ANTICIPATION: EARLY PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' CONCEPTIONS OF TEACHING

by

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(Under the Direction of NANCY FLANAGAN KNAPP)

ABSTRACT

Two hundred and nine pre-service teacher candidates, at the beginning of what was for most their first course in education, wrote reflective journal entries in response to an open-ended question about what would be the most rewarding and most challenging aspects of teaching for them. Some of the challenges they discussed are realistic, such as classroom discipline and motivating students, but these pre-service teachers do not demonstrate an awareness of or concern for the aspects of teaching that drive so many out of the profession. Their responses express an optimistic expectation that the positive aspects of teaching will outweigh the challenges. Implications for teacher education and retention are discussed.

INDEX WORDS: pre-service teachers, concerns, satisfaction, rewards, conceptions of teaching

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my aunt, Pam. Though she may not fully understand why I have chosen to spend so many years in graduate school, she has helped to make it possible. I am grateful for everything she has done for me, particularly in the last four years.

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First and foremost, I want to acknowledge my advisor, Nancy, for all of her invaluable time and guidance. Our meetings always helped me formulate and focus my thoughts and ideas. I would also like to thank Ryan for his enthusiastic support and never-ending patience.

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INTRODUCTION

The nation greatly needs a sufficient supply of quality teachers to fill the vacancies in its rural and urban schools located in high poverty districts and in critical areas such as math, science, and special education. It is widely reported that there is a severe teacher shortage with staggering statistics (e.g., National Commission on Teaching, 1997). Much of the attention has turned from recruitment to retention, particularly the retention of teachers within the first few years of teaching. In 2003, the National Commission on Teaching & America's Future announced that teacher retention was a "national crisis", particularly in schools that serve largely poor and minority students.

While teacher education programs produce sufficient numbers of teachers each year, many choose not to teach or leave the profession within a few years, fueling this retention crisis. Many reports indicate 25-50% of beginning teachers resign during their first three years of teaching (Ingersoll, 2002; Fleener, 2001; Voke, 2002). Other reports state that nearly ten percent leave in their first year (Recruiting New Teachers, Inc., 2000). According to Ingersoll (2003), job dissatisfaction and the desire for a better job elsewhere, at a different school or outside education altogether, are reported by half of those who leave their positions. Those who leave because of dissatisfaction often cite low pay, student discipline problems, lack of support, and little opportunity for teacher input in decision making.

At the same time, teacher educator and researchers are also concerned with teacher quality. A large factor in teacher quality is teachers' beliefs, particularly about their students. The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS, 2001) states that quality teacher beliefs about their students include, among others, that all students can learn, that they must treat all students equitably, and should foster respect for individual, cultural, religious, and racial differences. Teachers' beliefs about diverse students are particularly important because while the teaching force remains largely white, middle-class, English-only speakers, the student population is increasingly diverse. Because teacher's beliefs about their students have been linked to student achievement, many teacher education programs emphasize a respect for and understanding of diversity. The goal is often two-fold, with an intent not only to increase pre-service teachers' respect for diversity but also their beliefs about their ability to teach diverse learners (teacher efficacy).

Quality teachers who remain committed to the profession often cite the rewards they receive from working with students (Inman & Marlow, 2004; Nieto, 2003) as their main reason for staying. These teachers embody the NBPTS standards of commitment to and respect for students and believe that their work is crucial to the successful lives they imagine for their students.

For these teachers, such rewards make the challenges of teaching bearable, but what about those who do not remain in the profession, the "leavers" as Marilyn Cochran-Smith (2004) calls them? Education researchers hypothesize that those teachers who leave within the beginning years are overwhelmed by a "reality shock" when they move from their teacher education departments to their own classrooms. Simon Veenman

defined this concept as "the collapse of the missionary ideals formed during teacher training by the harsh and rude reality of everyday classroom life" (1984). The shock affects the new teacher's behavior, personality and attitudes to the point that the rewards and satisfactions of teaching are stifled by the feelings of failure. It is this simultaneous experience of positive and negative aspects of teaching that I am interested in. More specifically, I am concerned with what these anticipations can tell us about how early pre-service teachers conceptualize teaching. In the following section I present a review of the literature on in-service and pre-service teachers' concerns, challenges, and problems, and on the smaller body of literature that focuses on the positives.

Teachers' Concerns

Beginning v. Experienced Teachers

Veenman's 1984 meta-analysis of the challenges of novice teachers provided a framework for work by several researchers on beginning teachers' perceived problems. Concerned with the "reality shock" experienced by many beginning teachers, Veenman conducted an extensive review of the perceived problems of novice elementary and secondary teachers. From a total of sixty-eight categories, he identified eight major problems: Classroom discipline, problems motivating students, dealing with individual differences, assessing students' work, parent relations, organization of class work, insufficient resources, and dealing with problems of individual students.

Fuller's work (Fuller, 1969; Fuller, Pilgrim, & Freeland, 1967; Newlove & Fuller, 1971) with student teachers, beginning teachers and experienced teachers suggests that as teachers develop and change, so do their concerns. Beginning teachers, according to Fuller's theory, result largely concerned with issues related to self and survival. Class

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control, adequate subject matter knowledge, evaluations, and reactions of students are some of the concerns of teachers in the first phase of their careers (Fuller, 1969). Teachers in the second phase are more concerned with the task of teaching: lack of resources, methods, and mastery of teaching skills. Teachers in the third phase are most concerned with the impact of their teaching: their students' learning, needs, and personally relating to their students. Fuller hypothesized that more student-related concerns become salient only after the initial concerns of self as teacher have been resolved.

While Veenman's (1984) meta-analysis included studies from a number of different countries, one group of studies examined the problems encountered by experienced American teachers (Dunn, 1972; Koontz, 1963; Olander & Farrel, 1970; and Pharr, 1974). These studies indicated that many problems of beginning teachers were also concerns for experienced teachers such as motivating students, lack of assistance from the school, and problems adapting instruction for individual students' needs.

Other studies have found that while general self and task concerns do seem to follow Fuller's model, teachers at all levels consider classroom discipline and motivation to be major concerns (Adams, 1982). Based on these studies it is clear that challenges are not limited to novice teachers; all teachers have concerns or problems in certain areas, and it appears that some concerns remain stable across all developmental stages and experience levels.

Based on Fuller's (1969) developmental hierarchy model, the Teacher Concerns Questionnaire (henceforth, TCQ) (George, 1978) measures teachers' concerns in the areas of *self*, *task*, and *impact*. These are the three stages through which the

developmental hierarchy model suggests teachers pass through as they move from a pre-professional to a seasoned professional educator. Samples items on the questionnaire from each area include: "Getting a favorable evaluation of my teaching" for the area of *self*, "Too many noninstructional duties" for the area of *task*, and "Guiding students toward intellectual and emotional growth" for the area of *impact*.

<center>*Pre-service Teachers*</center>

Some teacher educators and researchers have applied Veenman and Fuller's theories to pre-service teachers' concerns with varying results. Reeves and Kazelskis (1985) analyzed 128 pre-service and 90 experienced teachers' responses to the TCQ and found results that were not in line with the developmental hierarchy model. For both pre-service and experienced teachers, impact concerns were most salient, and no significant differences were found on the self and task concerns. When the TCQ was given to "outstanding" teachers at four stages of career development (in teacher education and in early, mid, or late career stages), the results were more in line with Veenman's, Fuller's and George's findings and theories (Marson & Pigge, 1994): the pre-service teachers had lower task and higher *self* concerns than the in-service teachers, who indicated more concern with the *impact* of their teaching. In-service teachers who were in the early stages of their career, as suggested by Fuller, reported higher *self* concerns than teachers who had been teaching for a long time.

Interestingly, in other studies using the TCQ the concerns of pre-service teachers tended to mirror those of experienced teachers more than those of beginning teachers (Evans & Tribble, 1986; Reeves & Kazelskis, 1985). Evans and Tribble compared pre-service teachers' concerns with those of beginning teachers. The pre-service teachers

were more concerned with elements of task and impact, such as motivation, problems of individual students, and subject matter knowledge, than the beginning teachers, and less concerned about classroom discipline, grading, and relationships with parents. Weinstein (1990) posits that this discrepancy is due to the optimism of pre-service teachers at Fuller's stage of "non-concern", prior to any teaching experience. Because pre-service teachers in this stage are not teaching, they have yet to worry about developing a teacher self, nor are they yet concerned about the survival of that self, so they are free to focus on the imagined impact of their future teaching.

Possibly due to these varied results using the TCQ with pre-service teachers, researchers have more recently been employing qualitative means of accessing pre-service teachers' concerns. These have included questionnaires based on Veenman's and Fuller's work (Evans & Tribble, 1986; Zielinski & Preston, 1992), pre-service teachers' self-generated lists of concerns (Bohning, Hale & Chowning, 1999; Reeves-Kazelskis & King, 1994), and concerns drawn from pre-service teachers' reflective writings (Boyers, 2004).

The reflective writings Boyers (2004) received from 152 pre-service teachers over a semester-long education course revealed five major categories of concern that differ somewhat from Veenman's findings on novice teachers' concerns. These were a) Misbehavior, Aggression, Violence, and victimization, b) Multiculturalism and Diversity, c) Personal Preparation and Career Choice, d) the Responsibility of Providing Appropriate Teaching and Learning Methods, and e) Appropriate Involvement in Children's Lives. Besides being in different stages of their teaching careers, these differences in perceived concerns may be a reflection of the changing times and

educational contexts pre-service teachers' expect to experience now, versus when Veenman (1984) did his study. Nevertheless, Boyers reports that the concerns most frequently mentioned in the journals were coded as Personal Preparation and Career Choice. This is in line with Fuller's suggestion that beginning teachers are concerned with matters of the self.

Some researchers have examined the change in pre-service teachers' concerns before and after specific methods courses. Reeves-Kazelskis and King (1994) compared lists of concerns generated at the beginning and end of the semester in two language arts methods classes. The two classes differed in their pedagogical approaches; one utilized traditional lectures and demonstrations by the professor, while the other included lectures along with field-experience. The researchers wanted to see if the different approaches had an effect on the pre-service teachers' concerns. The results show that concerns about discipline increased among the field experience participants and decreased amongst the participants who had no field experiences (for a similar result, see Knapp, 2001). Bohning, Hale, and Chowning (1999) compared the concerns before and after a science methods course of "change-of-career" teachers and other pre-service teachers. They reported that the "change-of-career" prospective teachers were less concerned with the development of a teacher self than their younger peers and that they were more concerned with science content and teaching performance at the beginning and the end of the semester. This study highlights the fact that beginning teachers have typically been young, and may still be attempting to solidify a personal identity at the same time they are trying to develop a teacher self.

All of the research cited so far on pre-service teachers' anticipated concerns has focused on those who were taking methods courses or in their student-teaching experiences. This focus is not surprising, since many of the researchers were concerned with the effect of specific course content or experiences on the pre-service teacher's beliefs and conceptions. However, I believe it is just as important to understand what pre-service teachers are thinking about the challenges of teaching at the very beginning of their programs, *before* they are introduced to methods courses or student-teaching experiences. If we learn more about the prior knowledge or misconceptions they come to teacher education with, we can better plan these methods courses and experiences to address pre-service teachers' needs.

Positive Aspects of Teaching

Beginning v. Experienced Teachers

As with teachers' concerns, the literature on the positive aspects of teaching is focused on novice and experienced teachers. Researchers in this area have focused on two main constructs, teacher efficacy and teacher satisfaction. Teacher efficacy refers to a belief in one's ability to make a difference in students' learning (Ashton & Webb, 1986). The teacher efficacy of beginning teachers is thought by many to make a vital difference in their decision to stay or leave the profession within the critical first few years of teaching. For example, Onafowora (2005) found that novice teachers expressed verbally, in interviews and journals, their struggles and concerns that problems, especially classroom discipline, were overshadowing instruction. However, on a teacher efficacy scale, her results indicated these same novice teachers still had fairly high beliefs in their ability to reach even the most difficult students. This discrepancy suggests that beginning

teachers' efficacy may be rather mutable, affected by current experiences and long-held ideals, depending on which is most salient at the time.

Of particular concern is the effect of the "infamous" first year on new teachers' efficacy. The first year is generally described as the toughest, and according to Friedman (2000), beginning teachers have high expectations for personal success in teaching, which when countered with the realities of the classroom, result in the "reality shock" (Veenman, 1984). With such high personal expectations, the efficacy of beginning teachers suffers a great blow when the challenges of teaching prove more difficult than they first thought.

Teacher efficacy and persistence have been linked to teacher retention. Teachers who persist though difficult times experience higher efficacy and vice-versa, according to Tschannen-Moran, Hoy and Hoy (1998). It is their persistence that allows them to experience the rewards and satisfaction which ultimately keep teachers going. More experienced teachers not only display more efficacy than beginning teachers, (Watkins, 2000) but also find satisfaction in more aspects of teaching. According to many researchers, a major source of teachers' satisfaction is students' learning and making progress (Hargreaves, 1998; Hatch, 1993; Jackson, 1968; Lortie, 1975; Nias, 1989).

Looking at the other common construct, teacher job satisfaction, Inman and Marlow (2004) asked 100 teachers, ranging in experience from one year to nine years, what aspects of teaching were factors in their decisions to remain in the profession. They found that only one external factor, salary, contributed to retention, but that salary was significantly less important for teachers with less than four years experience. In fact, 23% of the beginning teachers did not even mention money but focused on the intrinsic

rewards of teaching, interacting with students and impacting their learning. Other intrinsic factors included collegiality, job security, and working conditions (which included administrative support, class size, and resources). Inman and Marlow found that the experienced teachers discussed employment factors more frequently than the newer teachers. Employment factors included working conditions (resources, support, class size, etc.), job security and collegiality. Half of those who had been teaching for more than five years indicated that salary was also important to their decision to stay in teaching.

Pastor and Erlandson (1982) interviewed 20 experienced teachers and found areas of high satisfaction for these teachers were, in order of frequency, seeing students' growth, teacher influence on students, teacher/student interaction, summer vacation, job variety, student participation, and convenient hours. For the same sample of teachers, areas of low satisfaction included classroom discipline problems, pay, unresponsive students, lack of parental concern, problems with school administration, status, and no upward mobility.

Pre-service Teachers

While it is difficult to measure pre-service teachers' expected job satisfaction, Young (1995) compared pre-service teachers' career plans and work expectations with a sample of experienced teachers. Among the questions posed to pre-service teachers was the degree of expectation for characteristics of teaching such as "opportunity to help others", "good student discipline in my classroom", and "manageable class size" factors related to job satisfaction. The pre-service teachers expected higher levels of teacher morale and better student discipline, but poorer relationships with colleagues and principals than the experienced teachers.

Pre-service teachers are often discussed as having unrealistic expectations for teaching, for their own performance and the experiences they will face in schools and classrooms. The literature on the optimistic and naive beliefs of pre-service teachers (Cole & Knowles, 1993; Weinstein, 1988; Weinstein, 1990) appears to be missing a discussion of exactly what pre-service teachers' positive beliefs about their future teaching consist of, what specific aspects of teaching they believe will be the easiest or most rewarding. Weinstein's work does touch on the connection between optimism and teacher efficacy, but her work does not describe what the pre-service teachers believe will be positive or rewarding about teaching. In 1989, she found that student teachers tend to rank as important qualities for teachers the same characteristics they list as their own strengths. In another study Weinstein measured their efficacy by asking how they will compare with their peers when dealing with the challenges of the first year of teaching (1990). Weinstein found a statistically significant decrease in optimism at the end of the semester with 87% of the pre-service teachers rating themselves as "slightly above average; above average; or much above average" (compared to 92% at the beginning of the semester). When asked to explain the reasons for their self-ratings, the pre-service teachers indicated that their own affective qualities (ability to relate to, understand, and care for children) were influential in their beliefs in their abilities. Weinstein believes that the academic success that most of the pre-service teachers have experienced as students, when coupled with their commitment and compassion for children, are the sources of their optimistic beliefs.

Other researchers have tried to link teacher-efficacy with the models of teachers' concerns, by comparing pre-service and in-service teachers' concerns and efficacy.

Watkins (2000) statistically compared pre-service and in-service teachers' concerns and efficacy but her results do not support Fuller's developmental hierarchy of concerns. Unsurprisingly, the teachers with the least amount of experience had the highest level of concern in all areas and the lowest level of teacher efficacy. However, Evans and Tribble (1986) found no relationship among pre-service teachers' levels of concerns and their efficacy.

<div align="center">Summary and Research Questions</div>

With so much concern focused on the crisis of teacher retention, researchers have begun studying what makes teachers decide to leave or stay in the profession. The reasons many teachers cite for leaving mirror their main teaching concerns or problems (student discipline, lack of support, etc.) and in turn, the rewarding aspects of teaching influence their decision to stay. Much is said about the reality shock that new teachers experience within their first year, when their ideals and optimistic conceptions of teaching are challenged by the realities of the classroom and field experiences. However, there is surprisingly little research on what early pre-service teachers believe they will experience as teachers, prior to any field experience, particularly on what they expect to be easy or rewarding. I believe it is important to discover what challenging and positive aspects of teaching these future teachers expect to encounter in their careers and how this influences their conceptions of teaching, especially before they are exposed to either university-based ideas and theories or school-based realities, to truly understand what they expect teaching to be like. This leads me to the two research questions in this study.

1. What are pre-service teachers' beliefs about the most challenging aspects of teaching at the start of their teacher education?

2. What are pre-service teachers' beliefs about the most positive aspects of teaching at the start of their teacher education?

CHAPTER 2:
METHODS

Sample Selection

Each semester at the University of Georgia, approximately 450 students enroll in EPSY 2020, the introductory educational psychology course. I decided to study students who enrolled in this course because it is usually the first education course many take at the university and for the majority it is their first exposure to university-based ideas on teaching theories (Knapp, 2005). Students who are considering careers in education are required to take this course before they can apply to admission to specific teaching majors in the College of Education. At the same time, approximately a third of the students enrolled in the course do not plan to become teachers, but are decide to enroll because they perceive course content as potentially helpful in related fields such as social work, medicine, physical therapy, etc. Other students are merely exploring the idea of whether a career as a teacher is for them. Though some of the students have had some experience working with children, almost none have had any experience teaching in a classroom setting. Since I am interested in early pre-service teachers' perceptions of teaching, these qualities make them ideal participants.

The students who enroll in the course reflect the demographics of teacher education students throughout the country. The majority are European American, middle-class, English-speaking, and female (Zimpher, 1989). They have routinely experienced success in education. In 2003, the undergraduates admitted to the UGA College of Education averaged a 3.71 high school GPA and a combined SAT score of 1175.

Data Collection

Students in EPSY 2020 are typically given a reflective journal assignment during the first week of class to access their beliefs about teaching. With my research questions in mind, a journal assignment was designed asking students to discuss what they foresaw as the three most challenging aspects of teaching and also the three easiest or most rewarding for them (see Appendix). This reflective journal assignment was designed to give the students an opportunity to reflect on their own beliefs about teaching. Since I am interested in pre-service teachers' conceptions of teaching, the open-ended nature of this assignment makes it a useful vehicle to access the students' beliefs at their entry into the class, prior to any extensive exposure to university-based ideas or theories about teaching. Rather than a quantitative survey or questionnaire such as the TCQ, this method is a hybrid of the data collection methods employed by Reeves-Kazelskis and King (1994) and Boyers (2004) to explore the teaching concerns of pre-service teachers.

I met with most of the course instructors before the end of the Fall 2005 semester, discussed my research interests with them and described the journal assignment. Most had a positive reaction, agreeing that it would be very interesting and informative and that it would make a very good introductory journal assignment.

The assignment was incorporated by six of the instructors during the first week of the Spring 2006 semester in ten sections of EPSY 2020. After the assignment was turned in and before it was graded, the students' responses were copied, the names were removed from each copy, and these copies were given to me. The originals were graded as usual by the instructors and returned to the students. Of the 284 responses I received, 209 respondents indicated a goal to become a teacher. Their intended grade level varied

from pre-school to college, but the majority expressed a desire to teach K-12. The 75

responses of those who did not plan to become teachers were not included in this study.

Data Analysis

Once all the responses had been collected, copied, and turned over to me, I

electronically scanned or transcribed the texts for analysis using a qualitative analysis

software package, SuperHyperQual (Padilla, 2004). An initial analysis was conducted on

50 journals. Following the suggestions of Wilms et.al (1990) and Miles and Huberman

(1994) that researchers begin analysis with general themes derived from the literature and

develop new themes as they go, I used Veenman's framework for the initial categories

related to anticipated challenges while developing categories "in vivo" (Strauss &

Corbin, 1990) for the positive anticipations since so little had been done in this area. As

the remaining texts were read and analyzed, it became necessary to add or expand

categories based on students' responses in a process similar to constant comparative

analysis (Bogdan & Bilken, 1992).

The "thematic units" (Krippendorf, 1980) used in the analysis were each of the

challenging or positive "things" that the pre-service teachers discussed in their journals.

While most respondents wrote about three positive and three challenging things, some

wrote more or less, and the "thematic units" ranged in length from one sentence to

lengthy paragraphs. In all, 614 thematic units related to challenges and 571 thematic units

related to positive anticipations were used in the analysis. Each thematic unit was sorted

into one and only one initial category. This phase of analysis resulted in 64 distinct

categories of challenges and 42 categories of positives.

During the secondary stage of analysis, another researcher and I worked together to collapse and group the initial 64 (challenges) and 42 (positives) categories into larger conceptual categories and sub-categories (see figures 1 and 2). This was a process similar to Strauss and Corbin's (1998) axial coding which is "the act of relating categories to subcategories". We ended up with seven main categories of challenges and six main categories of positives.

After axial coding was conducted, I returned to the journals to search for "disconfirming evidence" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This resulted in the revision of a few of the categories. An example is an initial category of "effective teaching" that contained concerns of teacher-efficacy. Upon further analysis, I discovered that many of the responses actually addressed concerns of meeting students' learning needs, a concern that was covered in another category and very different from concerns of speaking clearly or explaining things well. Therefore, the category "effective teaching" became "teaching clearly" and some of the responses were recoded, as necessary. In the end, the process of identifying disconfirming evidence resulted in a revision of the initial themes to more accurately reflect the content of the data.

A subset of the data, representing ten percent of the thematic units, was used to assess intercoder agreement. A second coder was provided with the thematic units (60 challenges, 59 positives), a complete, hierarchical list of the coding categories, and a codebook with descriptions of each code. The agreement between the second coder and me was calculated at .80.

Some alterations to the texts were necessary both in the initial analysis and during the writing of this thesis. Changes were only made in the case of obvious typos and

misspellings on the part of the journal writer, or to correct errors made during either the transcription or scanning process. The alterations did not change the meaning of the words or the texts, and grammatical and syntactical errors were left uncorrected.

CHAPTER 3:
RESULTS: POSITIVE ANTICIPATIONS

During the initial analysis the responses to the journal assignment were separated

into two parts, the thematic units that discussed anticipated challenges and those that

discussed positive anticipations. In the axial coding phase, the 43 categories of positive

anticipations were analyzed together to form five overarching conceptual categories:

Positive Impact on Students, Personal Fulfillment, Job/ Career Benefits, Instructional

Skills, and Personal Characteristics and a sixth category was later created for

Miscellaneous Rewards (see figure 1). Because of the wording of the reflective journal

assignment, the results of the positive anticipations had to be split into two distinct

domains, aspects of teaching expected to be easy, and those expected to be rewarding.

The journal assignment prompted the pre-service teachers to write about what they

believe "will be the three most rewarding or easiest things about being a teacher" (see

Appendix), but most chose to write about the rewards. Of the 571 thematic units

identified as a positive aspect of teaching, 460 were about anticipated rewards. Because

the positive anticipations had been considered together in the axial coding phase, four of

the five main categories contain aspects of teaching that some of the pre-service teachers

expect to find rewarding while others reported that those areas would be easy for them.

As I discuss the major themes of the pre-service teachers' positive conceptions of

teaching, I will split the discussion into two parts: those expected to be easy and those

expected to be rewarding. This explains the repetition of some themes and categories

within the following two sections. After I discuss the easy aspects of teaching, I will

move on to the rewarding aspects.
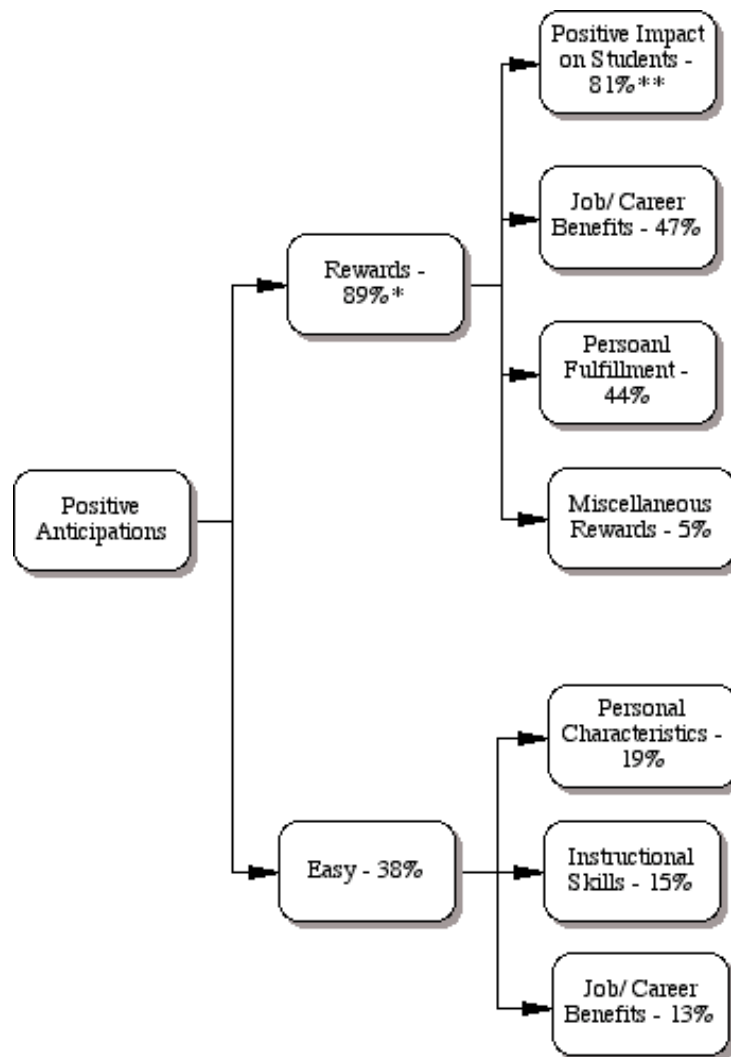
*All percentages are percentage of total participants who wrote about a specific
category or sub-category

** Percentages in sub-categories will total more than percentage in main category
because some participants wrote about two or even three specific anticipations within a
single main category

Figure 1: Positive Anticipations

What Will Be Easy?

Overview

In this section I will provide an overview of aspects of teaching that the pre-service teachers anticipate will be "easy" before discussing what these findings tells us about their conceptions of teaching. Thirty-eight percent of the respondents discussed an aspect of teaching that they believe would be easy for them. The 111 thematic units on this topic spread out fairly evenly across three conceptual categories, Instructional Skills (discussed by 18%), Personal Characteristics (21%) and Job/ Career Benefits (14%). The small number of responses within these areas is due to most the participants (89%) having discussed at least one anticipated reward of teaching, while fewer (38%) chose to write about something they thought would be easy .

Instructional Skills

Instructional Skills refers to the tasks or skills that the pre-service teachers expect to complete or fulfill with relative ease. These include a range of tasks or skills including being creative, lesson planning, and grading. The most frequently discussed task or skill was "being creative", which was written about by 6% of the pre-service teachers in this study.

Personal Characteristics

The area of *Personal Characteristics* includes the strengths and qualities, which the pre-service teachers believe they possess, that will make certain tasks easier. A warm and agreeable personality, for example, is expected by many of the respondents to help make relationships with students easier and was the most common characteristic mentioned (by 11%). Having a passion for the subject one teaches is expected by some (5%) to make teaching their classes in that subject easier.

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Job/ Career Benefits

Responses categorized under *Job/ Career Benefits* refer to specific characteristics of the profession of teaching that will help make things easier for them as teachers, such as a convenient schedule and summers off, the opportunity to share one's knowledge and passion, and the flexibility and autonomy that they expect in a teaching career.

These conceptual categories were constructed, as stated earlier, with the entire body of positive anticipations in mind. Looking first at what they expect to be easy, it became clear that these easy expectations fell into two main categories. The pre-service teachers talked mainly about two different things when they discuss what will be easy: the easy things about *teaching in general*, and other things that will be easy for *themselves in particular*.

Easy Things About Teaching

Fourteen percent of the pre-service teachers discussed general aspects of teaching, which they thought would either be easy in and of themselves or make other aspects easier. The main things they perceive as inherently easy are enjoying their career and grading student work. The benefits they expect to make things easier are convenient schedules, helpful coworkers, and flexibility and autonomy in the classroom.

Things that are easy about teaching

Enjoying my Job. It is important to a few (2%) of the pre-service teachers studied that they enjoy what they do for a living and they see teaching as something very easy to enjoy, because it involves a number of rewarding aspects such as working with children, and with one's passions and strengths. These pre-service teachers' responses indicate that

they do not expect to ever dread going into work and that it will be very easy to be happy with their job.

> I think that one easy part of being an elementary art teacher will be waking up everyday knowing that I love my job and I am having fun. For me working with kids is fun and I would feel privileged knowing that I get paid to spend the day sharing my passion for the arts with my students. I do not want to be one of the people who dread going to work and I think that when I am a teacher I will be enjoying my life too much to ever dread my job.

> The last thing I feel like will be the easiest thing for me to do is be happy with my career and what I'm doing. In fulfilling my goal of becoming a teacher it would change my life dramatically.

Grading. Two percent of the pre-service teachers studied also perceived grading student work as the most inherently easy task of teaching. They do not expect it to be very demanding, either emotionally or mentally. One respondent recognized that grading could be time consuming, but even this respondent did not seem to recognize the complexities of grading. A couple of these four respondents even discussed how much "fun" grading seems to them.

> I think it would be so fun to grade. I really enjoy grading because you can see what concepts students understand, and what they aren't so clear on. I like to grade. It's very methodical and relaxing. Though I think it might it might be a little frustrating if everyone failed. But if that happened, I would know that they didn't understand a part of the lesson, and I could help them.

> Lastly, I think one of the easiest challenges I will face as a teacher is grading paper. That is one area of teaching that I feel confident I can do well. I enjoy sitting and grading papers, and sometimes I think that is why I want to be a teacher just for the fun of grading papers, tests, and worksheets. Many times teachers find grading to be a tedious task but oddly enough I look forward to giving out assignments and being able to see how each student did. I am sure there will be times when I wonder what I was thinking when I thought grading was fun.

Aspects That Make Teaching Easier

Convenient schedule and calendar. The schedule and calendar of schooling was expected by 5% of respondents to make teaching inherently easier or at least make it easier to balance a family and a career. Whether they said that the 9- or 10-month school calendar gives teachers the summers to recharge and have time to relax, plan for the upcoming school year or, travel or spend time with their families, the summers off were seen by these respondents as a benefit of the profession that makes the job easier.

> Lastly, the easiest thing about being a teacher will be having the summers and holidays off to spend free time for myself, recharging and preparing to do it all over again.

However, it is not only the summers that are seen as a benefit. The daily schedule, particularly the early release time for most schools, is seen as an aspect that helps make the life of a teacher easier. This is most often discussed as making it easy to spend time with one's family, particularly school-aged children.

> An easy thing about being a teacher is the hours. By being a teacher, say the school lets out at 3, you would be able to leave by 4 or somewhere around there. This would make having a family a lot easier, simply because you would be home when the kids got home, and could almost be a stay at home mom while still working. Though you would probably have to go into work a little earlier, the hours are more flexible with the life style of a family.

It is important to note that the convenient schedules and summers off were also discussed as a potential reward. However, I believe it is clear from their texts that these respondents are describing how the schedule and summers off will make a career in teaching easier than it would be if the daily schedule and vacation times followed corporate-models.

Flexibility/ autonomy. Another aspect of the profession that is expected by 1% of respondents to make teaching easier is the perceived flexibility and autonomy of teaching. These pre-service teachers expect to have a great deal of control in their

classroom over what and how they teach. They also anticipate being able to plan and pace lessons in a way that reflects the strengths and needs of the classroom, rather than having to follow a rigid timeline.

> I think probably the easiest thing about being a teacher is it not being a very high stress job compared to other occupations. As a teacher, you can work at your own pace and can teach in a way that you feel is most effective. Being a teacher allows you to put forth your own creative ideas for the classroom that would be beneficial to the students.

Co-workers. Co-workers are also viewed as assets, particularly to a new teacher. Having experienced teachers and administrators to turn to for questions and support is something some respondents (1%) expect to make teaching easier. Undoubtedly, a good relationship with fellow teachers is invaluable to any teacher, especially a novice.

> Something else that I think will be easy about teaching is interacting with everyone that I work with. I think it will help make things easier to work with all the other teachers and administers who have more experience.

Things That Are Easy for Me

Another way the pre-service teachers talked about what they expect to be easy was to highlight the skills and knowledge or personal characteristics they possess that give them confidence that they can teach, or perform certain tasks of teaching, with relative ease (referred to as *teacher efficacy* in the literature). The most common among these skills and characteristics are discussed below.

Skills and Knowledge

Lesson planning. One of the teaching tasks that some of the pre-service teachers (2%) expect to be easy is planning lessons. Their responses show no awareness of the need to align lessons to state standards or curricular objectives. Rather, they expect that personal creativity and organization will facilitate the planning process.

I think planning a course outline, and making activities to keep the students involved will be another easy aspect of teaching. I love to make learning interesting and I don't believe in the traditional "lecture" format of teaching, so being creative is going to be a plus for me.

Knowledge and passion for subject. Seven percent of the pre-service teachers already see themselves as experts in their subjects, or at least are confident that they will not have difficulty sharing their knowledge with students. And without a doubt, the passion that some of them have for their subject area is expected to fuel their energy and teaching, so that their students will not only learn the material, but also feel motivated by the their teacher's enthusiasm.

In light of this, I'm confident a very easy part of teaching will be encouraging my students through my own strengths and passions. I love reading and writing and I have so many ideas on unique ways to interest my students in passionately engaging in their creativity, and thus let it shine through these two fundamental areas.

Characteristics and Personality

Being interesting. Two percent of the pre-service teachers considered themselves energetic and interesting people and believed that these aspects of their personality will help make teaching easier because it will help them get, and keep, the students' attention.

Another area that I am gifted in is the ability to keep young people's attention. I don't believe that I have to be the "easy" or "cool" teacher to be effective. I am a high-energy person who enjoys students and I love their attention. This attribute works well in the education field because it allows me to hold the attention of the students effectively enough to truly teach.

Relationships with students. The aspect of teaching most frequently identified as easy was developing relationships with students (11%). These pre-service teachers had various reasons for why they thought this would be easy. Most mentioned a patient, warm personality, while others discussed their ability to relate to students. Whatever the reason,

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these future teachers expect that developing a positive relationship with their students will not be difficult.

> Probably the easiest thing I will face in my career is the ability to relate to many of my future students. I loved high school and therefore can't wait to go back, next time at the professional level. For my first few years on the job, I won't be much older than many of my students and will (hopefully) clearly remember my high school years. I hope to remember what it was like being a high school student and from that will be able to relate and know what my students are experiencing.

> One thing that I think will come easy to me as a teacher is being able to relate to my students. I feel as though I have a personality that is easy to get along with and become close to. Hopefully this personality trait will help me to be successful in relating to students and getting them to open up to me when they need to.

Being creative. Creativity is considered an invaluable characteristic to have as a teacher, at least according to six percent of the pre-service teachers in this study. They expect that their natural inclination to creativity will enhance their classrooms and lessons. Their creativity will make teaching complex ideas easier and will create classroom environments that are active and engaging.

> One more thing that is going to be easy as a teacher is expressing my creativity and always thinking of new ways to display the material for students to learn. Students and myself will benefit from the different learning styles I will create for each class. I believe that students will learn better by not just lecturing, but also having hands on activities.

> Finally, another attribute which will help my teaching ability is my creativity. I love inventing new and creative activities, games, and projects that will make the learning environment more enjoyable, for me and the students. I have a ton of energy and hope to make the classroom exciting and educational. Creating new and unique activities to help students learn will be fun for everyone and beneficial to the students as well.

The pre-service teachers, who discussed parts of teaching that they anticipate will be easy talked about both general aspects of the profession and their own personal traits in their responses. The aspects of the profession that they expect to be easy are loving the job, grading, the autonomy they expect to have in their classrooms, convenient schedules, and positive relationships with coworkers. These aspects are all predicated on conditions and characteristics of the profession external to the teachers themselves. Personal characteristics that these future teachers believe they possess that are expected to make certain aspects of teaching easier for them include being interesting, relating to students, and being creative. Overall, the journal responses show a tendency in respondents to be overly optimistic concerning the easy aspects of teaching. Their discussions of grading and planning lessons and assignments, for example, do not anticipate the time commitment these tasks require. Additionally, their expectations that developing relationships with students and co-workers will be easy does not take into account that developing a relationship requires more than having a nice personality. It takes time, energy, and constant attention.

What Will Be Rewarding?

Overview

Having presented the results of the pre-service teachers' anticipations about the easy aspects of teaching, I turn now in this section to their discussions of the rewards they expect to receive from teaching. The clear majority of positive anticipations (81%), as indicated in the responses to the journal assignment, were identified as rewards of teaching. These 460 thematic units regarding rewards were sorted into four conceptual

categories during the axial coding phase of the analysis: Positive Impact on Students, Job/Career Benefits, Personal Fulfillment, and Miscellaneous Rewards.

Positive Impact on Students

Almost every journal (89%) contained at least one discussion of the rewards of having a Positive Impact on Students. Included in this area are the categories of *Seeing Growth and Learning* (discussed by 53% of respondents) and *Individual Impact* (49%).

Job/ Career Benefits

The area of Job/ Career Benefits was the second most commented upon category of reward and contained the rewards of *Sharing Your Knowledge and Passion* (24%) and *Convenient Schedule/ Summers Off* (14%). These rewards are more personal in nature, in that these are rewards that will benefit the teachers, themselves. There is some overlap, as I discussed before, with other respondents indicating that these aspects of teaching would be easy.

Personal Fulfillment

The area of Personal Fulfillment is a close third, with half of the pre-service teachers discussing such rewards as Relationships with Students (24%), Social Impact (8%), and Passion for Subjects (8%). These rewards also tended to be more self-focused.

Miscellaneous Rewards

This last category of rewards was much smaller and contains rewards that did not seem to fit within any other category and within this area are. Three rewards, Grading, Parents, and Establishing Good Programs, were each discussed by only one participant. The reward of Creating a Positive Atmosphere was discussed by two (1% of respondents). The largest number of responses in this category were about the reward of

Being Creative, primarily seen as the reward of working in a career where they could use their natural talent, which was discussed by six participants (3%).

The pre-service teachers talked about two main types of rewards overall. The most common type was the altruistic rewards that they expect to get from teaching. These are the rewards that come from interacting with the students and making a difference. These rewards are not primarily about the self and what they have to personally gain from teaching, but are rather focused more on the altruistic rewards of helping others. These rewards are not tangible, but consist of a feeling of having done something good for others. The second and less frequently described category includes more self-focused rewards. While these rewards are also, for the most part, intangible, they are more focused on the pre-service teachers themselves, and what they expect to gain from a career in teaching.

Altruistic Rewards of Teaching

The rewarding feelings that result from making a difference in another person's life are very often the reason people choose careers in the helping professions, particularly teaching (Lortie, 1985). The pre-service teachers' responses indicate that it is the anticipation of these sorts of rewards that has lured them to the field of education. The majority of the altruistic rewards that were discussed are general and slightly vague, such as *seeing growth and learning*, and *impacting a student* in some way. However, about a tenth of the responses in this category had specific focuses, such as instilling confidence in students, helping students think for themselves and providing them with challenges.

Seeing Growth and Learning

The aspect of teaching that the pre-service teachers in this study anticipate to be the most rewarding is witnessing the growth and learning of their students (53%). The responses in this category tended to use passive verbs such as "seeing" or "witnessing" this growth and learning take place, suggesting that the reward is a more vicarious one. Obviously, such rewards come in part from knowing that the success you are witnessing is something you helped create, but the main emphasis in these responses is the child owning the success and that success acting as a turning point in a child's education.

For many, the greatest reward of teaching is a fleeting moment of watching a child's success after an initial struggle. Almost all of these responses describe the look on a child's face, or in their eyes, or their smile.

> I also can't wait to see the look on a child's (or parent's) face after seeing the student grasp something that they had been struggling with for the first time. Not only will I love to have helped this certain family, bit I will also know that my long hours of preparation and work will not have been in vain, and that I truly advanced the student further in pursuing his or her education. I will be very proud of all my students, but especially those who struggle but finally master difficult concepts.

In addition to witnessing the moment of understanding, these pre-service teachers also discussed the reward of witnessing students' growth and learning, including students' future accomplishments, over time. Their responses vary from discussing growth over the semester or school year, to watching the students grow into successful adults.

> The third and biggest reward in a teaching career will be seeing my students succeed. Whether their success is on a test for my class or they do well on the verbal section of s standardized test, I will have the personal satisfaction of knowing that I helped young people for whole a year of their lives.

Another thing that I think will be rewarding to me as a teacher is when I see my students being successful. This could be graduating high school, passing a course, pursuing college, pursuing psychology, or something as simple as passing a test. It will be the desire for success that really makes me happy.

Individual Impact

The second most anticipated reward for pre-service teachers in this study was knowing that they have had an impact on students (49%). This is obviously related to the previous category, *seeing growth and learning*, but the emphasis in these comments was somewhat different. Rather than talking about "seeing" the impact in the form of the "light-bulb moment" or good grades, this reward is less temporally specific and more focused on teachers' own sense of efficacy. Maybe these pre-service teachers do not expect always to see the impact they will have on kids, but their reward will come from knowing that they have made a difference in a child's life, whether personally or academically.

Those who plan to become elementary school and special education teachers especially, anticipate a reward from teaching a child basic skills. It is through these skills, that their students will use every day or that will build a foundation for the rest of their education, that these pre-service teachers believe they will make a real difference.

Teachers, especially elementary school teachers are able to make the most impact on a child's life, because they are having to learn morals, what is right and wrong, and all the basics about life. At this early of an age, teachers are able to transform and guide the children to learning and setting them in a path to follow.

Many of these respondents anticipated the reward of having a former student return years later to tell them how much of an impact they had had. They talked of teachers in their own lives who had made this kind of impact and seemed to value that

recognition and appreciation from their own students. Some indicated that this was the

main reason they had chosen to become a teacher.

> I want to make a difference while I am living. Teachers have an impact on each one of their students everyday. It is my hope that I can become successful enough that students that I come across will come back to me years later after I have taught them, and thank me for the positive effect I have had on their lives. I could not see having any greater joy than that.

> Finally, the knowledge that I am impacting my students' future in a positive way is the most rewarding element of teaching and the very reason I chose my major. Students spend a wealth of their time in the classroom and learn many things in addition to the material they are being taught. Thus, it shapes the way students develop enough to impact their future behavior and goals. I know that, if conducted correctly, the classroom can be a very nurturing and inspirational part of a student's life.

Personal Rewards

In contrast to altruistic rewards, there are also some more personal rewards that

the pre-service teachers in this study expect to derive from teaching. While none talked

about monetary benefits, and the personal rewards remain largely intangible, this

category has more to do with what the pre-service teachers themselves, rather than the

students, have to gain from their work in the profession. While most talked about

relationships with students, the opportunity to work within their favorite subject or

passion, and the summers off, about 38% discussed other personal rewards. These

include areas such as the opportunity for personal growth, a career outside of a cubicle,

and the spontaneous nature of a classroom.

Relationships with Students

While about a quarter (12/51) of the pre-service teachers' responses that

discussed the rewards of developing positive relationships with students are altruistic,

talking about how the students will benefit from such relationships, the rest of these

responses, and the overall sense of this category, is that this reward is personal on the part of the teacher. The pre-service teachers expect that the relationships they form with their students will generate positive affect in their own lives and teaching, not just in their students'. This reward is most often discussed in the form of being looked up to as a mentor, or holding a special place in a students' life. I consider this a personal reward because it is at least as much about how good the pre-service teachers expect to feel when they develop positive relationships with students, and what they will gain from these relationships, as it is about how the students could benefit.

> Second, I think I will be rewarded through the relationships that I will form with my students. I can remember as a student in high school that many of those teachers who made the biggest impact on my life made impacts outside of their subject areas. They were excellent teachers in the classroom, but outside the classroom they showed a genuine interest in my well-being and were always willing to help out when they could. I honestly look forward to fulfilling that role in the lives of my students.

> Finally one thing I think that will be very rewarding will be the relationships that I form with my kids. I think these relationships will give me new perspectives on life and situations I must face. It will be very satisfying to watch the kids teach me, just as much or more than I teach them. The bonds that I make with the kids will touch my heart in very special ways, and I know I will hold them with me forever. This is what I think my ultimate reward will be. The kids will teach me each and every day, and I will have the opportunity to learn from them.

Share Knowledge and Passion

Tied for the third most anticipated reward of teaching along with *Relationships with Students* is *Sharing your Knowledge and your Passion* with others (24%). The pre-service teachers expect this to bring them joy and a sense of contribution. Some want to share their passion with their students in the hope of inspiring them to follow in their footsteps.

I am very excited about getting to spread my joy and excitement about art to my students. I will play an irreplaceable role in their lives and I will take advantage of that to the fullest extent. I think it will be so rewarding to see children take an interest in my subject that would not have otherwise without my class. I believe this will happen frequently.

Secondly, another reward as a teacher would be having the opportunity to share with students something that I'm passionate about which is mathematics. For me, mathematics is a beautiful subject. For me mathematics is a human endeavor that is developed in the mind. Whether one comes across abstract concepts or more real world applications in mathematics, the idea is usually manifested in the mind. Mathematics uses logical structure in order to solve questions and problems that appear throughout our lives. Moreover, I would like to share with students that mathematics is all around us. The music we hear, the television we watch, and the telephone we talk on is just but a few advances that our society has been able to make with the aid of mathematics.

Others talked about the rewards of sharing their knowledge with someone else, of

knowing that they gave another person something that they did not have before.

Another reward of teaching is the ability to provide students with insights and information that they can use to improve their own skills. While it is nice to be a good writer and know correct grammar, these skills have little reward for me unless I can share them with others who can benefit from them as well. Teaching others makes one's own skills more meaningful.

For some, this transfer of knowledge was not limited to subject matter.

Not only do I want children to know that they learned something from my class, I also want them to remember it being enjoyable and learning things pertinent to life also. In this stage in their development, it is important to not only teach the students about bugs and the civil war, but also about the world that they are stepping into. I think it will be very rewarding to see my students grow not only intellectually but emotionally and socially also.

Convenient Schedule and Summers Off

The only reward the pre-service teachers in this study anticipate to come from the

job itself, rather than the interaction with students in the classroom, was the convenient

schedule and summers off (discussed by 14%). These pre-service teachers talked about

this as being rewarding for many of the same reasons that other respondents found this to be an easy aspect of teaching. The majority talked about the schedule being compatible with their own children's schedules, allowing them to spend more time at home with their family in the evening and during breaks. Others talked about the breaks as a time to regroup, relax, and refine their lesson plans. Still others talked about the opportunity to travel and pursue other passions during the summer.

> My second reason for why I believe teaching will be rewarding is because teaching will allow me to be at home with my future family. My top priority is being able to be at home with my future children. Teaching will allow me to be at work when my children are in school and home when they are home. This reason may be less obvious to some, but is very important to me and to the environment I hope to create for my family.

> The part of teaching I am most excited about is the summer vacation I get. That will definitely give me a break and time to regroup before I get a new set of students. Although teaching will be fun, I will still be happy to get a two month vacation.

> Unfortunately, one of the major draws of teaching as a profession is the fact that I will get three months off for summer. I think this is important because it will give time for me unwind from the stresses of the job and will give me time to think about the last year and learn from any mistakes that I might have made during the year. This factor will be vital to me and my growth as a teacher. It will give me some much needed time to reflect on my experiences during the year and help me think of ways I might be able to improve my lesson plan for the years to come.

Summary of the Anticipated Rewards

Of the 571 thematic units of positive anticipations discussed by pre-service teachers in response to the journal assignment, 460 were about the rewarding aspects of teaching. The analysis of these responses revealed that the pre-service teachers talked about two types of rewards, altruistic and personal. The altruistic rewards that they expect to experience as a teacher are also the two most frequently discussed of all the positive anticipations: *Seeing Growth and Learning* and *Individual Impact*. These rewards are

focused on what the students will gain from the teachers' work, whereas the personal

rewards are more about what the teacher himself or herself gains from teaching. These

personal rewards are *Relationships with Students*, *Sharing Knowledge and Passion*, and

Convenient Schedules and Summers Off.

Overall Summary of Positive Anticipations

In this chapter I have discussed the findings related to one part of a journal

assignment designed to access early pre-service teachers' conceptions of teaching, the

question which asked them to discuss what they foresaw as the three most rewarding, or

easiest, aspects of teaching. Because the question was worded in this manner (asking for

either the rewarding or easy aspects), respondents wrote about both types of positive

anticipations separately. Most wrote about what they anticipated would be the rewarding

aspects of teaching. Their rewards were either altruistic in nature or more personal, with

the altruistic rewards being the most frequently discussed and mostly concerned with two

main types of rewards: witnessing the growth and learning of students, and having an

impact on students. The personal rewards included anticipated relationships with

students, the ability to share their knowledge and passion with others, and the convenient

schedules and summers off. That the altruistic rewards were more frequently discussed,

suggests that these pre-service teachers expect to derive more feelings of reward and

satisfaction from the interaction with their students than from the slightly more tangible

personal rewards.

The pre-service teachers that talked about what they anticipated will be the easiest

aspects of teaching approached this in two ways. The first was to discuss aspects of

teaching in general that they believed would be easy. This included what they felt would

be inherently easy tasks, such as grading, as well as the benefits of the profession, such as flexibility, convenient schedules and summers off, and helpful coworkers. The other way the talked about what would be easy was to describe personal skills and characteristics that would make certain aspects of teaching easy for them. Their discussions of what they expect to find easy about teaching were overly optimistic, disregarding or seeming unaware of all that is involved in lesson planning and developing relationships with students. Their anticipated rewards, similarly, were quite often discussed as making up for the challenges of teaching, and while this will be true for those who become successful teachers, many may find that the rewards will become overshadowed by the difficulties.
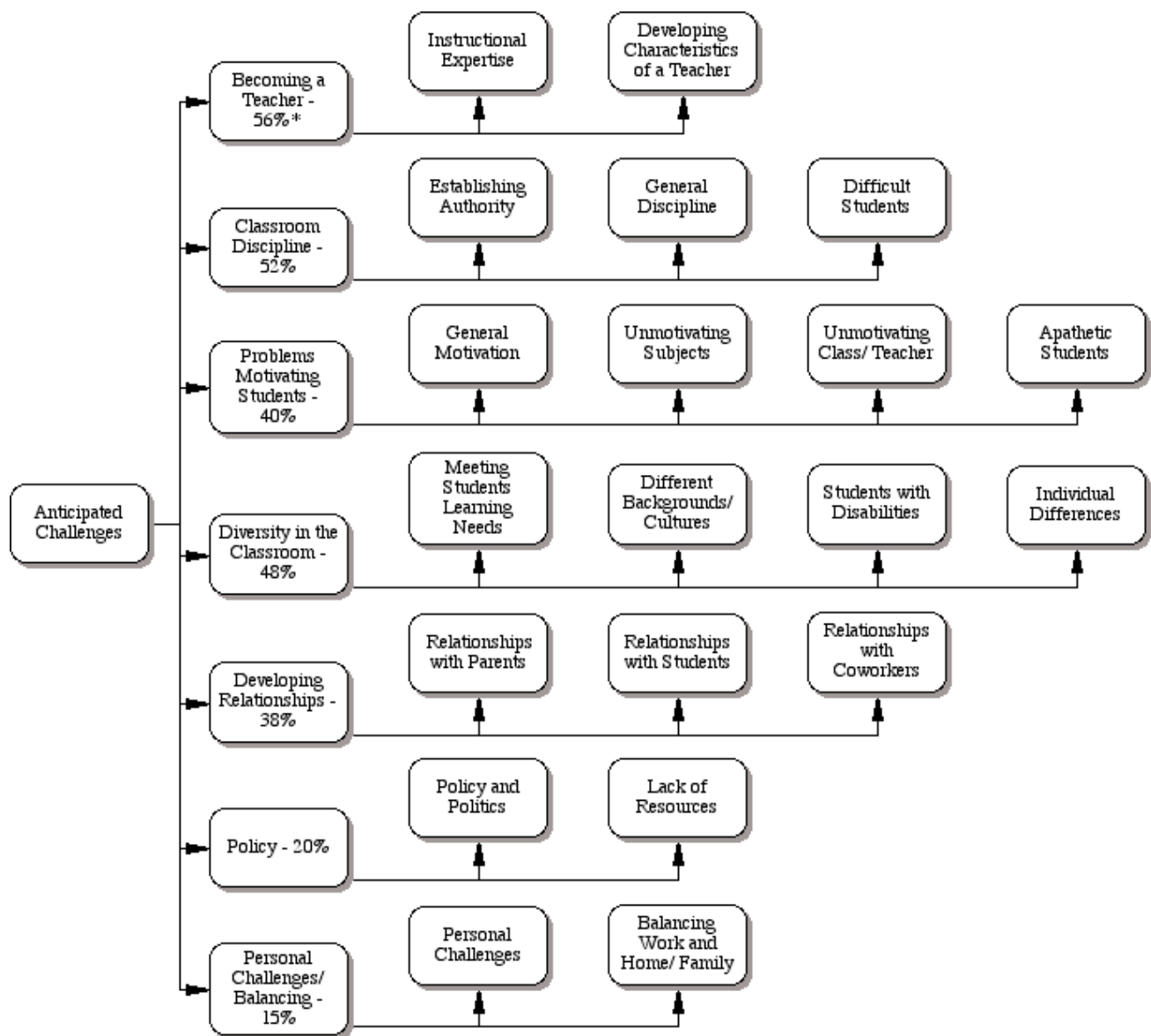
CHAPTER 4:
RESULTS: ANTICIPATED CHALLENGES

What Will Be Challenging? – An Overview

The other question included in the journal assignment designed to access early

pre-service teachers conceptions of teaching asked them to discuss what they foresaw as

the three most challenging aspects of teaching. Responses to this question reveal not only

the challenges these pre-service teachers expect to face when they become teachers, but

also important aspects of what they expect teaching its self to be like. From the 209

journal responses included in this study, there were a total of 614 thematic units that

discussed anticipated challenging aspects of teaching. Six overarching conceptual

categories emerged from these data during analysis: Becoming a Teacher, Classroom

Discipline, Motivating Students, Diversity in the Classroom, Developing Relationships,

Policies, and Personal Challenges (see figure 2). In this section I will first present an

overview of four of the categories of anticipated challenges. I will then discuss the

remaining two, Classroom Discipline and Motivating Students, in depth later in the

chapter.

Becoming a Teacher

The area of challenge most frequently discussed by the pre-service teachers

involved concerns about becoming a teacher. Concerns in this category were discussed

by 56% of the pre-service teachers (165 thematic units out of 614 that discussed

challenges). This category focused on the development of both the skills and personal

characteristics respondents believed were essential for any teacher.

Anticipated Challenges

Becoming a Teacher - 56%*
- Instructional Expertise
- Developing Characteristics of a Teacher

Classroom Discipline - 52%
- Establishing Authority
- General Discipline
- Difficult Students

Problems Motivating Students - 40%
- General Motivation
- Unmotivating Subjects
- Unmotivating Class/ Teacher
- Apathetic Students

Diversity in the Classroom - 48%
- Meeting Students Learning Needs
- Different Backgrounds/ Cultures
- Students with Disabilities
- Individual Differences

Developing Relationships - 38%
- Relationships with Parents
- Relationships with Students
- Relationships with Coworkers

Policy - 20%
- Policy and Politics
- Lack of Resources

Personal Challenges/ Balancing - 15%
- Personal Challenges
- Balancing Work and Home/ Family

*All percentages are percentage of total participants who wrote about a specific category or sub-category.

Figure 2: Anticipated Challenges

That so many pre-service teachers discussed this challenge is not surprising, considering that they were at the beginning of a college program dedicated to learning how to become a teacher. However, the focus in this area on themselves (also evident in many of the findings in the previous chapter) is reinforced in other areas of challenge as well. For example, in the area of Classroom Discipline (52%), the pre-service teachers more frequently wrote about the difficulty of establishing authority based on what they saw as their perhaps overly "nice" personalities and youthful age or appearance, rather than about challenges associated with problematic students or situations.

<div align="center">Diversity in the Classroom</div>

In the area of Diversity in the Classroom (discussed by 35% of respondents), pre-service teachers' journal entries revealed some general anxiety about dealing with different students' "learning styles" or "abilities".

> A second challenge that I may encounter in a teaching career is having to cope with differences in students' learning styles. I have learned that I best absorb information from written notes or from classroom discussion and debate, and I realize that I will probably concentrate on these forms of presenting information. I though I personally learn most effectively from these kinds of presentations, the students that I am teaching may not. Finding a happy medium for presenting information in each class will be a difficult task because each group of students is different.

They also expressed praiseworthy commitment to meeting every student's needs.

> First, there is the challenge of meeting individual needs. It is often difficult to get a classroom full of children to pay attention and learn about something in a group. It is an even greater challenge for me to get to know the detailed needs of each child. Young children won't be able to tell me exactly what they need; therefore it is my job to take the time and effort to find out.

However, few revealed any understanding of the myriad of other ways in which students in their classrooms may differ. For instance, while 24 of the 101 "challenges"

written about that were related to diversity did discuss how diverse cultures might affect

students' learning in their classrooms, these issues were almost exclusively discussed in

terms of the challenge of teaching students whose first language is not English. That

students of various other cultures, classes, and ethnicities might provide unique teaching

challenges was not discussed by anyone in this group of pre-service teachers. Some (8%)

did, however, anticipate challenges related to teaching students with special needs and

disabilities, especially in an inclusive classroom.

> First the main challenge that I worry about is having children with different learning needs in my classroom. Children with disabilities have always been an area of teaching that makes me nervous. My main worry is that I will not be able to help these students in the way that they need to be helped. I had always pictured that perfect classroom where everyone understood what you were teaching and anyone different would be in special classes. I realize now that that is simply not the case and there may be times when I have to work extra hard to help some students to grasp those concepts.

Developing Relationships

The category of Developing Relationships (discussed by 38%) is a particularly

interesting one, especially as it concerns pre-service teachers' anticipated relationships

with parents. While nine percent of respondents indicated that developing relationships

with the students might be difficult because of the challenges of getting to know and

relating to every child, it is the parents of the children they teach that these future

teachers believe will be the most difficult to establish positive relationships with. About

27% of all pre-service teachers in this study wrote that their relationships with parents

will be one of the most challenging aspects of teaching; their responses indicate that they

anticipate many parents will be either disrespectful and challenging of their teaching or

completely uncaring and absent from their child's education. In contrast with other

"challenge" categories, none of the pre-service teachers discussed solutions to improving relationships with parents. Instead, their responses suggest that this is a challenging aspect of teaching over which they do not expect to have any control, a problem that they will just have to learn to live with.

<div align="center">Policies</div>

About 20% of pre-service teachers wrote about concerns dealing with district or governmental policies, mainly about the lack of resources or respect for teachers but also about problems with policies and politics at all levels ranging from the school administration to federal education laws such as No Child Left Behind. There was a sense from these future teachers that these challenges were out of their hands and that they would simply have to learn how to deal with them.

> Another potential problem that I foresee as a teacher is in the involvement of nation, state, and local government dictating what I must teach in the classroom. Though I am not entirely familiar with education policy and government regulations, I am well aware of the fact that I will not be able to select much of what I will teach. I feel that this will limit my creativity, as well as my ability to effectively cater to the individual needs of many of my students.

<div align="center">Personal Challenges/ Balancing</div>

The opposite is the case for the category of Personal Challenges / Balancing (discussed by 15%) in which all of the challenges are personal ones that the pre-service teachers admit they will need to work on to be successful both at school and at home. Some of the challenges discussed in this area include overcoming shyness and dealing with stress as well as balancing their work and home lives. Those who talked about balancing work and home (5%) focused on the challenge of not bringing emotions either to or from work.

I think another great challenge as a teacher will be staying on top of things even when I feel down. Up to a certain age I saw my teachers as happy individuals who loved coming to teach us and didn't think that before they came to school they probably had to get their kids ready and when they went home in the afternoon their job was only halfway done. I think that it is the responsibility of the teacher to keep his/her personal life out of the classroom for the most part. For the younger student to get the most out of the days' teaching he doesn't need to know that my mom is sick, etc.

I have chosen two categories of the pre-service teachers' anticipated challenges to discuss in further depth because I believe responses in these categories reveal particularly useful information about how these pre-service teachers are thinking about teaching. Classroom Discipline and Motivating Students are the second and third most frequently discussed challenges in this study, respectively, and while this popularity was a factor in my decision to choose them for discussion, it was not the most important factor. After all, the category of Becoming a Teacher contained the most thematic units. However, Becoming a Teacher was comprised of a large number of distinct, though related, concerns (24) while Classroom Discipline and Motivating Students were much more concentrated and the responses reveal more than just challenging aspects of teaching. More than any other categories of challenges, these two contain the clearest insights into what pre-service teachers think teaching will be like.

Challenges in Classroom Discipline

Mirroring the themes drawn from the pre-service teachers' discussions of their Positive Anticipations, themes found within Classroom Discipline tended to fall into two categories, those with causes derived from their own characteristics and qualities and those with causes that stem from others. The themes that deal with challenges that were oriented in themselves include youth, appearance, and personality. Themes related to

others, rather than self, include challenges to classroom discipline posed by students'

behavior and other adults, such as parents or co-teachers who question their disciplinary

decisions.

Challenges Based on Pre-Service Teachers' Own Characteristics and Qualities

Age and Youthful Appearance

One of the most surprising findings in the category about classroom discipline

was the anxiety expressed by a notable proportion of the pre-service teachers (10%),

particularly those who plan to teach in a high school, about the small age difference

between themselves and their future students. They are worried that their students will

not respect them simply because they are so close in age and that this will be a big

challenge to their classroom discipline.

> Probably the most obvious of these challenges is the fact that when I begin
> my first year of teaching high school, I won't be much older than many of
> my students. This could cause my students to show a lack of respect for
> me and my classroom, as they may not view me as an authority figure. I
> had several first year teachers in high school and some students saw them
> as just another face in the classroom. These young teachers often had a
> hard time establishing authority and therefore enforcing the rules. This is
> potentially my biggest challenge.

> One challenge I will face is gaining the respect of my students. When I
> was in high school, and we would have a teacher that was just out of
> college, we would not always pay them the respect they deserved. In most
> cases, we would feel that they did not know enough about what they were
> teaching to take them seriously.

For these pre-service teachers, gaining the students' respect is not a challenge

because of the students' attitudes or because they have yet to develop management skills,

so much as it is about how they will appear to the students. Age, or a youthful

appearance, is considered by them to be a barrier to authority; they expect the students to

disrespect them because of these qualities, which have nothing whatsoever to do with their teaching. In fact, the pre-service teachers who discuss this challenge do not talk about developing a system of discipline or management, but talk only of this fear. For these pre-service teachers, looking like a teacher is as or more important than what you actually do as a teacher, as far as authority is concerned.

Authority vs. Friend

In addition to their concerns about not looking like an authority figure, many respondents (20%) talked about the challenge of finding a balance between being too strict and too nice with their students. A strict authority figure was discussed as someone distant and cold, while the nice teacher is caring and warm, but something of a pushover. The assumption is that there will be a difficulty in balancing these two extremes, the authoritarian and the permissive, to find a more authoritative manner of teaching (Baumrind, 1967). Not surprisingly, 27% of the students who talked about the challenge of developing an authoritative discipline style indicated that they had had previous experience with children or had taken other education courses prior to this one. Their prior work with children had shown them how difficult this balance can be.

> Another challenge for a teacher is balancing between being an authority/ adult figure in the classroom and attempting to remain youthful to recognize how the child is understanding the material. A teacher cannot simply be a strict dictator nor can they be just like the children, the teacher must find a balance between the two to assure the real learning is taking place in an atmosphere where the children feel welcome and understood.

> I also feel one of the greatest challenges will be figuring out how to gain control over those "class clowns". It will be tough to find a happy medium in being a fun, interesting and likable teacher as well as a stern and powerful one.

Willingness to Assert Authority

A third related theme was the fear of being too passive, expressed by ten percent of respondents. There were two elements to this challenge. For some pre-service teachers, classroom discipline is expected to be a challenge due to their belief that they possess a "lenient personality". The responses that discussed this fear talked about having a passive nature or an aversion to confrontation, such that they are not confident that they will be able to assert themselves or be consistent with discipline.

> The third challenge I think I would face would be disciplining. I am a passive person, and I dislike confrontation. I believe I would be able to discipline a student if they were behaving inappropriately, but I think I would be a little uncomfortable doing so.

> My uneasiness in working with larger groups is a function of my introverted nature, as is the quality of being assertive, which I see as definitely necessary to a teacher. A teacher working with students of any age needs to establish control over her classroom; he or she requires the respect and subsequent attention of the students in order to act as a leader, a role model, a supplier of correct and important information. This is acquired through assertion, or it is at least not acquired through shyness. I feel that being assertive, as well as being quick-witted and sharp in my classroom will be a challenge to me.

For others, this fear is not only rooted in a perceived passive nature, but also in a desire to avoid being disliked.

> For me, the most trying part of teaching will no doubt be disciplining. Often times I have difficulties holding people to promises, or more importantly, their current task. As a teacher, I would want all of my students to like me. I would also like my students to respect me. I realize that the student's respect is more important than their friendship, and so I anticipate difficulty in disciplining and thus, risking a severed friendship between my students and myself.

> Disciplining the students will be difficult for me because I hate seeing children cry. I am the type of person that will give several warnings before I take action. I have been advised to stand my ground when I have threatened disciplinary action. I don't want to be known as the means teacher who students dread to have.

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These future teachers express an accurate understanding that a lack of consistency and discipline will create a negative learning environment, but at the same time they recognize that they might have a hard time following through with their disciplinary threats.

Others-Derived Challenges

As previously mentioned, the journal responses revealed two main sources of challenges in the area of Classroom Discipline. I have just discussed those that are derived from the pre-service teachers' perceptions of their own characteristics and qualities, above. Now I will turn to those challenges for which the pre-service teachers located the source of the problem in others.

Problematic Student Behaviors

While most of the responses that discussed classroom discipline seemed focused on the pre-service teachers themselves, 11% wrote about expectations that behavior from individual students would be a challenge. Some respondents were concerned about normal, or general misbehavior; for others, more serious, violent behavior is a main concern. What is interesting is that, for the most part, in addition to their fears, these pre-service teachers discuss ways to address these problem students. Their solutions take into consideration knowledge of what might make a student act out. An explanation for their insight into the issues, prior to teacher education may be the apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 1975), witnessing (or enacting) misbehavior throughout many years in the classroom as students.

> The next greatest challenge I believe I will face, especially since I will be teaching at the secondary level, are problems with academic dishonesty, juvenile behavior in the classroom and other problems attributed to

teaching teenage kids. It would be very naive of me to say that I will be working with and teaching a class full of perfect angels. Disciplinary problems will occur, and probably often, so I need to be alert and ready to take the necessary action to straighten a student out.

Every classroom has children who misbehave. Constructing an effective behavior reward/punishment system will definitely be one of the ideas I work on before I become a teacher. Children, especially first-graders, are going to talk out of place and not pay attention. My job will be to teach them basic manners by giving them incentives. For example, if my students know that if they are quiet and they follow my class rules they will be rewarded, then they are most likely to do the right thing. If they talk out and misbehave and do not get punished or warned, then they will not learn anything and they will continue misbehaving.

One of the most difficult challenges I expect to face (especially if I teach at an elementary school) is classroom management. Controlling students' behavior enough to clearly communicate ideas and lessons is always a challenge, I expect this because of growing up in the public school system and watching teachers struggle with keeping the class quiet and disciplined. Learning disabilities will further contribute to this difficulty. However, as the year progresses, a routine (which helps many students feel more comfortable) should help control behavior.

Direct Challenges to Authority

A small number of the pre-service teachers (4%) discussed concerns about

possible direct challenges to their disciplinary decisions from students, parents, and co-

teachers. They expressed a fear that what they perceive to be an appropriate response to a

problem behavior may be quite different from what others feel is the right action. This

challenge lies not in their own willingness to assert authority, but in concerns about

having to defend their decisions and actions when they do discipline a student.

I am also afraid of student criticism. I know that I will be forced at times to make unpopular decisions, and that their will be resentment and possibly strong opposition. I hope to be able to keep my calm and to resolve any issues in a compassionate and professional manner. I want to be able to have to respect of my students while at the same time not making anyone feel as if they are inferior or under my rule.

My mom is a teacher, and I've heard her talk about how she's had to deal
with parents who think that she has done the wrong thing in punishing
their child because their child would never do anything wrong. I know that
I will probably have to deal with people like that, and I am most certainly
dreading it already.

Secondly, not every parent, student, and fellow teacher will agree with
every way in which I choose to handle situations in my classroom. All I
will be capable of doing is keeping the kid's best interest in mind when
making decisions.

Summary of Challenges in Classroom Discipline

The pre-service teachers' anticipated challenges in Classroom Discipline reveal

some key insights into how these future teachers think about teaching and discipline.

Their responses discussed either challenges with causes that originate from their own

characteristics and qualities, or those that originate in the behaviors of others. There are

three main characteristics and qualities about themselves that the pre-service teachers

believe will cause them concern in the area of classroom discipline: age (or a youthful

appearance), establishing an authoritative style, and asserting their authority as a teacher.

Among these three, only one, age, was seen as out of their control. Their responses

indicated that this is a challenge they will simply have to deal with for a few years until

they are no longer young, or look young, and it is no longer an issue. The concerns of

establishing and asserting authority were discussed as challenges that will require hard

work, but are, ultimately, surmountable. The challenges to classroom discipline that are

considered to have their causes in the behaviors and actions of others', include not only

problematic student behaviors, but direct challenges to the teachers' authority, mainly

from other adults. This concern echoes those of respondents who wrote that developing

relationships with parents would be challenging. The problematic student behaviors are

challenges that the pre-service teachers expect to be able to control fairly well within their classrooms. However, it is the confrontational behaviors from other adults concerning disciplinary decisions that the pre-service teachers particularly fear and feel little control over.

<div align="center">Challenges in Motivating Students</div>

The responses that discuss motivation as an anticipated challenge reveal important aspects of how pre-service teachers conceptualize motivation. From the responses, two prevalent themes emerged, *motivation as a student trait* and *motivation as "making things fun"*. These themes frame what the pre-service teachers believe will be difficult about motivating students. As I discuss these two themes I will provide samples from the journals that address the specific challenges to motivating students that these pre-service teachers expect to encounter in their future classrooms.

<div align="center">*Motivation as a Student Trait*</div>

While less common than *motivation as "fun," motivation as a student trait* was also a widely a fairly widely held conception of motivation (11%). These responses reveal a belief that students choose whether or not to engage with the material. Students who have chosen to be motivated to learn are interested in what they are learning and well behaved. Those students who are not engaged have made a conscious decision not to learn or engage with the material; "they only come to school because they have to". These students are discussed as a challenge to teachers.

> Another challenge I will face will be the students. Some students want to learn, while others do not. The ones who want to learn will pay attention and those are in my class because they have to be will disrupt the class and thus prevent those who want to learn the opportunity.

One challenge I know I would face entails certain children that just do not want to learn. This is very common in schools and I think that it is very important to catch and reverse this behavior before the child reaches higher education. The challenge is to find a way to change the child's mind, without singling them out or without in fact raising greater adversary to learning

These pre-service teachers' conception of *motivation as a student trait* is strongly reflected in their discussions of students who they describe as possessing the ability and opportunity to learn, but who refuse to engage in school. Overwhelmingly, the pre-service teachers see these students and their apathy towards education as a personal challenge and talk about them with a very harsh tone. They often mention other adults, both family and other teachers, who they believe have allowed the students to develop such negative attitudes to school and learning. These responses contain a tacit assumption that motivation, or lack thereof, is a personal trait of students, fixed and immutable. These pre-service teachers do not suggest that, as teachers, they can make a difference in the motivation of these students to learn and their orientation towards school. Rather, there is an alarming sense of having already given up on reaching these "apathetic" students.

Another challenge I will face will be the students. Some students want to learn, while others do not. The ones who want to learn will pay attention and those are in my class because they have to be will disrupt the class and thus prevent those who want to learn the opportunity.

I hope that most of the motivation issues I encounter are a result of a disability that can't be changed and not an acquired apathy that parents or teachers have allowed to grow. I think it would be a lot easier to help motivate someone who is reasonably/understandably/legitimately defiant and not just lazy, as some people are. This will most definitely be a challenge as it can be very hard to motivate someone to motivate themselves if others allow them to be lazy. I think I can handle people who are MR and don't want to participate in group activities, but I will struggle with the student who just thinks they don't need to work. My

parents never accepted that attitude, and though some may be nature, adult influences have a large part in that.

Students who simply do not care about their learning or their grade will be hard to deal with. If they do not want to learn, it is almost impossible to teach them.

Motivation as "Making Things Fun"

The most common conception of motivation was that it is a characteristic of the subject or teacher (40%). Behind this conception seems to lurk the belief that in order to motivate students, learning must be "fun". Many of the responses that discussed *motivation as fun* tended to talk about it quite vaguely, as in the first example below. However, as in the second example, some pre-service teachers described the rudiments of a strategy, such as active learning, as a way to get the students engaged and having "fun".

I want to make learning fun and exciting but educational at the same time. I have to figure out a way to keep the students interested in what I am teaching and make sure that they are having fun at the same time.

Making the material interesting and fun so that the kids will be more susceptible to learning it. In my classroom I want it to be a fun and interesting environment. I'm going to try and incorporate the material into active activities that get the students involved. For me personally I think it will make my job more fun and interesting also. I know from personal experience that if I have fun and am in an interesting environment I learn better. I hope my students will also.

The pre-service teachers who demonstrated a conception of *motivation as fun*, thought it was very important to make the class or subject interesting in order to gain and keep the attention of their students. Fortunately, they also have a sense that these are challenges to motivating students that they, as teachers, can overcome with patience and creativity. They also discussed three main reasons students might not have "fun" and thus, be motivated.

A subject is difficult or boring (or it just has that stigma)

From the responses that discussed why students might not be motivated in a specific class, it seems that every subject could potentially be perceived as difficult or boring. The pre-service teachers who talked about this expressed a fear that despite their own interest or passion for a subject, many of their future students will not share this positive view.

> One such challenge will be trying to overcome the stigma that is associated with math classes. As has been the case for many years, students have a tendency to have no desire to learn mathematics, and these feelings become very prominent during high school, thus making it very hard just to get the students engaged and willing to learn.

> Most of the time when people say they have to go to history class, you hear them moan because they are dreading what they are about to have to do. They dread going because they think that having to go sit through what they would call "a boring history class" is as excruciating as someone sawing their leg off. Because of this preconceived idea, it will be very difficult to motivate the students to pay attention and do well in the class. In my attempt to motivate them, I will tell them stories that will excite them, plan activities that will draw them in, and show them images that will help the events of history come alive for them.

The material is irrelevant or unimportant to students' lives

The few pre-service teachers who expressed concern with making class material relevant to students' lives deserve credit for thinking about this important aspect of motivation. There is a sense from the responses, however, that they are not quite sure how to make the material that they have chosen to teach relevant.

> The biggest challenge I think I will face is getting high school-aged students to see the importance and relevance of subjects like past American presidents or conflicts during the Civil War. College-bound students especially are constantly reminded to think about their future and sometimes they don't see the value in learning about our past.

> The second great challenge I believe I will face will be the challenge of showing the relevance of a particular subject to a student's non-academic

life. I believe that when a connection is formed between a subject and a student it helps stimulate a desire to learn more about the subject. However, such a connection is difficult to form without showing how the subject is relevant to a student when they step out of the classroom. There are certain required classes that I, and other students, may have taken during a High School education in which one would question how the class itself would benefit you beyond the classroom. If these problems were addressed and evidence was shown to a student as to why the class is important, it would help encourage a student to excel in that area.

Students are forced to go to school or take unwanted subjects

In addition to concerns that students might not find the material interesting or relevant are the fears of some respondents that students will be averse to a specific class, or to schooling in general, because it is required.

> As a teacher I will undoubtedly face many challenges. The first major challenge I think I will face will be to engage those students who are not exactly interested in the material. Government classes in a high school are required and students often find the information rather boring. The challenge for me as a teacher will be to engage those students who are not even remotely interested in the subject. I can, in no way, force them to take interest in the content, but it is still possible for them to be active in the class with out really having an interesting the content of the course.

Summary of Challenges in Motivating Students

The challenges the pre-service teachers anticipate about motivating students reveals how these future teachers are thinking about motivation and how they expect it to play out in their classrooms. The first conception, motivation as a personal trait, was particularly revealing in their discussions of apathetic students. For these students, according to the journal responses, motivation is unrelated to external factors such as the teacher, subject, or material. As such, the pre-service teachers who see motivation as a personal trait have essentially given up on these students already. In contrast, those who demonstrated a conception of motivation as "fun" often discussed strategies they could implement to increase student motivation.

Summary of Anticipated Challenges

In this chapter I have discussed the findings on the anticipated challenges discussed by the early pre-service teachers in this study. Their responses to a journal assignment that asked them to describe what they foresaw as the three most challenging aspects of teaching resulted in seven main categories of concerns: Becoming a Teacher, Classroom Discipline, Problems Motivating Students, Diversity in the Classroom, Developing Relationships, Policy, and Personal Challenges/ Balancing. In particular, the responses that discussed Classroom Discipline and Problems Motivating Students revealed not only what the pre-service teachers expect to be challenging about these aspects of teaching, but also how they are thinking about discipline and motivation as psychological constructs. Their discussions of discipline show that they see challenges in this area as either originating from their own characteristics or from those of others. Their discussions of motivation contain two almost parallel conceptions of motivation: motivation as a personal trait and motivation as "fun" and more related to the learning context. Certain aspects of each were considered out of the teachers' hands, challenges that the teachers would have little control or influence over, particularly the characteristics and attitudes of others. On the other hand, they expect to be able to overcome (with hard work and persistence) certain challenges that have an origin within themselves and their own characteristics and qualities or within the context of their classrooms.

CHAPTER 5:
DISCUSSION

The purpose of the present study was to investigate what early pre-service

teachers, most of whom are taking their first education courses at the university, expect

teaching to be like. Their conceptions of teaching were accessed through a journal

assignment given within the first week of the semester of an introductory educational

psychology course which asked them to describe what they believed would be the three

most challenging and three most positive aspects of teaching.

Some of the challenges they discussed are realistic, but these pre-service teachers

do not demonstrate an awareness of or concern for the aspects of teaching that drive so

many out of the profession. In contrast to the reasons for in-service teachers'

dissatisfaction found in the literature (Ingersoll, 2003; Pastor & Erlandson, 1982), very

few of these future educators discussed the lack of support in schools for new teachers

and the fact that teachers have little influence in educational decision making at higher

levels. Only six pre-service teachers mentioned that the relatively low salary might be a

challenge, while dissatisfaction with salary was a commonly cited concern for in-service

teachers. These pre-service teachers are concerned about student discipline and

motivation, but their main concerns in these areas focus on themselves: Will my students

respect me? How will I appear as a teacher? Will I be too nice, too young, too mean, or

worse, too boring?

This preoccupation with the self is consistent with Fuller's developmental hierarchy of concerns, which posits that the most common concerns for beginning teachers is dealing with developing the skills, identity and characteristics of a teacher. If beginning teachers, according to Fuller's the model, are concerned with matters of the self and survival, then it logically follows that pre-service teachers are most concerned with developing that teacher-self.

There was even greater convergence in the positive anticipations about teaching discussed by these pre-service teachers, mainly because they tended to focus on the positive interactions they expect to have with their students. Their responses express an expectation that the altruistic rewards of teaching will outweigh the challenges and research suggests that if they remain in teaching and experience success in dealing with challenges, this will be so (Inman & Marlow, 2004; Nieto, 2003). This naïve expectation is most likely a result of their personal experiences with their own teachers and their own academic success. However, during their first few years, it will be likely that many of these respondents will feel overwhelmed by the challenges of classroom teaching and the rewards will be less than they had expected, resulting in the "reality shock" so common to novice teachers (Ingersoll, 2003; Veenman, 1984).

It is important to note that while the pre-service teachers' positive anticipations, in particular the rewards, make much mention of the positive interactions with students, they also demonstrate beliefs about children that have not yet matured to the level set by the NBPTS and other organizations concerned with standards for "highly qualified" teachers (NBPTS, 2001). Specifically, their responses show little recognition of the many types and effects of student diversity and when it is discussed (in terms of students

for whom English is a second language) it is described only as a challenge, not a potential resource. Additionally, while the pre-service teachers' responses do not case serious doubt on the ideal that every child *can learn*, they do seem to believe that not every child *can be motivated to learn*.

This analysis of the journal responses revealed that many of the pre-service teachers see things in a bipolar, dichotomous way. Students are either completely disinterested or having fun. Their behavior is either out of control or perfectly in-line. The teacher is either really mean or a complete pushover. What I found most alarming within their responses is the expectation that parents will be either unreasonably demanding towards the teacher or completely uninvolved in their child's education. Twenty-seven percent of the pre-service teachers already expect to have difficulty developing relationships with the parents of their students and there was only one future teacher who discussed that parents could be a positive resource. I cannot help but worry about how this might affect their willingness to attempt to reach out to parents when they become teachers. It seems they have already given up.

This type of dichotomous thinking provides us with a sense of how their teacher efficacy and locus of control intersect when considering the possible challenging and positive aspects of teaching. Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) defined teacher efficacy as a teacher's "judgment of his or her capabilities to bring about desired outcomes of student engagement and learning, even among those students who may be difficult or unmotivated." What these pre-service teachers' anticipations about the positive and challenging aspects of teaching reveal is that their efficacy for certain tasks is largely dependent on their locus of control, whether they attribute the difficultly or ease

of an aspect of teaching to external causes, or to some characteristic of themselves (Rotter, 1966).

When they located the cause of a challenge within themselves, particularly a perceived strength or good characteristic, these pre-service teachers suggested that they could overcome that challenge, given time and experience. For example, as they discussed challenges in classroom discipline, they tended to express confidence that they would eventually establish authority and become comfortable asserting it. They perceived authority as a personal characteristic, but they perceived the challenges to establishing and asserting authority as within themselves, as well. It was their own perceptions of their personalities, fears of being disliked, and aversion to confrontation to which they mainly ascribed the challenges of establishing authority. Within motivation, as the pre-service teachers discussed the challenges of making a class or subject "fun", they largely talked about it as a responsibility and quality of a good teacher. Making a class "fun" is an aspect of motivation that many suggested the teacher can control, though it is not easy. It is important to note here that what research has found that students describe as "fun" in educational contexts does not necessarily resemble a party, but is often the very aspects of a classroom that education researchers and teachers believe are important for optimal learning: time, choice, ownership, competence, and collaboration (West, 1994).

In contrast to challenges related to personal attributions or actions, challenges that these pre-service teachers attributed to external causations were not usually accompanied by any suggestions that patience, creativity, and hard work would ease the problem. The future teachers who related fears about direct challenges to their authority from students, parents, and co-teachers and discussed the difficulties of developing relationships with

parents, only talked about how they feared the confrontation within those situations. They did not mention ways to cope with these fears. In contrast to the pre-service teachers who described motivation as within the teacher's locus of control through the creation of "fun" lessons, those who discussed motivation as a personal trait of a student alarmingly appear to have already given up on the students who do not exhibit motivation towards schooling.

Interestingly, however, problematic student behavior, an external challenge, was suggested to be within the teacher's locus of control and those who discussed it very often offered strategies and suggestions for dealing with this type of challenge. However, perceptions of how their own age or youthful appearance may hinder their efforts at establishing authority, was seen as having causes beyond their own control. Chance, it seems, has cursed them with particular physical characteristics that they believe will be a barrier to being taken seriously as an authority figure.

What these challenges suggest is how the relationship between locus of control and teacher-efficacy shapes their anticipations of teaching. Where the pre-service teachers attribute challenges to external factors, they tend to have less confidence (teacher efficacy) in their ability to successfully deal with those challenges. When they attribute challenges to internal factors, they are more confident that they can overcome those challenges. Additionally, the majority of what they described as easy aspects of teaching were predicated upon perceptions of their own strengths and characteristics, such as creativity and a warm personality.

Though only a small percentage (6%) wrote about creativity exclusively as a skill or characteristic that would make teaching easier, creativity was mentioned in other

responses as a helpful characteristic for a teacher to possess. It was seen as a way to help motivate students, through the creation of innovative methods and "fun" activities. That ten percent of the pre-service teachers in this study discussed creativity as a vital aspect of teaching is important in light of the fact that they will be entering an educational climate focused on standards and accountability that has been criticized for limiting the creativity of teachers.

<div align="center">Limitations</div>

There are several limitations to this study, two of which involve the instrument used to access the pre-service teachers' conceptions of teaching. The journal assignment contained wording in the second question that was unintentionally confusing. It asked the pre-service teachers to write about what they thought "will be the three most rewarding or easiest things about being a teacher, and why" (see Appendix). When the question was created, the distinction between aspects that would be rewarding and those that would be easy was not foreseen. This resulted in the positive anticipations being split between those expected by the pre-service teachers to be easy and those expected to be rewarding.

The other limitation involving the instrument itself is the fact that the pre-service teachers were limited to writing about three things each for challenges and positives. It was assumed that by limiting their responses to three, they would write about those things they anticipated *the most*, but it also narrowed the scope of their expectations so that we do not know about any other challenging or positive aspects of teaching that they were considering.

Lastly, information on the demographics of this group of early pre-service teachers was not collected. Therefore, we cannot trace how gender, previous experience with children, or other personal experiences may have affected their conceptions of teaching. Nor do we have information on varying intensities of commitment to become a teacher.

Conclusions and Implications

As these early pre-service teachers were just beginning their teacher education – most taking their first education course – it is not surprising that their conceptions of motivation, classroom discipline, and diversity were so unsophisticated. However, I believe this study points to several cognitive dispositions that teacher education programs need to pay particular attention to. First, motivation is not a fixed, immutable personal trait nor is it all fun and games. That these future teachers have already given up on "apathetic" students should be very disconcerting to teacher educators and inform the way we teach the topic of motivation. They learn, in the introductory educational psychology class in which the journals were assigned, about motivational theories and strategies for increasing motivation, but it is also necessary that the pre-service teachers experience early success in reaching unmotivated students through these strategies. Seeing first hand that motivation is not as simple as either having it or not, altering their locus of control for motivation from external to internal would increase their efficacy for motivating future students.

Secondly, the fact that the pre-service teachers' responses contain little recognition for the diversity of cultures, families, and experiences should bolster efforts made by teacher education programs to increase awareness of and experience with

diverse student populations. In order to understand the many types and effects of student diversity, pre-service teachers need not only to learn about diversity in their courses, they need to experience it first hand through placement in schools or community resources that successfully serve diverse student populations. Having positive interactions with diverse students and families may increase their knowledge of and respect for the many ways their future students will differ, while observing successful models for teaching diverse students should increase their efficacy in this area.

Similarly, we especially need to provide these pre-service teachers with models and strategies for successful interactions with parents in order to increase their efficacy and locus of control for this challenge. We cannot change the attitudes and behaviors of parents, but we can help these future teachers learn how to reach out to parents before problems occur and how to effectively deal with defensive and challenging parents.

Finally, these pre-service teachers' conception of classroom discipline needs to be refocused as strategic classroom management. They need to understand that students do not behave or misbehave because of a teachers' appearance, but because of his or her actions. A good deal of the pre-service teachers did exhibit the rudiments of a strategy for managing classroom behavior, but many did not demonstrate an awareness that respect and authority are also the positive consequences of a good management strategy. This is an aspect of teaching that teacher educators need to address long before pre-service teachers experience the "shock" in their student teaching field placements.

This study also points to implications for teacher retention. These students are very optimistic regarding the levels of satisfaction and success they expect to experience. They anticipate a working environment with co-teachers and administrators who will be

supportive, but unfortunately this is not always the case. Too often, beginning teachers

feel alone in their struggles and cite a lack of support as one of the main reasons for

leaving (Ingersoll, 2003). These pre-service teachers also expect to have a great deal of

autonomy, but again, limited control or input in decision making is also one of the main

sources of dissatisfaction for beginning teachers. In addition, thirty percent of the pre-

service teachers in this study expect the schedules and summer breaks of school to

provide them with satisfaction, but they do not anticipate having to devote much of their

"free time" to planning, grading, meetings, and professional development. Their

expectations of the positive aspects of teaching are very optimistic and while we should

not tell these pre-service teachers that they will not experience satisfaction from working

with co-teachers, or that they will not have much autonomy or free time after all, we need

to prepare them for this dissonance between their expectations and the realities of

teaching. Mentor teachers can be of great help to ease this dissonance. It is becoming

increasingly popular for schools to provide a mentor to new teachers (Hargreaves and

Fullan, 2000), and there is some proof that they do help retain teachers. Smith and

Ingersoll (2004) found that novice teachers who had had mentors were significantly more

likely to remain in their positions than those who had not had mentors.

Other implications for teacher retention regard the pre-service teachers' optimism

for success. This finding echoes those of other studies (Weinstein, 1990; Friedman,

2000) that found that pre-service and beginning teachers have high expectations for

personal success in teaching. The pre-service teachers in this study exhibited optimism in

their ability to establish relationships with students and co-teachers, and to deal with

student discipline problems. However, in-service teachers find these to be areas of

concern and challenge (Adams, 1982; Ingersoll, 2003), especially discipline.

Establishing relationships with students is one of the most rewarding aspects of teaching, but it is not always easy. Beginning teachers do not always experience success in establishing relationships or in dealing with student discipline, but these are also areas in which mentor teachers can help. By sharing their own struggles and providing support, mentors and other experienced teachers can help guide novice teachers through these challenges. These pre-service teachers have been used to experiencing success in schools all their lives; they need educators and mentors who will be honest with them about the challenges of teaching, who can admit their own failures and struggles as teachers and help prepare them for the realities of the classroom, both difficult and rewarding.

<div align="center">Suggestions for Further Research</div>

Future research in this area should seek to collect data from a more diverse sample of pre-service teachers. Teacher education students from not only from the University of Georgia, but also institutions with less homogenous student bodies should be included. Conducting this study with cohorts at various stages of teacher education would also be useful. This wider cast would allow pre-service teachers' characteristics and experiences to be considered in a factor analysis. Such information would facilitate an investigation into the influences on pre-service teachers' anticipations and the effect of experiences such as specific courses or early fieldwork, lending more understanding to their conceptions of teaching before, during, and after teacher education.

Additionally, the instrument should be revised to clarify the intent of the second question, the one dealing with the positive anticipations. This should be changed to ask for the three most positive aspects of teaching, rather than the three easiest or most

rewarding. While the responses would probably not differ greatly with this clarification, analysis would be easier to conduct and the results would then only aggregate into two parts, the challenges and the positives, which was the original intent.

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EPSY 2020: JOURNAL ASSIGNMENT

For your first journal in this class, I would like you to reflect on your own ideas and expectations as a future teacher or other professional, as they are related to this course:

IF YOU PLAN TO BE A TEACHER, please indicate the grade level/subject you plan to teach and write about:

a) what you think will be the three greatest challenges you will face as a teacher, and why, AND

b) what you think will be the three most rewarding or easiest things about being a teacher, and why.

IF YOU DO NOT PLAN TO BE A TEACHER, please indicate your future chosen profession, and write about;

a) what you think may be three challenges related to *someone else's* learning or motivation you will face in your future career, AND

b) what you think may be most rewarding or easiest about motivating or teaching *someone else* to do something in your future career.

In other words, think about how you see yourself using the material you will learn in this course.

FOR EVERYONE: Please indicate at the top of this journal entry what year you are in school and whether you have already taken or are currently taking any other courses related to education.

REMEMBER - In each journal, you need to address the required question(s) (see above) AND write about one or more things that really struck you (puzzled you, excited you, made you disagree or agree strongly) in the class readings or discussions.