Pre-Grad	Post-Grad	Δ
To what extent were you prepared to effectively implement the discipline-management procedures approved by the campus?	3.72	3.09	0.63
To what extent were you prepared to communicate clear expectations for achievement and behavior that promote and encourage self-discipline and self-directed learning?	3.85	2.78	1.07
To what extent were you prepared to provide support to achieve a positive, equitable, and engaging learning environment?	3.88	3.67	0.21
To what extent were you prepared to build and maintain positive rapport with students?	3.89	3.67	0.22
To what extent were you prepared to build and maintain positive rapport and two-way communication with students' families?	3.68	2.96	0.72
Mean	3.80	3.23	0.57

felt in providing a positive classroom environment in the areas of student behavior and engagement along with

rapport with students and parents (Table 1). There was a significant difference in the scores of the pre-graduates ($M=3.80$, $SD=.097$) and post-graduates ($M=3.22$, $SD=.489$); $t(4)=3.227$, $p=.032$. These results indicated that the pre-graduates felt very prepared upon their graduation but after gaining teaching experience, post-graduates realized they were not as prepared as they believed at first to provide an excellent classroom atmosphere.

The next section of the survey covered the instructional strategies teachers need to use to effectively teach their students. Questions asked to what extent the graduates were prepared to vary instruction, differentiate for students' needs, assess, model, assign goals, and reflect on both teacher and student learning (Table 2). A paired-samples *t*-test was conducted to compare the means pre-graduate and post-graduate feelings of preparedness on implementing effective instructional strategies in the classroom. There was a significant difference in the scores of the pre-graduates ($M=3.89$, $SD=.023$) as compared to the post-graduates ($M=3.37$, $SD=.183$); $t(7)=8.506$, $p=.000$. Once again, teacher candidates upon graduating believed they were well prepared to instruct their students. As seen in Table 2, the pre-grads had high scores on every item. However, the scores dropped for every question with the post-graduates who recognized they were not as well prepared as they thought when they graduated.

Table 2

Instructional Strategies	Pre-Grad	Post-Grad	Δ
To what extent were you prepared to implement varied instruction that integrates critical thinking, inquiry, and problem solving?	3.88	3.44	0.44
To what extent were you prepared to respond to the needs of students by being flexible in instructional approach and differentiating instruction?	3.89	3.39	0.50
To what extent were you prepared to use the results of formative assessment data to guide instruction?	3.86	3.19	0.67
To what extent were you prepared to engage and motivate students through learner-centered instruction?	3.91	3.55	0.36
To what extent were you prepared to integrate effective modeling, questioning, and self-reflection (self-assessment) strategies into instruction?	3.92	3.30	0.62
To what extent were you prepared to assume various roles in the instructional process (e.g. instructor, facilitator, audience)?	3.89	3.53	0.36
To what extent were you prepared to set clear learning goals and align instruction with standards-based content?	3.92	3.51	0.41
To what extent were you prepared to provide quality and timely feedback to students?	3.87	3.21	0.66
Mean	3.89	3.39	0.50

Teachers of every subject and grade level will probably have students that face many challenges including disabilities, and these students may require special

education services to be successful in the classroom. This research study determined how prepared the participants felt to teach students with disabilities and all the laws and regulations required when working with special education students. The paired-samples *t*-test revealed a significant difference in the scores of the pre-graduates ($M=3.62$, $SD=.051$) and post-graduates ($M=2.84$, $SD=.149$); $t(6)=16.861$, $p=.000$ (Table 3). This section of the survey revealed the largest mean difference between the feelings of preparedness of the pre-graduates and the post-graduates.

Table 3

Students with Disabilities	Pre-Grad	Post-Grad	Δ
To what extent were you prepared to differentiate instruction to meet the academic needs of students with disabilities?	3.63	2.85	0.78
To what extent were you prepared to differentiate instruction to meet the behavioral needs of students with disabilities?	3.61	2.72	0.89
To what extent were you prepared to provide appropriate ways for students with disabilities to demonstrate their learning?	3.61	2.74	0.87
To what extent were you prepared to understand and adhere to the federal and state laws that govern special education services?	3.63	2.91	0.72
To what extent were you prepared to make appropriate decisions (e.g., when and how to make accommodations and/or modifications to instruction, assessment, materials, delivery, and classroom procedures) to meet the learning needs of students who have an individualized Education Program (IEP)?	3.56	2.94	0.62
To what extent were you prepared to develop and/or implement formal and informal assessments that track students' progress toward IEP goals and objectives?	3.56	2.65	0.91
To what extent were you prepared to collaborate with others, such as para-educators and other teachers, in meeting the academic, developmental, and behavioral needs of students with disabilities?	3.71	3.08	0.63
Mean	3.62	2.84	0.78

Another important student population in most schools is English Language Learners and the survey once again questioned to what extent graduates were prepared to teach these students (Table 4). The statistical tests revealed a significant difference in the feelings of preparedness' scores of the pre-graduates ($M=3.53$, $SD=.063$) and post-graduates ($M=2.98$, $SD=.053$); $t(4)=23.452$, $p=.000$.

Table 4

English Language Learners	Pre-Grad	Post-Grad	Δ
To what extent were you prepared to provide appropriate ways for LEP-ELL students to demonstrate their learning?	3.56	3.06	0.50
To what extent were you prepared to understand and adhere to federal and state laws that govern education services for LEP-ELL students?	3.48	2.96	0.52
To what extent were you prepared to comply with district and campus policies and procedures regarding LEP-ELL students?	3.58	3.00	0.58
To what extent were you prepared to support LEP-ELL students in mastering the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), including the English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS)?	3.45	2.92	0.53
To what extent were you prepared to model and teach the forms and functions of academic English in content areas?	3.59	2.96	0.63
Mean	3.53	2.98	0.55

The final section of the pre- and post-survey had questions about how prepared the participants felt to use technology as a tool for instruction, assessment, data collection and analysis (Table 5). There was a significant difference in the scores of the pre-graduates ($M=3.79$, $SD=.119$) and post-graduates ($M=3.26$, $SD=.239$); $t(7)=9.083$, $p=.000$. These results suggest that students were familiar with the personal use of technology but may need more instruction in how to use technology effectively to assess and collect data in the classroom.

Table 5

Technology	Pre-Grad	Post-Grad	Δ
To what extent were you prepared to use technology available on the campus to integrate curriculum TEKS and Technology Applications TEKS to support student learning?	3.83	3.51	0.32
To what extent were you prepared to provide technology-based classroom learning opportunities that allow students to interact with real-time and/or online content?	3.80	3.46	0.34
To what extent were you prepared to teach students developmentally appropriate technology skills?	3.86	3.37	0.48
To what extent were you prepared to use technology to make learning more active and engaging for students?	3.92	3.55	0.37
To what extent were you prepared to use available technology to collect, manage, and analyze student data using software programs (such as Excel or electronic gradebook)?	3.66	3.08	0.58
To what extent were you prepared to use available technology to collect manage, and analyze data from multiple sources in order to interpret learning results for students?	3.68	3.08	0.60
To what extent were you prepared to use available technology to document student learning to determine when an intervention is necessary and appropriate?	3.68	2.96	0.72
To what extent were you prepared to use available technology to collect and manage formative assessment data to guide instruction?	3.76	3.04	0.72
Mean	3.77	3.25	0.52

To get an overall picture of the feelings of preparedness for both groups, the means for the total questions of the pre-survey and post-survey were calculated. There was a significant difference in the scores of the pre-graduates ($M=3.74$, $SD=.150$) as compared to the scores of the post-graduates ($M=3.15$, $SD=.308$); $t(32)=15.970$, $p=.000$. This followed the same pattern as the comparison of means from all sections of the test. In summary, the post-graduates who have teaching experience felt they were not as prepared when they graduated as they first thought when they were pre-graduates.

Discussion

Teacher candidates must be well prepared to provide innovative, effective instruction and manage a diversity of students. Teacher preparation programs must meet this challenge as they educate future teachers. As these teacher candidates develop their beliefs about teaching from observations, personal experiences, and the education they receive (Lortie, 2002), they formulate a feeling of self-efficacy as a teacher. This efficacy seems to rise during

teacher preparation and student teaching, but as this research study has shown, teacher self-efficacy drops significantly during the first years of teaching (Gale et al., 2021). It is important to establish a teacher candidate in the knowledge required to be an excellent teacher so they develop efficacy before they enter the profession. These beliefs influence the teachers' persistence when they face challenges and helps them to be tenacious in their work (Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017).

Because beliefs and feelings of preparedness are so important for the teacher candidate, teacher preparation programs must make sure they are successfully preparing their graduates for the classroom. When students graduate from a university program, they usually have high feelings of efficacy about their teaching skills. However, these feelings of preparedness may change as the teacher gains experience in the classroom. This study looked at the degree of change of perceived preparedness of pre-graduates and post-graduates from a university teacher preparation program. Teacher preparation programs need to know the areas where their graduates feel less prepared in order to create the best training possible for their students.

Study results indicated that as the teachers gained experience in the classroom, they realized they were not as prepared as they thought when they graduated. By looking at the mean difference in each section, it is apparent that the greatest change ($\Delta=0.78$) in the feelings of preparedness of the graduates was that they felt unprepared to instruct students who have disabilities. The other sections had a mean difference range of 0.50-0.57 illustrating that the graduates felt less prepared in the other areas at approximately the same levels.

One of the most interesting parts of the study was that the change ($\Delta=1.07$) from pre-graduate to post-graduate preparedness' feelings was the greatest when determining to what extent the teacher was prepared to communicate clear expectations for achievement and behavior that promote and encourage self-discipline and self-directed learning. This major difference demonstrates that teacher candidates need more instruction in helping their students manage their own behavior and learning.

The overall score for both groups showed a mean difference $\Delta=0.59$ demonstrating that teachers who have experience felt less prepared from their university teacher training program than they first thought upon graduation.

This confirms the hypothesis that pre-graduates have a higher sense of being prepared before they enter the profession. After gaining teaching experience, the post-graduates' data revealed feelings of preparedness had changed about how well they were prepared when they left their training program.

Educational Implications

Potentially, teacher preparation programs will benefit from this study by knowing more about how well teacher candidates believe they are prepared to meet today's educational challenges and the reality of that preparedness after gaining teaching experience. This awareness informs the decisions that teacher preparation programs will make to improve their course structure, curriculum, and training in pedagogy as well as classroom management in order to efficiently train their teacher candidates. Due to the amount of change in the mean scores of the sections of working with students of disabilities and English Language Learners, the major southwestern university has begun to change its teacher education program to provide more instruction in these areas as well as helping their teacher candidates help their own students become independent learners.

Limitations and Future Research

This research study highlighted relevant information about feelings of preparedness of graduates of a university teacher education program, but it also presented data from a small sample. It will be important to expand the number of participants surveyed and the variety of training they have received in order to discover more about feelings of preparedness. Researchers who complete these further studies can provide data to institutions so that they may discover what has proved useful to their graduates as well as improve training of future teacher candidates. This study will contribute to the field of research in how to produce quality educators that are better prepared to meet the needs of their students.

Conclusion

The need for quality teacher graduates who are prepared to effectively instruct students of all types continues to be a great need in our schools. The present study showed that teachers who graduated from a teacher preparation program felt less prepared than they first thought to meet challenges faced in the classroom. More

work needs to be done to find the areas where teacher candidates feel unprepared so that training programs can

change to provide the needed instruction and send well prepared teachers into the field.

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