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Overview

The Kentucky Journal for Excellence in College Teaching and Learning is a peer-reviewed electronic Journal sponsored by the Kentucky Council for Post-Secondary Education Faculty Development Group. General categories for articles include theory, research, and practice. In addition, the Journal will publish manuscripts containing media reviews, profiles, and commentary. The Journal initially targets the professional development of college and university faculty within the Commonwealth. Its primary goal is to enhance student learning by promoting excellence in teaching in higher education institutions in Kentucky and beyond.

Submission of Guidelines for Research, Theory, and Practice Papers, respectively

1. Submit original manuscripts as MS Word documents to the Journal website.
2. Use APA style when preparing the manuscript. Please refer to the American Psychological Association Manual of Style, Sixth Edition.
3. Include an abstract of 200 - 250 words for research, theory, and practice.
4. Use one-inch margins and double-space your text.
5. The length of your manuscript should be between 3,000 – 5,000 words in Times New Roman, 12-point font.
6. Use a minimum of tables. Provide image-ready tables, figures, graphs, and charts on separate pages. Include only essential data in the tables, figures, graphs, and charts. Combine tables whenever possible.
7. Do not include the author's name(s), positions, titles, or places of employment on the cover page to safeguard anonymity.
8. Do not use generic masculine pronouns or other sexist terminology in your manuscript.

Peer-reviewers read and recommend articles for publication under the research, theory, and practice categories. Articles published in the Kentucky Journal of Excellence in College Teaching and Learning, reflect the views of the authors and not of the Editors, Editorial Board, or Eastern Kentucky University.

Submission Guidelines for Media Review, Profile, and Commentary

1. Submit original manuscripts as MS Word documents to the Journal website.
2. Use APA style when preparing the manuscript. Please refer to the American Psychological Association Manual of Style, Sixth Edition.
3. Include an abstract of 120 words.
4. Double-space your manuscript and insert one-inch margins.
5. The length of your manuscript should be 2,000 to 3,000 words in Times New Roman, 12-point font.
6. Use a minimum of tables. Type tables on separate pages. Include only essential data in the tables. Combine tables whenever possible.
7. Do not include author's name(s), positions, titles, or places of employment on the cover page to safeguard anonymity.
8. Do not use generic masculine pronouns or other sexist terminology in your manuscript.

The editors review papers in the media, profile, and commentary categories. Articles published in the Kentucky Journal of Excellence in College Teaching and Learning reflect the views of the authors, not those of the editors, editorial board, or Eastern Kentucky University.

Brief Notes on Categories

Research

Educational research is a process of discovery that may or may not use the scientific method. There are limitations in the scientific method and other types of research methodology. The researcher recognizes and defines a problem, formulates a hypothesis, collects data, analyzes the data, and then provides a statement of conclusion that may or may not confirm the hypothesis.

Theory

Theory is a tested and testable concept that explains an occurrence. Researchers may analyze existing theories or apply them to contemporary situations. Sometimes researchers develop new interpretations to existing theories. A theory paper involves a lot of critical-thinking, reading, and reflection.

Practice

Practice involves almost everything teachers do relative to their profession. Teachers continuously try out new concepts and ideas, and reflect on “best practices.” They usually share their successes with colleagues in the profession.

Media Review

We live in an era of information overload and teachers play the role of sorting out and managing the material they intend to use in their classrooms. Media reviews contain reports, demonstrations, and/or critiques of print or electronic resources that enhance or facilitate teaching and learning.

Profile

A profile is a feature story of a person that highlights the person’s background, ideas, and accomplishments. Profiles describe qualities that are worthy of emulation.

Commentary

A commentary is a piece of writing that gives a perspective on an occurrence or event. It may clarify, explain, or illustrate issues related to the title.

The Kentucky Journal of Excellence in College Teaching and Learning

Mission

The Journal targets the professional development of college/university faculty in the Commonwealth of Kentucky. We also welcome submissions from faculty in the United States and overseas.

Goals

1. To adapt “best practices” to new teaching and learning contexts.
2. To promote innovative research in the scholarship of teaching.
3. To provide a forum for sharing successful teaching/learning strategies.
4. To profile individuals who exhibit excellence in teaching.
5. To stimulate ongoing professional development through teaching/learning resources.

Submissions

Articles must represent innovation in teaching and learning in higher education. Articles must be submitted exclusively to the Kentucky Journal of Excellence in College Teaching and Learning. Manuscripts must be double-spaced with one-inch margins, paragraphs indented five spaces, pages clearly numbered, 12-point Times New Roman font, and should use the most current edition of The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association. Upload an electronic copy to the Journal website.

Journal Content

The Journal will address innovative and practical teaching resources for faculty. It will also publish informative articles relating to the profession on topics such as:

- “Best practices”
- Innovative environments
- Collaborative practices
- Instructional technology
- Creative pedagogical approaches
- Student retention
- Diversity within the teaching/learning environment
- Creative and innovative teaching tips
- Successful teaching/learning practices
- Profiles of honorary award recipients
- Book and media reviews
- Professional meetings, workshops, conferences and resources

Publication Information

This peer-reviewed electronic Journal is sponsored by the Faculty Development Workgroup/Council on Postsecondary Education and published by the College of Education, Eastern Kentucky University. Reviewers represent faculty from public and private institutions of higher education all over Kentucky and beyond. A print copy of the Journal will be available at the annual Kentucky CPE Faculty Development Conference.

In This Issue

Ann Burns • Eastern Kentucky University

Senior Editor for The Kentucky Journal of Excellence in College Teaching and Learning

This issue features seven articles focused on happenings across Kentucky universities, by Kentucky professors. The contexts range from support programs, teaching practices, and historical context pieces. We invite you to read and learn with our authors. With this issue, we are moving to a fully digital format. We welcome you to pursue our past issues and consider reviewing and/or submitting articles for future issues.

Samantha Bryant discusses the importance of the Upward Bound Program for low-income, first-generation students in *The Upward Bound Programs*. Research-based institutional and classroom strategies related to Upward Bound have been coded and comprised into three main categories: cost, intrusive advising, and co- or extra-curricular offerings. Additionally, the importance of the faculty's role, culturally compassionate curriculum, and communication is examined.

Cynthia Harter and Erin A. Yetter present findings in *Knowledge is Power in Teaching Economics* from a statewide standardized economics assessment of K-12 teachers prior to the implementation of new social studies standards. Using descriptive analyses, the results show that instruction in economics for K-8 teachers and for teachers in rural areas, in particular, should focus on concepts beyond fundamentals such as opportunity cost and specialization and include practice with comprehension skills as defined in Bloom's taxonomy.

Amanda Brown discusses how important study abroad can be to trauma focused care in *Using a Short-Term Study Abroad Program to Teach Trauma-Focused Care: Design, Implementation, and Findings*. Findings suggest that short term study abroad (STSA) programs may be an effective tool for student learning specifically related to trauma focused care (TFC).

Richard Day revisits the historical Rose vs Kentucky Board of Education decision in *Not Without a Fight*. This article offers a historical perspective of the prelude and outcome of the courageous nine-year political fight waged by local school superintendents, supported by a contemporaneous grass-roots policy effort, executed by creative legal statesmanship, and resolved by an activist Supreme Court decision. The historical record confirms that the effort to bring fiscal adequacy and equity to eastern Kentucky school students was not achieved without a fight. Its legacy will be the courts' determination that an adequate education is the fundamental right of each and every student.

Marie Manning and Susan Hermes review the importance of collaboration in multiple pre-service settings in *Developing an Interdisciplinary Collaborative Approach for Higher Education Teaching: A Conceptual Framework*. This paper introduces a conceptual framework that promotes four key knowledge and skills in the areas of teaming, roles, ethics, and communication across disciplines at the pre-licensure level.

Raymond Lauk studied the effect of financial incentives for perfect attendance in *When a paycheck isn't enough*. This study analyzed all districts in a southern U.S. state to determine any relationship between financial incentives for perfect attendance and school quality factors. The study sought to determine any relationship between the presence of financial incentives and such proxies for school quality as student attendance, chronic absenteeism, college admissions, teacher turnover, and graduation rates. No significant relationship was identified that would support the presence or absence of incentives.

Joseph “Rocky” Wallace, J.M. Blackhourn, Beth Giesler, and Michael Hylan, explored the study of servant leadership, its theory and practice in *Servant Leadership, It’s Basic Propositions*. The roots of servant leadership extend far back into the past, involving the study of “Great Leaders” who preceded this era, in a search for common aspects and principles that hold relevance for current application. The field of Education has adopted, and often co-opted, various practices, procedures, and processes, which could potentially yield greater productivity among organizational members.

RESEARCH

The Upward Bound Programs

Samantha Bryant • Associate Director • Morehead State University

Abstract

Low-income, first-generation (LIFG) student college enrollment has been steadily increasing for the last decade. This group of marginalized students are typically overlooked as needing additional support as they often lack any visual indicators of their LIFG status. LIFG students arrive on-campus with unique goals, stories, and challenges but often lack college-going knowledge and capital. These areas of deficiency often impede success for LIFG students but many colleges and support programs have developed and implemented an array of strategies that have demonstrated the ability to increase success, when measured by cumulative GPA, retention, and ultimately, degree conferment. While much work has been done to increase access for the students it often stops there. LIFG students are more likely to drop out before degree completion at a much higher rate than their more affluent peers. The current body of literature provides an overwhelming large number of strategies and andragogical approaches that work and do not work. This research contains a meta-analysis of the current body of data. The data provided a detailed student profile including rationale for the need for institutional and classroom change as well as an overview of the unique challenges faced by this group of students. Research-based institutional and classroom strategies have been coded and comprised into three main categories: cost, intrusive advising, and co- or extra-curricular offerings. Additionally, the importance of faculty's role is examined and the importance of culturally compassionate and sensitive curriculum, as well as communication is provided..

Keywords: low income, first generation, marginalized students, andragogical, meta-analysis, culture, faculty

Review of the Literature

According to 2015-2016 enrollment data reported by the Center for First-Generation Student Success (2016), 56% of college freshmen were considered first-generation, meaning neither of their parents have a bachelor's degree. This number has grown exponentially since 1995-1996 when only 34% of the student body at four-year institutions being first-generation (Pascarella, Pierson Wolniak, & Terenzini, 2004). Studies (e.g. see Mitchall & Jaeger, 2018; Rondini, 2016; Low, Hallett, & Mo, 2016; Ting, 1998) have demonstrated that first-generation status oftentimes coincides with students living in poverty, at a low-income level, or sometimes even in homelessness. According to the United States Office of Postsecondary Education (2020), a family of four in the contingent United States is considered low-income when the total household income is \$39,300 or below.

Despite these barriers, low-income, first-generation (LIFG) students are enrolling at such an astounding rate but unfortunately do not persist into their second or third year (Lohfink & Paulsen, 2005). Mamiseishvili's (2011) longitudinal study found only 11% of low-income, first-generation students completed a bachelor's degree within six years. As comparison, 55% of their more affluent peers persisted through degree completion. Factors impacting persistence were found to be feelings of isolation (Jehangir, 2009), inability to secure a support system (Yeh, 2010), understanding of faculty expectations, and inability to adjust to the 'college student' role (Collier & Morgan, 2008).

Several pedagogical approaches, classroom strategies, and interventions have demonstrated to be beneficial for all students but particularly LIFG students. Hao (2011) praises Compassionate Pedagogy as one solution as it allows for the examination of

institutional policies and classroom practices that put these disadvantaged students even farther behind the eight-ball. This pedagogical approach is a process in which faculty and staff teach students how to communicate effectively using “four components: observation, feeling, need, and request” (Hao, 2011, p. 92). Culturally responsive pedagogy has also shown to be beneficial to LIFG students especially those from ethnically diverse backgrounds (Glass, Gesing, Hales, & Cong, 2017). This approach promotes analysis of cultural differences in learning processes and curriculum to increase feeling of belonging and campus engagement.

Additionally, simple strategies both in and out of the classroom help LIFG students succeed (McMurray & Sorrells, 2009; Miller, 2013). These strategies include intrusive advising (McMurray & Sorrells), faculty making first-contact outside the classroom (Collier & Morgan, 2007), additional summer programming (Renbarger & Long, 2019), and using illustrative examples (McMurray & Sorrells). Learning experiences outside of the classroom also provide to be constructive for LIFG students. According to Conley and Hamlin (2009), justice-learning supports marginalized students by engaging them in processes that investigate concepts of privilege, power, and difference. Service-learning provides opportunities to build skills related to academia and possible career choices and creates connections to real-life for personal student development (Yeh, 2010).

This literature review and meta data-analysis explores these factors as well on-going barriers to collegiate success faced this marginalized group of students. Additionally, the importance of familial and institutional support, the critical role of faculty, and successful interventions were examined.

Methodology

A meta-analysis approach was used to examine and code several existing studies. All studies address the same, or similar guiding research question: what strategies and approaches have the potential to increase success, as defined by overall GPA, retention, and graduation? Because current literature addresses this question thoroughly several connecting themes and results exist.

Upon review of the literature and application of a meta-analysis, the data were coded into three main categories. The first category, including information on the student profile, provides both context and guiding ideas for on-going research. This category includes data regarding parental influences, impact of social class, effect of homelessness, and issues with support and motivation.

The two remaining categories addressed the research question specifically were coded into institutional support and the importance of faculty. From the literature, the three main factors that influence low-income, first-generation students were cost, intrusive advising, and extracurricular activity offerings. When examining the importance of faculty, two approaches generated results which impacted LIFG students’ success positively: culturally responsive andragogy which includes compassionate communication and implementation of experiential learning experiences such as service and justice learning. While other outliers exist and may be beneficial to low-income, first-generation student success the meta-analysis provides a thorough breakdown and summary of approaches that address the research question and generate desired results.

Findings

Student Profile

In 2007 nearly 3.5 million low-income (LI) K-12 students demonstrated the ability to perform at the top academic quartile (Hébert, 2018). Many of these high-achieving, low-income first-generation students arrive to academia underprepared or unprepared due, in-part, to lack of rigorous curriculum in high school (Wilson, 2016), misunderstanding collegiate applications and processes (Hoxby & Turner, 2015), familial codependency (Hand & Payne, 2008), and financial strain (Lohfink & Paulsen, 2005; Mamiseishvili, 2010). This lack of preparedness often results in poor transitions into college (Pascarella et al., 2004). However, with academic and social support, additional guidance (Renbarger & Long, 2019), and institutional interventions (Watt, Huerta, & Alkan, 2011) the LIFG students can often preform at the highest possible level.

Self-efficacy, one's belief in one's ability to succeed in specific situations or accomplish a task, also impact's a student's ability at the post-secondary level. According to Ramos-Sánchez and Nichols (2007) LIFG students are often deficient in this area. Self-efficacy has been demonstrated as a predictor of collegiate GPA, persistence (Pike & Kuh, 2005; Green, 2006), and motivation (Katreovich & Aruguete, 2017). Lacking self-efficacy can often impact a low-income first-generation student's collegiate choice (Hébert, 2018; Hand & Payne, 2008; Green), major (Pulliam, Ieva, & Burlew, 2017), and even the type of courses he/she enrolls in (Ortagus, 2017).

Despite most LIFG students receiving substantial financial aid packages (Azmitia, Sumabat-Estrada, Cheong, & Covarrubias, 2018), with 38% of undergraduate students receiving a Pell Grant (Mead, 2018), many still work (Pike & Kuh, 2005; Ortagus, 2016; Hinz, 2016). Balancing school and work impact the low-income, first-generation students with limited time (Katreovich &

Aruguete, 2017) to potentially participate in co-curricular and extra-curricular activities (e.g., see Glass et al., 2017; Schademan & Thompson, 2015) or engage in meaningful social relationships with peers or faculty. This blatant lack of supportive relationships typically results in overwhelming feelings of loneliness and isolation, thus eventually leading to student drop-out (Jehangir, 2008; Martin, 2015).

Parental influences. It should come as no surprise that the level of parental and familial support plays an important role in the development of student self-efficacy and motivation. Most LIFG students experience a fierce sense of community (Rondini, 2016) and connection unique to their social class. These relationships, both to family and community, can sometimes cause students to develop 'imposter syndrome' – the inability to believe individual success is deserved or has been achieved via personal effort and skill. This imposter syndrome can generate guilt and potentially impact college-choice (Mitchall & Jaeger, 2018).

Impact of social class. According to Rondini (2016) most LIFG students hail from working class families. These families typically have little, if any, knowledge of the college-going process (Mitchall & Jaegar, 2018). Due to this lack of educational attainment, individuals from these families often fail to understand the cultural, institutional, and societal barriers (Rondini) in place that perhaps had an impact on their academic success. Despite this their lack of success, as defined by attainment of a college degree to secure a career placing them above the poverty line, many families held postsecondary education in the highest esteem and those involved in the student's education had a positive impact on educational persistence and outcomes (Mitchall & Jaegar, 2018).

Social class can be impacted by a variety of factors. Martin (2015) found work

and family responsibilities were more often barriers than interactions with more affluent peers, however both play a critical role. Stressing one's class experiences, "socioeconomic background influenced every aspect of the college experience..." (Martin, p. 277); but for many escaping such a stifling home environment was a testament to the level of commitment in attending and persisting throughout college (Martin). Due to this disconnect between familial background and career goals, many LIFG or working-class students experience class transition and begin to subconsciously adapt their language and behaviors to mirror that of the upper and middle class (Hinz, 2016). According to Hinz, this occurs because "working-class students must eventually decide whether they want to identify with the working class and the middle class, because the two are fundamentally opposed..." (p. 287).

This juxtaposition of class identity can often cause tension between individual identity and perceived social expectations (Means & Pyne, 2017). Students can also perceive the need for multiplicity (Pizzolato, Chaudhari, Murrell, Podobnik, & Schaeffer, 2008) in order to maintain their cultural background and succeed in the middle class. Unfortunately, many LIFG and working-class students felt their individual experiences and identities were not always recognized or accepted at their institution (Means & Pyne).

This can be especially problematic for white LIFG students. White LIFG are often lost in the fray because they can often look the same as their more affluent peers (Martin, 2015). This leads to a lack of institutional encouragement for this marginalized groups and these students access very few support offices or programs which sometimes impedes their academic success (Moschetti & Hudley, 2008). This lack of institutional support demonstrates the amount of

remaining inequity present in current policies at institutions of higher learning which only creates more barriers for these students to traverse (Taylor & Cantwell, 2018).

Homelessness. Many LIFG students experience what Low, Hallett, and Mo (2017) refer to as doubled-up homelessness at least once in their lifetime. Doubled-up homelessness refers to students involuntarily living in a residence with one or more families (Low et al.). These students are also referred to as high mobile youth and account for 75% of the homeless students attending public school (Low et al.). The students often go unnoticed or unsupported because they do not meet the traditional idea of homelessness (Low et al.). According to Low et al. the homeless students have poor academic goals, struggle with truancy, may demonstrate poor behavior, and have consistently lower GPAs than their non-homeless peers.

Support and motivation. Student motivation can be determined and impacted by familial support (Mitchall & Jaeger, 2018). Even though most LIFG students hail from families with little to no information about the college-going process, and how parental/guardian motivation and support play a key role (Mitchall & Jaeger).

Mitchall and Jaeger (2018) determined most LIFG students come from one of two different homelife structures: informational or permissive environment. An informational environment "provides a feedback structure that enable the child to have a sense of competency to master the environment" (Mitchall & Jaeger, p. 585). An informational environment provides rules and consequences and stability – the student learns and becomes proficient in his/her situation (Mitchall & Jaeger, p. 585). Contrasting the informational environment is what Mitchall and Jaeger call the permissive environment which "does not provide adequate rules or boundaries...critical for understanding...competency and autonomy"

(Mitchall & Jaeger, p 585). A permissive environment is often inconsistent, unstable, and provides the student with little, if any, hands-on guidance.

Perhaps the most important component of familial support is the gift of choice. Students whose parents supported educational pursuits and offered guidance, but ultimately left the choice of college and major to the student were most resilient and comfortable in their college choice process (Mitchall & Jaeger, 2018). According to Mitchall and Jaeger, parents who were active participants in the application and financial aid process, even with little knowledge demonstrated a positive impact on motivation. Additionally, high academic expectations, positive feedback, validation, and encouragement were all positive contributors to student motivation and self-determination (Mitchall & Jaeger).

Institutional Support

There are several opportunities for post-secondary institutions to provide support in order to increase the likelihood of LIFG students' success. These simple institutional shifts that have demonstrated increase in all student success, especially those in marginalized groups, include intrusive academic advising, financial aid advising (Wiggins, 2011), individualized degree plans (Miller, 2013), facilitating time to build strong instructor-student relationships (Schademan & Thompson, 2015), and explicitness in expectations (Collier & Morgan, 2007). All of these simple adjustments have shown to assist LIFG students in adapting to the college student role (Collier & Morgan) and learn to balance this new responsibility with others (Schademan & Thompson).

Cost. It comes as no surprise that cost is sometimes a determining factor in the decision to attend and remain in college. The availability and extent of financial aid packages, including scholarships, has

positively impacted academic outcome for LIFG students (Renbarger & Long, 2019). The financial stress often limits college choice for even the highest achievers among this low-income, first-generation population. These financial concerns cause most LIFG students to choose institutions closer to home (Hébert, 2018), regardless of reputation or degree offerings (Taylor & Cantwell, 2018).

Many students must work in order to cover basic expenses, sometimes working two or more jobs. These jobs, while necessary, may prevent full engagement on campus (Glass et al., 2017). This is especially true for non-traditional students who are often LIFG. Work, family, and other stressors often contribute to decisions to persist or withdraw (Hébert, 2018). Many of these students reported considering returning in order to complete the final six-twelve credit honors to obtain a degree if the institution would offer those final credits for free or even at a discounted rate (Bers & Schuetz, 2014).

Intrusive advising. Intrusive advising has indicated to have positive implications on LIFG student success. In order for this process to be effective an established line of communication should be in place to promote supportive relationships (Watt, Huerta, & Alkan, 2011) between students and faculty. To develop this relationship, intrusive advising can begin with casual conversation. McMurray and Sorrells (2009) offer to ask "questions related to students' hometown, parents' occupations, siblings, interests, and campus involvement..." (p. 211). This unpremeditated approach promotes interpersonal connection between faculty and student (Schademan & Thompson, 2016).

This personal approach oftentimes makes it easier to identify potential academic, financial, and social problems (Miller, 2013). Unfortunately, it sometimes becomes difficult in determining who should initiate these conversations (Collier & Morgan, 2008). Collier and Morgan points out the

misunderstanding of faculty office hours and how one professor explained them explicitly; “I sit in that office waiting for you to come and talk to me. If you choose not to, that’s okay but I am here for you.” (p. 434). Regrettably, many LIFG students struggling with asking for help as they do not want to be perceived as unprepared or unintelligent (Hao, 2011). Hao argues offering additional support, including appointments with LIFG students during office hours may improve academic success. This continued exposure (Miller) may help alleviate stress related to alienation (Schademan & Thompson, 2015) and isolation.

Extracurricular activities.

Extracurricular activities oftentimes become the conduit for LIFG students when considering to persist in academia from one year to the next (Glass et al., 2017). However, due in part to other responsibilities many LIFG students are not given equal opportunities to participate (Glass et al.). A truly student-centered institution puts great effort into understanding the students in which it serves (Miller, 2013). For organizations whose student body is comprised of many LIFG students, reevaluation of extra- and co-curricular activities may be beneficial (Wiggins, 2011). Perhaps most important, are the days and times in which these events occur (Glass et al.) as many LIFG students have other responsibilities – family and employment (Martin, 2015) that impede the ability to participate during certain hours. This lack of engagement on campus has shown to increase LIFG feelings of isolation (Hao, 2011) which can result in drop-out (Wiggins).

Importance of Faculty

According to 2015 enrollment data 24% of the undergraduate population was composed of LIFG students (Schademan & Thompson, 2015). With the increase of

enrollment for this population colleges and universities should examine policies and procedures that may be barriers for collegiate and career success (Conley & Hamlin, 2009). Institutional change comes with resistance and can get caught up in bureaucratic red tape. Increasing the likelihood of success for LIFG students frequently becomes the responsibility of faculty. Fortunately, data reflects positive impact from faculty when adjusting to simple classroom strategies and adjustment to their andragogical approach (Schademan & Thompson).

Andragogy. Data demonstrates three main andragogical approaches faculty can take to increase the success of LIFG students: Relational (Schademan & Thompson, 2015), Culturally Responsive (Glass et al., 2017), and Critical Compassionate (Hao, 2011; Wiggins, 2011) andragogy. Each of these approaches contain similarities which incorporates authentic relationship building, explicit communication, and offering additional assistance outside the classroom. All of these approaches can help create classrooms and institutions where all students, especially marginalized groups like LIFG, can feel safe and be successful.

Relational andragogy places emphasis on the role of a “positive and supportive teacher” (Schademan & Thompson, 2015, p. 211). This is essential to Relational andragogy as the relationship between teacher and student can be instrumental in decreasing feelings of isolation (Schademan & Thompson). According to Schademan & Thompson, faculty who develop authentic relationships with LIFG students can become powerful cultural agents of change. These agents of change can become instrumental in prompting classroom (Schademan & Thompson), cultural (Hao, 2011), and community engagement (Yeh, 2010). Classroom and instructional strategies of Relational andragogy include close monitoring and discussion of student

progress, understanding additional student responsibilities, and reaching out first when a student is seemingly struggling with workload (Shademan & Thompson).

Culturally Responsive andragogy places focus on “improving outcomes for all students” (Glass et al., 2017, p. 898). This improvement typically comes with exploration, analysis, and discussion of student perspectives (Glass et al.) on barriers impacting success. During this process students’ worldview may be challenged (Glass et al.) as their perceptions of actual barriers change. Perhaps the most important factor in Culturally Responsive andragogy is active engagement in cultural differences, especially in the learning process (Glass et al.). This acknowledgement of learning variations can create a classroom space where LIFG students feel comfortable, appreciated, and valued (Hand & Payne, 2008), ultimately decreasing their feelings of marginalization. Classroom strategies for Culturally Responsive andragogy includes enhancing a sense of community, honoring diversity and internationalism, as well as offering academic challenge with additional support (Glass et al.) as needed.

Critical Compassionate andragogy can generate unease for instructors and faculty as it promotes “educators to criticize institutional and classroom practices that ideologically place underserved students at disadvantaged positions” (Hao, 2011, p. 92). Ideally, this approach aims to investigate not just educational policy but social justice as well (Hao) and any race or class barriers (Wiggins, 2011) the student may face. At the core of Critical Compassionate andragogy is compassionate communication which aims to minimize violence and defensiveness while improving communication skills that allow us to specifically address issues of personal concern (Hao). In the classroom, Critically Compassionate practitioners closely observe their students – specifically learning styles

and peer interaction, discuss observations with the student, and asks for specific feedback or strategies the student feels would be beneficial to his/her success (Hao).

Service and justice learning.

Community service has been found to be a positive predictor in LIFG student collegiate GPA as well as post-secondary persistence (Yeh, 2010). Unfortunately, many marginalized students are not afforded such opportunities in middle or high school (Green, 2006) and often struggle to take advantage of such offerings on campus do in part to cost or job responsibilities (Hinz, 2016). Service-learning is an instructional strategy that allows LIFG students an opportunity to engage meaningful in their community and has “been positively linked to students’ personal development, racial and cultural understanding, civic engagement, [and] academic learning...” (Yeh, p. 51). Additionally, service-learning experiences support LIFG students in generating social and cultural capital via networking. LIFG students involved in Yeh’s study demonstrated service-learning experiences allowed them to build transferable skills and develop understanding of their community, increase personal resiliency, discover meaning in career choice, and develop a critical consciousness.

The positive influences of justice-learning experiences are similar. Justice-learning differs from service-learning as it aims to “confront and destabilize...students’ initial views of privilege, power, and difference.” (Conley & Hamlin, 2009, p.47). Using a justice-learning approach often allows for students to develop agency on campus and within their communities (Conley & Hamlin). An important factor of justice-learning is the connection of academic content with civic engagement and real-life policies and practices that impede marginalized groups (Conley & Hamlin). Ultimately, the goal of justice-learning is to

promote students to “explore and reflect upon their own social positioning” (Conley & Hamlin, p. 52) in order to address barriers they may encounter.

Conclusions

LIFG students make up a substantial part of the collective collegiate student body (Center for First Generation Student Success, 2016) and it is unlikely this trend will go away any time soon. In order to help these students, colleges and universities should begin investigating policies and procedures that may inhibit or negatively impact these student – including the application process (Hoxby & Turner, 2015), unclear degree plans (Bers & Schuetz, 2014), and lack of on-campus employment opportunities (Mamiseishvili, 2010).

Faculty, however, are perhaps the most critical (Glass et al., 2017) in ensuring the success of LIFG students as they can become important agents of change (Schademan &

Thompson, 2015). Through simple adjustments in classroom strategy and exploration of specific andragogical approaches (Conley & Hamlin, 2009; Yeh, 2010) low-income, first-generation students can persist, succeed, and thrive.

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RESEARCH

Knowledge is Power in Teaching Economics

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Abstract

This study presents findings from a statewide standardized economics assessment of K-12 teachers prior to the implementation of new social studies standards. The objective is to provide evidence-based recommendations for instructors and economic education providers that can increase teacher knowledge in preparation for teaching the economics content in the new standards. The new standards aim to combine content knowledge and discipline-specific skills to produce high school graduates who are civically engaged and culturally aware. The standards integrate history, civics, economics, and geography for each grade and include an inquiry arc that requires teachers to provide opportunities for students to practice social studies skills of questioning, investigating using discipline-specific content, using evidence, and communicating evidence-based conclusions. The intention is to integrate content and skills by teaching students how to investigate the subject matter and also help students discover the importance and relevance of social studies as they become engaged citizens. The newly adopted standards include more specificity and increased rigor in economics content which suggests a need for more college-level economics instruction for current and future teachers. Using descriptive analyses, our results show that instruction in economics for K-8 teachers and for teachers in rural areas, in particular, should focus on concepts beyond fundamentals such as opportunity cost and specialization and include practice with comprehension skills as defined in Bloom's taxonomy. Targeted opportunities for postgraduate education for teachers in rural areas and inclusive practices could also increase achievement in economics and better prepare teachers to teach the new standards.

Keywords: economic education; assessment; economics standards; rural education

The study of social studies has been part of the U.S. educational system at least since the 1916 Bureau of Education report on *The Social Studies in Secondary Education*. The report used an analogy of gardening to describe the importance of standards by which the teaching of social studies can be judged to be effective. As a gardener "...cultivates the plant day by day he appraises its growth by standards clearly recognized by all gardeners, and he varies his treatment according to the signs" (Dunn, 1916, p. 57). Over the past century, social studies standards have been constructed and revised a number of times amid tensions between those who support national standards and those who prefer standards that are developed at state or local levels. Combine those tensions with variations in teacher knowledge, and differences can impact student outcomes and expand

achievement gaps. This study uses descriptive analyses of teacher assessment in economics to identify opportunities for college instructors and economic educators to contribute to better K-12 student outcomes in a state where new social studies standards have been recently adopted. The objective is to provide recommendations for tailoring preparation to be most effective for teachers as they implement the new standards. Results from a statewide sample show that college-level teacher education should increase coverage of specific microeconomic and macroeconomic concepts for teachers in grades K-8 and provide targeted opportunities for postgraduate education and training for teachers in rural areas.

In the pursuit of academic standards that are "focused on the critical knowledge, skills and capacities needed for success in the global economy," the Kentucky Department

of Education implemented new social studies standards during the 2019-20 academic year (KGAD, 2017, p. 2; KDE, 2019). The new standards aim to combine content knowledge, discipline-specific skills, and an inquiry-based approach for teaching social studies so as to “...produce Kentucky graduates who are civically engaged, socially responsible and culturally aware” (KDE, 2019, p. 5). Like the link between the C3 Framework and the National Council for Social Studies (NCSS) standards described by Herczog (2013), the Kentucky standards prescribe discipline-specific content and provide an inquiry-based pedagogical approach. The standards integrate history, civics, economics, and geography for each grade and include an inquiry arc that is similar to the approach described in the C3 Framework as well (Swan et al., 2013). This pedagogy requires teachers to provide opportunities for students to practice social studies skills of questioning, investigating using discipline-specific content, using evidence, and communicating evidence-based conclusions. The intention is to integrate content and skills by teaching students how to investigate the subject matter and also help students discover the importance and relevance of social studies as they become engaged citizens.

The Kentucky Department of Education posted a draft of the new standards prior to final adoption and requested feedback. Comments that were primarily from teachers and school administrators suggest that the new standards in economics are more rigorous. For example, one respondent wrote, “The economic standards are very high level, it will take several years before students will reach the high school with proper backgrounds and foundations in economics to fully master the new standards” (ARCC, 2019, p. 42). One of the more dramatic changes is that, at the elementary and middle grades, there are specific standards for each

grade level, starting in Kindergarten. This is a change from “grade-banded” standards that were assessed only in grades 5, 8, and 11, and has, even early-on, led to an increase in the demand for professional development in economics in order to improve teachers’ comfort with and knowledge of the content. The new standards are more specific in terms of economics content for each grade level as well. With few exceptions, every grade has economics standards in each of five areas: microeconomics; macroeconomics; specialization, trade, and interdependence; incentives, choices, and decision making; and, Kentucky economics (KDE, 2019). These changes in the teaching of economics at the K-12 level highlight the need for more economics instruction for future teachers at the university level and practicing teachers through post-graduate professional development.

The adoption of new standards presented an opportunity to measure the current state of economic content knowledge among Kentucky teachers and to establish a baseline by which to evaluate the impact of the new standards. We assessed K-12 teacher knowledge during the period from early 2016 to summer of 2019, before the standards were adopted. The descriptive results allow us to analyze scores by content categories and cognitive levels to identify particular areas where more education and training may be needed. It also provides us with a point of reference by which we can measure impacts of future education and training of teachers. Results indicate that future teacher training should include more coverage of specific content beyond the level of fundamental economics and provide instruction that requires higher-level cognitive skills, as defined by Bloom (1956).

There is no mandate in Kentucky requiring students to take an economics course before graduating from high school, but economics is a required content strand as

part of social studies education in grades K-12. Research has shown that increased teacher knowledge in economics has led to increased student achievement in this content area (*e.g.*, Allgood and Walstad, 1999; Bosshardt and Watts, 1990; Butters et al., 2011; Lopus, 1990; Swinton et al., 2010; Weaver et al., 1987; and, Wetzel et al., 1991). In a comprehensive summary of “what works” in economic education, Watts concluded that “at both the elementary and secondary levels, students of teachers who know more economics, who spend more time teaching economics, and who use good instructional materials, learn more economics” (Watts, 2006, p. 1). Analyzing teacher content knowledge and training in economics can lead to recommendations that better prepare students for the future where they will engage as workers and voters in our society.

This study follows the approach used in Grimes, et al. (2010), to establish a baseline level of economics knowledge for teachers in Mississippi. In the Grimes study, teachers were tested using the third edition of the Test of Economic Literacy (TEL) by Walstad and Rebeck (2001), and then they attended training to learn about a recent revision of the state’s social studies curriculum requirements. Our study adds to the literature by using a revised version of the TEL and investigating test results by content category as well as cognitive level with a particular focus on teachers from rural versus urban areas. Results provide prescriptions for university-level and post-graduate teacher preparation in economics.

Study Design, Data, and Descriptive Statistics

The assessment instrument used to measure teacher content knowledge in economics for this study is Form A of the fourth edition of the TEL (Walstad et al.,

2013). This 45-question, multiple-choice test is aligned with the Voluntary National Content Standards in Economics (CEE, 2010) and is a nationally normed and standardized test that was constructed to measure achievement in economics for high school students. The national standards include three fundamental areas of knowledge in economics which are general economics, microeconomics with labor, and macroeconomics with government and international economics, and the TEL assesses all three of these areas. Since not all K-12 teachers who are teaching economics in Kentucky have had a semester of college economics, this high-school level test seemed appropriate to measure their general economics knowledge.

In our administration of the TEL, we added seven categorical demographic questions and five short-answer questions about teacher experience and training. We also offered teachers an opportunity to provide an email address, making the instrument 58 questions in total. We received approval to conduct the research project through the university’s Institutional Review Board, and the testing instrument was made available to Kentucky teachers through an online testing portal (PrePost-testing, n.d.). Teachers were provided with a URL that took them to the testing instrument where they completed it online. We provided the test online since it is not a requirement for teachers through their schools or the Kentucky Department of Education, and this appeared to be the most effective way to reach teachers across the Commonwealth. There was no real incentive for teachers to cheat while completing the online assessment because results are not shared with schools. Further, the only individually identifiable information collected was an optional email address that may be used to contact the same respondents for future testing.

We used all available connections to K-12 social studies teachers in the Commonwealth of Kentucky to invite them to participate in the study. This included email distribution lists from professional development organizations, list-servs that specifically targeted Kentucky social studies teachers, conferences and meetings of social studies teachers, and any other opportunities to connect with teachers and invite them to complete the assessment in order to reach as many as possible. While the process was intended to invite every social studies teacher to participate, it has possibly resulted in a biased sample since the modes of contact that were available to us most effectively reached teachers who have participated in training and are interested enough in economics to participate in a voluntary assessment. Since Kentucky does not require a separate course in economics for K-12 students and embeds the content in social studies courses, we would typically expect teacher scores on the TEL to be relatively low in our study. This was the case for Mississippi teachers in Grimes, et al. (2010), where the teacher average was about 62%. However, based on the processes available to enlist participants, we hypothesize that the average score for Kentucky teachers in our study will be higher than that of the teachers in the Mississippi study. Our sample, while geographically representative of Kentucky, is likely more knowledgeable about economics than a typical, randomly selected sample of social studies teachers.

Empirical Analyses

Teachers were asked to report their geographical region based on areas defined by the Kentucky Department of Education as service areas for educational cooperatives (KDE, 2020). As shown in Figure 1, every county in the state is in one of these service regions, and participants from each region

did complete the assessment for our study. Although the percentage of K-8 versus high school teachers varied among the cooperatives, overall, just over one-third of the respondents taught high school. Test score averages by educational cooperative area showed some variation, but ANOVA results indicate that there was no statistically significant difference in average test scores across the regions.

Demographics

Mean values for the variables included in our study are provided in Table 1. The sample is mostly white women, mostly over 35 years old, and nearly all have at least a master's degree. This level of education is not surprising since, until 2018, the Kentucky Professional Standards Board required practicing teachers to earn a master's degree (Cooper, 2018). In terms of grade level, our sample is distributed fairly evenly over elementary, middle, and high with a little over one-third of the teachers in our sample teaching at least some high school. About one-half of the participants teach in districts where more than 60% of students receive free or reduced-price lunches (F/R). This is consistent with the statewide average of 60% for students who receive F/R lunches (Pruitt, 2016). Participants have an average of 15 years of teaching experience with an average of 10 years of experience in teaching economics. They have attended an average of almost three economics workshops and earned an average of slightly more than two graduate credits in economics. These demographics are comparable to statewide teacher demographics in Kentucky where 96% are White, 78% are female, and the average years of teaching experience is 12 (KDE, 2016). Our sample does have a higher percentage of males than the statewide group of teachers, but this is not uncommon in social studies (Hansen et al., 2018).

The overall average test score is 79%, which is higher than the average earned by teachers in Mississippi who completed an earlier version of the TEL. However, given the methods available for enlisting participants, we acknowledge that this is an opportunistic sample with no statewide comparison group available. Thus, we are unable to evaluate whether the level of economics knowledge of our sample is representative of the level of economics knowledge of Kentucky teachers at large or of a randomly selected sample. Although the average test score for the group is high, there is still a representative cross-section of demographics in our sample so that the analyses of differences in test scores across these categories provide useful insights about the need for economics instruction of teachers as the new standards are implemented.

To identify patterns in teacher knowledge in order to improve training, we analyzed average test scores by grade level taught and by geographic region of the school. We provided two models where, for Model A, we divided the data into grades K-8 and high school, and, for Model B, we divided the data into rural versus urban geographic region. For Model A, we split the sample into high school teachers and K-8 teachers because the amount of time spent on economics and the depth of coverage of the content is different between these two groups.¹ Specifically, a greater depth of coverage is expected at the high school level than at the lower grade levels. In comparing the new Kentucky Social Studies Standards with the Voluntary National Standards in Economics, the concepts covered in all 20 of the national standards are also covered in the new Kentucky high school standards. However, the Kentucky middle school standards

include concepts from only 16 of the 19 national middle school benchmarks while the Kentucky elementary standards include concepts from only 15 of the 16 national elementary benchmarks (CEE, 2010).

Analyzing the results from Model A in Table 1, differences between the K-8 and high school teachers that are statistically significant include the higher average test score for high school teachers, the higher percentage of female teachers in the K-8 group, and the higher average number of graduate credits in economics earned by the high school teachers. Using a t-test, the difference in average test scores between the K-8 and high school teachers is statistically significant with a t-statistic of 6.00 and a p-value of 0.000, and the higher average number of graduate credits in economics for high school teachers is statistically significant with $t = 2.00$ and $p\text{-value} = 0.047$. Using an ANOVA test to check for differences in the categorical variables, the higher percentage of females in the K-8 group is statistically significant with an F-statistic of 18.39 with 1 degree of freedom and a p-value of 0.000. These results are consistent with similar grade-level gaps found by Grimes et al. (2010), and France et al. (1989), and reinforce the strategy of analyzing the two groups separately.

Both grade-level groups scored higher than the national mean score on the same version of the test for high school students in an economics class, which was about 60% (Walstad et al., 2013). A positive gap between student scores and teacher scores is expected, but the difference is particularly noticeable for the K-8 teachers where our average of 75% is still considerably higher than the national high school economics student average. In Grimes et al. (2010), elementary teachers scored below the

¹ Teachers who teach multiple grades that include high school grades are counted as high school teachers in our sample.

national student average on the third edition of the TEL (58% and 63%, respectively), while high school teachers scored higher at 72%. Kentucky teachers in our sample are already teaching economics and 74% have attended workshops or earned graduate credit in economics, or both. In the Mississippi sample, researchers reported that the low scores were not surprising at that time because economics was not a prominent part of Mississippi teacher licensing requirements, and there had not been strong economic education advocacy in the state for an extended period of time (Grimes et al., 2010).

Model B in Table 1 illustrates differences in teacher scores by geographic location of the school. We refined the regional educational cooperative data by creating a variable denoting whether the specific county in which the teacher teaches is in an urban area or a rural area. About 5% of the sample did not report a county name, so those observations are omitted from these analyses. We classify an urban county as one that contains a metropolitan statistical area, which, as defined by the Office of Management and Budget, contains at least one urbanized area of at least 50,000 people (OMB, 2010). Although federal agencies have no standard definition for a rural area, we consider any county that does not meet the definition of urban to be rural for the purposes of this study. This designation includes micropolitan statistical areas that are defined to have at least one urban cluster of at least 10,000 but fewer than 50,000 residents (OMB, 2010) and any smaller areas. Information compiled by Harrah (n.d.) from the 2010 U.S. Census shows that Kentucky has 35 counties that are urban which constitutes 58% of the population of the Commonwealth. There are 26 counties that are micropolitan with 19% of the population, and the remaining 59 Kentucky counties constitute 23% of the population.

For our teacher sample, we have combined the non-urban counties into a group we are classifying as rural with about 70% of the counties in this group being smaller than a micropolitan area.

In Table 1, rural teachers scored lower than urban teachers on the TEL, and this difference is statistically significant. Teachers in rural areas also have less training in economics, having attended fewer workshops and earned fewer graduate credits in the subject, on average. These differences – both in number of workshops attended and number of graduate credits earned – are statistically significant and cannot be attributed solely to chance. Using t-tests, the difference in test scores between rural and urban teachers is statistically significant with a t-statistic of 1.66 and p-value of 0.100. The differences in teacher training are also statistically significant with a t-statistic of 1.93 and a p-value of 0.055 for the difference in graduate credits earned and a t-statistic of 1.68 with a p-value of 0.094 for the difference in workshops attended.

Cognitive Levels and Content Areas

We divided the assessment questions into cognitive levels based on information provided in the TEL Examiner's Manual to identify differences in performance if questions were testing knowledge (Cognitive Level 1), comprehension (Cognitive Level 2), or application (Cognitive Level 3) of the content. This three-level adaptation of Bloom's taxonomy was used by Walstad et al. (2013). As they explained, knowledge level is the ability to remember or recall information while comprehension level is the ability to show understanding by giving examples or restating in one's own words. Application level involves using information and applying learning to new situations and circumstances and could also involve analysis and evaluation. On Form A of the TEL, there are 6 knowledge questions, 14

comprehension questions, and 25 application questions.

Figure 2 shows test percentages for each of the cognitive levels for Model A and Model B. As expected, the average is higher for the lower cognitive levels. In Model A, there is a larger drop in absolute scores from the Knowledge level to the Comprehension level for K-8 teachers than for the high school teachers, and this drop is larger than the drop from Comprehension to Application. In comparing mean scores on each cognitive level between the K-8 and high school teachers, two-tailed t-test results show that the differences are statistically significantly different between the two teacher groups. For cognitive level 1, $t = 3.65$ with a p-value of 0.000. For cognitive level 2, $t = 5.27$ with a p-value of 0.000, and for cognitive level 3, $t = 5.61$ with a p-value of 0.000.

In Model B, Figure 2 shows that the average scores for each cognitive level are lower for rural teachers than for urban teachers. Using a two-tailed t-test to compare mean values between the two groups, we find that the difference is statistically significant for Cognitive Level 2 – Comprehension where $t = 1.67$ with a p-value of 0.097. College instructors and providers of economic education who conduct training as the new standards are implemented should recognize that, for K-8 teachers in particular, the drop from Knowledge level to the other levels of understanding is relatively steep, and the difference in knowledge performance for rural teachers is weaker in terms of comprehension questions. Teacher preparation should include content that is specific for the standards in each grade and include opportunities for teachers to practice providing examples of concepts and restating definitions and problems in their words.

Figure 3 shows test scores by specific type of content using the three fundamental areas covered in the national standards and on the TEL – basic economics, microeconomics

and labor, and macroeconomics, government, and international economics. The 45 questions of the TEL are distributed across the 20 standards in the National Voluntary Standards, and each standard has at least one test item associated with it. In this respect, the test is a general measure of the understanding of economics at the high school level although it is not designed to be a test of each standard. For this reason, we have grouped the questions into the three broader areas. As we would expect, the highest average is on the questions about basic economics content, and the scores decrease slightly for the other areas. The drop in average score from basic economics to either macroeconomics or microeconomics is larger in absolute terms for K-8 teachers than for high school teachers. Using two-tailed t-tests, results show that there is a statistically significant difference in average score for all three content areas between the two teacher groups. For basic economics, $t = 3.69$ with a p-value of 0.000. For microeconomics, $t = 5.62$ with a p-value of 0.000. For macroeconomics and international economics, $t = 6.39$ with a p-value of 0.000. This is not surprising since the high school teachers have, on average, studied and taught more economics and must cover more economics content in the classroom than the K-8 teachers. The concern is that, with the new standards, every grade has standards in each of five areas: microeconomics; macroeconomics; specialization, trade, and interdependence; incentives, choices, and decision making; and, Kentucky economics (KDE, 2019). The new standards have increased rigor and specificity, particularly for grades K-8. It is important for instructors preparing social studies teachers to recognize this and require economics instruction that educates them effectively. An appropriate depth of coverage is needed at the undergraduate level and should be included in postgraduate professional development

activities for teachers to help better prepare those who are currently teaching in the classroom.

Figure 3 shows that in Model B, the average scores for each content area are lower for rural teachers than for urban teachers. Using a two-tailed t-test to compare mean values between the two groups, we find that the difference is statistically significant for the macroeconomics content area where $t = 2.44$ with a p-value of 0.016. Lower average scores by rural teachers in comprehension questions and macroeconomics questions cannot be attributed solely to chance. Recognizing this difference between economics knowledge of teachers in urban and rural areas, educators could provide increased opportunities for postgraduate training in non-urban areas in order to impact student achievement. As a robustness check of these results, we investigated whether the differences in average scores and teacher training for our two models are driven by differences in the mix of teachers such that the higher percentage of high school teachers in the urban group might explain the higher average scores and higher average levels of training. The data show that, regardless of grade level, rural teachers in our sample have less training, on average, than urban teachers.

Conclusion

Results from administering the latest edition of the nationally normed, high school-level TEL in Kentucky show that, on average, K-12 teachers in our sample have a proficient level of understanding of economics. Although our sample may be composed of teachers of higher ability in this content area than would be the case for a random sample, the demographics are similar to those of teachers statewide, and we have established a useful baseline as new social studies standards that include more economics

content are implemented. The findings that scores, particularly for K-8 teachers, drop after the lowest cognitive level and the basic economics content level provide evidence that more economics instruction is needed. With the new standards, teachers have more specific content to cover at each grade level, and they are also tasked with teaching using an inquiry arc approach. Kentucky is requiring teachers to teach social studies with increased rigor and new methodology. The new approach should lead to more teachers seeking instruction in economics, more economics instruction occurring in K-12 classrooms, and increased teacher knowledge and student achievement.

This study highlights the changes in K-12 social studies standards and the subsequent need for more instruction at the university level and beyond. Teachers in K-8 need to be prepared to teach specific concepts required at each grade in the new standards, and teachers in rural areas need more access to postgraduate education and training. While our study does not indicate whether teachers with less professional development training end up in rural areas or there are fewer opportunities available for training in rural areas, it is important to provide access to education programs. With a higher percentage of females in K-8 teaching, instructors should also use best practices to teach economics using lessons and references that are effective for this group that has been historically excluded from the economics discipline (Bayer and Rouse, 2016). Deliberate attention to practices that expand comprehension for teachers and students from both urban and rural areas can also promote increased achievement.

These objectives may be easier to accomplish in today's world because the COVID-19 global pandemic has required schools to make virtual learning opportunities available. Teachers and students in rural areas may benefit from a

shift of resources toward virtual learning infrastructure and methods. States like Kentucky can build capacity to meet the needs of the diverse population in both urban and rural areas of the state and close achievement gaps between teachers and also between students. The American Economic Association provides resources for college

instructors in the “Working with Students” section of the AEA’s Best Practices for Economists that may be useful in preparing college students to teach newly adopted standards in the evolving world of K-12 education (AEA, 2020).

Supplementary Material

Figure 1

Educational Cooperative Regions in Kentucky

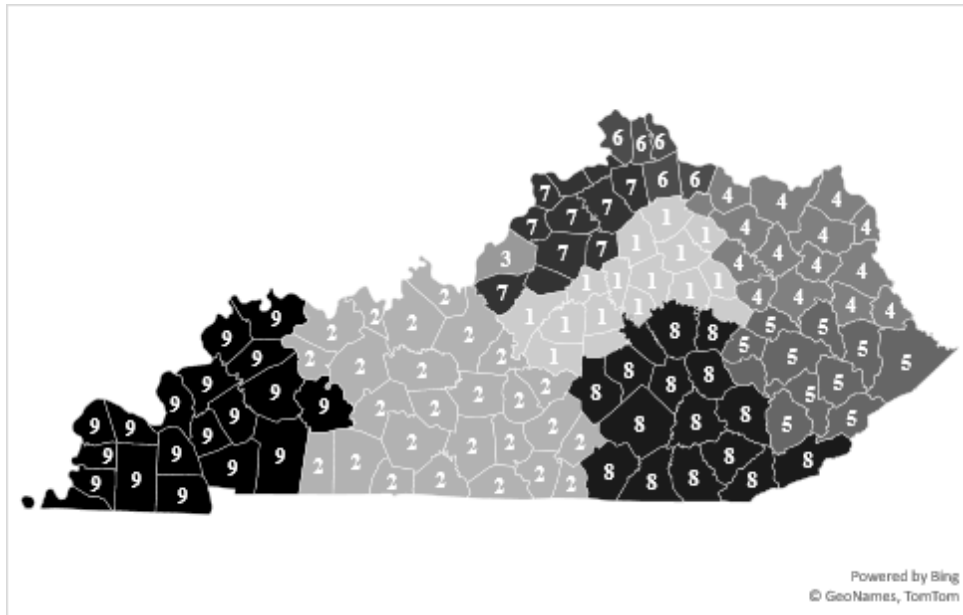


Table 1*Mean Values and Variable Definitions with Standard Deviations in Parentheses*

Variable	Definition	ALL ^a n=188	Model A n=188		Model B n=178	
			K-8 n=118	High n=70	Rural n=78	Urban n=100
Score	Average Score on Test of Economic Literacy	79.24 (14.08)	74.89 (14.49)	86.59 (9.70)	77.09 (13.72)	80.62 (14.42)
Female	Dummy variable = 1 if teacher is female and 0 otherwise	0.69 (0.46)	0.83 (0.38)	0.46 (0.50)	0.71 (0.46)	0.66 (0.48)
White	Dummy variable = 1 if teacher's race is White or Caucasian and 0 otherwise	0.97 (0.16)	0.97 (0.16)	0.97 (0.17)	1.00 (0.00)	0.95 (0.22)
Young	Dummy variable = 1 if teacher's age is under 35 and 0 otherwise	0.22 (0.42)	0.25 (0.44)	0.17 (0.38)	0.26 (0.44)	0.21 (0.41)
High School	Dummy variable = 1 if teacher teaches high school grades and 0 otherwise	0.37 (0.48)	0.00 (0.00)	1.00 (0.00)	0.32 (0.47)	0.41 (0.49)
Free/Reduced Lunch	Dummy variable = 1 if teacher teaches in a school where more than 60% of students receive free or reduced-price lunch	0.51 (0.50)	0.53 (0.50)	0.47 (0.50)	0.50 (0.50)	0.49 (0.50)
Masters	Dummy variable = 1 if teacher's highest degree earned is at least a Master's	0.95 (0.21)	0.94 (0.24)	0.97 (0.17)	0.94 (0.25)	0.96 (0.20)
Teaching Experience	Years of Experience	15.23 (8.75)	15.30 (9.18)	15.11 (8.02)	14.49 (8.19)	15.42 (8.91)
Teaching Economics	Years of Experience teaching Economics	10.13 7.20	10.36 (7.02)	9.76 (7.53)	9.48 (7.20)	10.39 (6.67)
Workshops	Number of Economics Workshops Attended	2.91 (5.64)	2.53 (4.12)	3.54 (7.50)	2.13 (2.58)	3.60 (7.33)
Grad Credit	Graduate Credits Earned in Economics Content	2.19 (4.49)	1.68 (3.13)	3.03 (6.06)	1.43 (3.02)	2.72 (5.22)

^a Processes of data cleaning yielded a final sample of usable responses of N=188 with variation in responses to individual survey items where respondents wrote non-numerical answers to short answer questions (e.g., "too many to count"). Also, the Rural/Urban model has 10 fewer observations because the information needed to identify the counties in which those teachers taught was missing.

Figure 2

Average Test Score by Cognitive Level for Teacher Groups

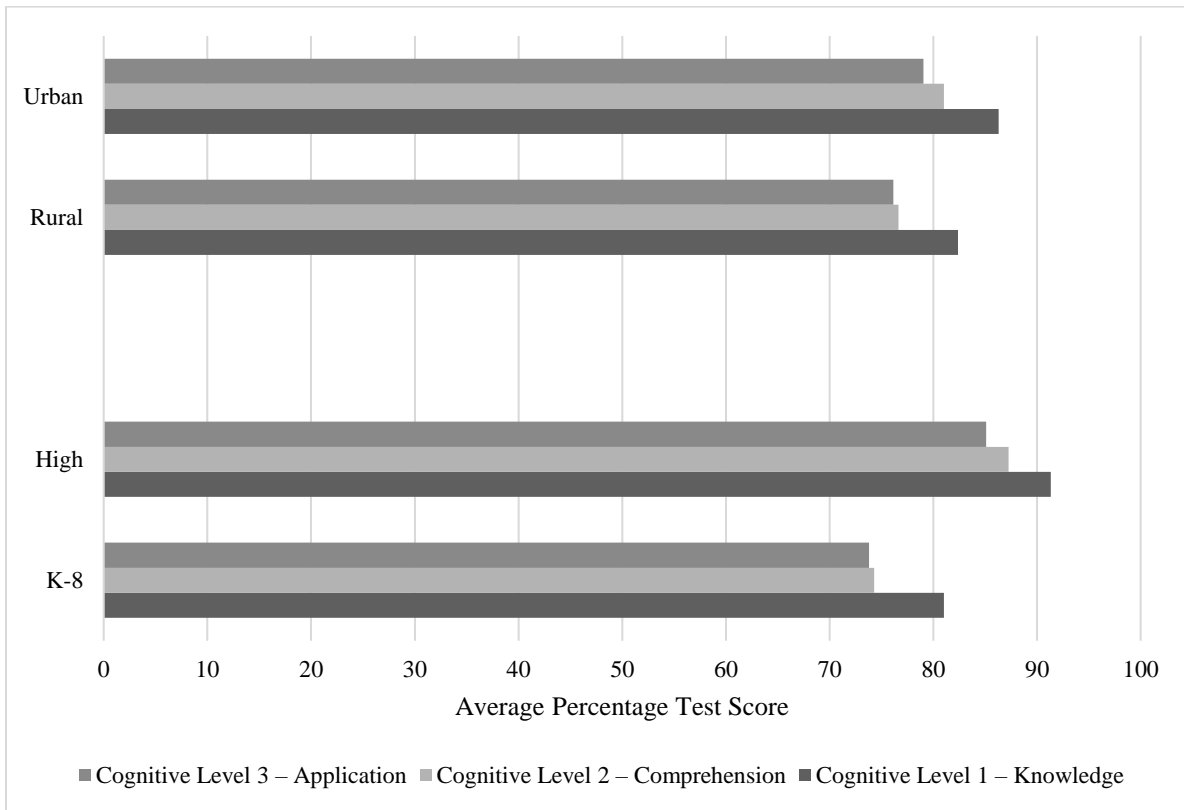
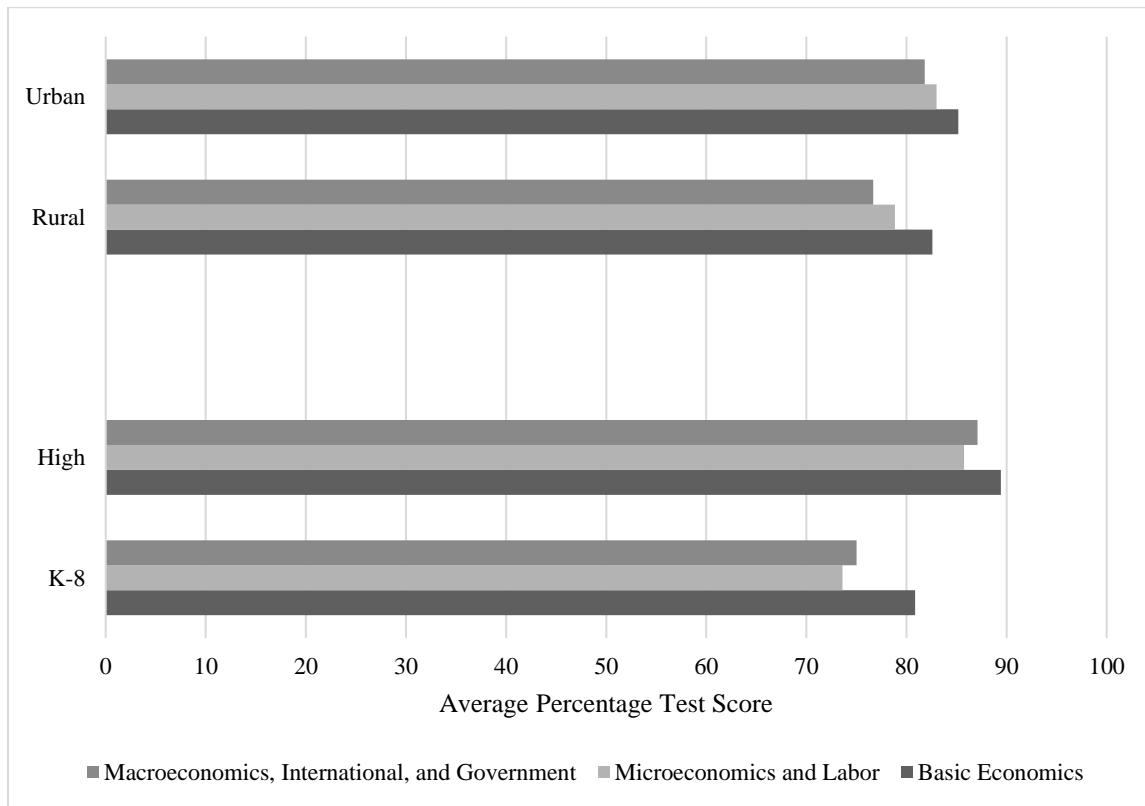


Figure 3

Average Test Score by Content Area for Teacher Groups



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RESEARCH

Using a Short-Term Study Abroad Program to Teach Trauma-Focused Care: Design, Implementation, and Findings

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Abstract

The literature identifies the need for trauma training and education in Master of Social Work (MSW) programs as social workers encounter a number of clients with trauma histories. Scant research exists that details the utilization of a short-term study abroad programs (STSA) to teach trauma training and education to MSW students. As such, a mid-eastern U.S. social work program collaborated with a social work program in Scotland to construct a STSA program for MSW students learning trauma-focused care (TFC). To enhance learning, this trip also included master's level counseling students from the same U.S. university. Pre and post- test survey data were collected from students regarding trauma knowledge and counseling skills as well as self-efficacy. Mann Whitney-U tests with Bonferroni's adjusted significance level were utilized. Results indicated a significant difference ($z=-2.896$, $p=.004$) regarding trauma knowledge. Although results of the Mann Whitney- U test indicated a non-significant difference in pre-post test data regarding the trauma counseling skills subscale ($z= -2.779$, $p= .005$), two measures were significant when examined independently. The current findings suggest that STSA programs may be an effective tool for student learning specifically related to TFC. Limitations, strengths, and implications regarding the content covered and the process of designing and implementing the STSA are explored.

Keywords: trauma-focused care, study-abroad, case-based learning

Introduction

A number of studies indicate that competency in trauma-focused care is critical for master's level social work students as recommended by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE, 2015). Warrener, Postmus, and McMahan (2013) report increases to students' professional self-efficacy when students are exposed to courses, training, professional experiences, and external, specialized workshops concentrating on trauma-focused care. Yet, minimal Master of Social Work (MSW) programs integrate this content into their curricula (Abrams & Shapiro, 2014; Bussey, 2008; Carello & Butler, 2014; Carello & Butler, 2015; Courtois & Gold, 2009; Marlowe & Adamson, 2011; Shannon, Simmelink-McCleary, Im, Becher, & Crook-Lyon, 2014; Strand, Abramovitz, Layne,

Robinson, & Way, 2014; Vasquez & Boel-Studt, 2017). Scholarship also identifies the benefits and effectiveness of short-term study abroad (STSA) programs in social work education (Cotten & Thompson, 2017; Lindsey, 2005, Roholt & Fisher, 2013), however, to the authors' knowledge, only one article exists which examines trauma training/education within a Master of Social Work (MSW), STSA program (Berger & Paul, 2017). To this end, a course on trauma-focused care (TFC), which included a STSA program were designed to assess graduate students' professional self-efficacy and competency in TFC.

Background

Social workers who receive training in TFC are equipped to work within macro systems, while also directly providing micro

services to individuals, families, and groups with trauma histories (Carello & Butler, 2015). Training in TFC also assists social workers in their understanding of clinical practice and delivery of services based in Harris and Fallot's (2001) five principles of trauma-focused care. These include safety, establishing trust, client voice and choice, collaboration, and empowerment (Harris & Fallot, 2001). Yet, Courtois' (2002) formative article recognized trauma training and education in "graduate curricula" as a substantive gap in social work education (p.34), as multiple studies demonstrate that students' sense of professional efficacy in working with trauma survivors increases significantly when they had at least one specific skill-based trauma course in their training program (Bussey, 2008; Strand et al., 2014). While Bussey (2008) identified a minimal number of Master of Social Work (MSW) programs that teach trauma trainings/educations/certificates, there continues to be substantial need for additional education and training in this area of study as this is not a required curriculum component currently (Abrams & Shapiro, 2014).

Curricular resources have been created by specialized bodies, such as CSWE's 10 areas of competency (CSWE, 2012; Vasquez & Boel-Studt, 2017), and their *Advanced Social Work Practice in Trauma (ASWPT)* practice guide, in addition to the *Specialized Practice Curricular Guide for Trauma-Informed Social Work Practice*. Concurrently, "as scientific advancements have outpaced academic curriculum development" in terms of graduate social work education in evidence-informed practice (EIP; Mennen et al., 2018, p. S56), current trauma scholarship also highlights the need to include neuroscience and resiliency literature within EIP for MSW trauma training/education (Egan, Neely-Barnes, & Combs-Orme, 2011; Gitterman & Knight, 2016; Layne et al.,

2014; Marlowe & Adamson, 2011). However, of the existing social work literature regarding trauma training/education, the two predominant themes of trauma training/education primarily focus on teaching strategies to avoid triggering students and/or experiences of vicarious trauma (Carello & Butler, 2014; Carello & Butler, 2015; Marlowe & Adamson, 2011; Vasquez & Boel-Studt, 2017), and self-care strategies for students (Miller, 2001; Shannon et al., 2014). This presents an additional gap in current social work TFC literature.

Utilization of STSA Program for Trauma Education

Given the accelerated format of most advanced standing MSW programs, STSA programs create manageable opportunities for exposure to international awareness and competencies as they are typically embedded within current social work classes (Nuttman-Shwartz & Berger, 2012). STSA programs effectively enhance student learning, particularly when content is best learned at an advanced level where experiential and reflective learning activities are included (Cotten & Thompson, 2017; Lindsey, 2005; Slotkin, Durie, & Eisenberg, 2012). Study abroad experiences are also linked with early and long-term career benefits. Potts (2015) found that study abroad participants reported an increase in "motivation and passion for their chose career direction" (p. 450). Furthermore, "63% of respondents believed that the international study experience had a positive or very positive impact on their long-term career prospects" (p. 450). In a research study that compared students enrolled in a study-abroad course and an on-campus course, Greenfield and colleagues (2012) found that the cohort of social work study-abroad students reported greater learning outcomes compared to their on-campus

counterparts. Although a number of studies indicate the importance and versatility of social work STSA programs, minimal scholarship exists about “study abroad programs dedicated to specific topics,” particularly the topic of trauma-focused care or the impact of such training on professional self-efficacy (Berger & Paul, 2017, p.298).

Trauma-Focused STSA Design and Implementation

The current STSA program included students from the U.S. and Scotland involved in learning TFC. The trip for U.S. students was twelve-days in total. The first five days were spent with students in Scotland, and the last five days were spent at another university in Ireland. Two social work faculty and one school counseling faculty co-lead the trip with ten social work and counseling graduate students. The program was designed to teach students trauma-focused care using case-based learning (CBL), while integrating neuroscience and resiliency literature within the curriculum, as this is a previously highlighted gap in the literature (Egan et al., 2011; Gitterman & Knight, 2016; Marlowe & Adamson, 2011).

CBL provides an opportunity to utilize team-based learning methods, large and small group discussions, and reflection exercises to solidify learning (Layne et al., 2011). This teaching method has previously been utilized as an instructional tool specifically for trauma training/education/competencies in MSW programs (Abrams & Shapiro, 2014; Gitterman & Knight, 2016). Abrams and Shapiro (2014) indicate that using CBL to teach trauma theory is necessary for students to prepare for the “complexities and challenges of treating survivors of trauma” (p. 408). Strand and colleagues (2014) point out the benefit of CBL to assist students, learning about trauma, in their ability to

“generate clinical hypotheses, develop relevant clinical questions, search for evidence to validate or invalidate hypotheses, and appraise clinical facts and inferences” (p. 125). Both U.S. and Scottish students in the STSA program were given a case study to examine *before* the trip. They were then asked to respond to the following questions: 1) What do you think are the three main issues/presenting problems/areas of concern with this family and why, 2) If this family presented to you for services, how would you begin provision of care (i.e. what would you do first, and how would you do it), and 3) Do you see any potential areas of trauma in this family? If so, identify the appropriate family member and what your hypothesis is regarding potential trauma.

In Scotland, U.S. and Scottish social work faculty facilitated six learning exercises for students. The first exercise for students included agency/practicum presentations facilitated by social workers and students working in the field. Students then discussed similarities and differences regarding systems of care within both countries. The second learning exercise consisted of students’ participation in small groups to discuss preliminary responses to the three questions listed above. Following this experience, students engaged in the third learning experience, a lecture regarding Trauma-Focused Care, facilitated by the first author.

The fourth learning exercise involved placing both U.S. and Scottish students into mixed small groups together. Each group was assigned one family member from the case study and asked to apply new information gleaned from the lecture to potentially reformulate original hypotheses from the second learning exercise. The fifth learning exercise included the students’ facilitation of presentations to the larger group regarding their assigned family member. The presentations included any revisions to

students' view of the presenting problems from a TFC perspective, and how this potentially changed the client's plan of care. The sixth learning experience for the students included a reflection exercise in which students were asked to individually identify skills they learned and would implement in their own practice as social workers/counselors. They then shared their responses within the large group setting.

Preliminary Outcomes

Vasquez and Boel-Studt (2017) identified a gap in measurement of effective trauma training/education programs. The authors of this research sought to measure the potential effectiveness of the STSA program designed to teach trauma-focused care. Upon receiving institutional IRB approval, faculty invited students to participate in a voluntary research study to answer the following research aims: 1) Do students' competencies related to trauma, as outlined by the Substance Use and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA, 2014), increase as a result of participation in this STSA program? and 2) Does participation in the STSA program positively impact students' professional self-efficacy related to TFC? Invited participants were given a recruitment statement in which details of the data collection were outlined, as well as a copy of the informed consent. Of those invited (n=34), 32 pre-test and 25 post-test surveys were completed (seven students were absent on the day of post-test survey collection). Surveys were anonymous, and collected by a non-Primary Investigator and placed in a sealed manila envelope to ensure additional anonymity. Respondents were debriefed at the end of the survey collection.

Variables

Based on SAMHSA's (2014) Trauma-Informed Counselor Competencies Checklist (TICCC), from the Trauma-Informed Care in

Behavioral Health Services, students responded to 19 items of trauma competency ($\alpha = .884$; See Table 1). This measure included two subscales: trauma awareness ($\alpha = .739$; TA1-8) and trauma counseling skills ($\alpha = .960$; TCS1-11). Respondents answered each question based on a Likert scale of 1-5, with 1 indicating strongly disagree, 2 indicating disagree, 3 indicating neutral, 4 indicating agree, and 5 indicating strongly agree. Students also responded to the Social Work Self-Efficacy Scale (SWSE) by Holden et al., (2002) which "assesses social workers confidence regarding a broad range of social work tasks" (p. 6), (see Table 2). Respondents answered each question on an eleven-point scale of 0 to 100, with 0 indicating cannot do at all, 50 indicating moderately certain can do, and 100 indicating certainly can do.

Survey Results

Pre and post-test quantitative data were analyzed using IBM® SPSS® statistical software. Each competency item met assumptions of normality, however due to the small sample size, a nonparametric Mann-Whitney U analysis, with adjusted Bonferroni's significance level was utilized to control the false positive rate at five percent. The first analysis examined change in pre and post-test data using a sum score of the two TICCC subscales. The second set of analyses examined each pre and post-test competency item independently. For the trauma awareness scale, the adjusted Bonferroni significance level was .005. For the trauma counseling skills subscale, the adjusted Bonferroni significance level was .004.

Descriptive data of the Trauma-Informed Counselor Competencies Checklist indicated that the means of all 19 measures (TA1-8, TCS1-11) increased in the post-test (see Table 1). Upon examination of the first subscale, trauma awareness, results of the

Mann Whitney-U test using Bonferroni's adjusted significance level indicated a significant difference ($z=-2.896$, $p=.004$). With regard to the individual items in the trauma awareness subscale, results of individual Mann Whitney-U tests indicated a significant difference (using Bonferroni's adjusted significance level) for item TA1) "I understand the basic principles of trauma-informed care framework for practice" ($z=-3.927$, $p=.000$). With regard to trauma counseling skills, results of the Mann Whitney-U test indicated a non-significant difference in pre and post-test data ($z=-2.779$, $p=.005$). However, when examining the items independently, two were significant using Bonferroni's adjusted significance level. The two significant items included TC9) "I demonstrate knowledge and skill in general trauma-informed counseling strategies, including but not limited to, grounding techniques that manage dissociative experiences, cognitive-behavioral tools that focus on both anxiety reduction and distress tolerance, and stress management and relaxation tools that reduce hyper-arousal" ($z=-3.149$, $p=.002$) and TCS10) "I am able to identify signs of Secondary Trauma Stress (STS) reactions and take steps to engage in appropriate self-care activities that lessen the impact of these reactions on clinical work with clients" ($z=-3.203$, $p=.001$).

Participants responded to 52 items based on the SWSE survey (Holden et al., 2002). In regards to the Self-Efficacy Survey, descriptive data demonstrated mean score increases for 51 of 52 items from the pre- to post-test (see Table 2). While the results of a Mann-Whitney U analysis (using a Bonferroni's adjusted significance level) did not reveal any statistically significant results.

Implications

Guided by previous literature which highlights a gap in trauma training/education, this study was the second to utilize a STSA program to facilitate trauma education for students in a MSW program as well as a Master's of Counseling program. Prior research indicated that external, focused education through specialized courses/workshops was a major indicator of students' professional efficacy (Warrener, et al., 2013). Specifically, descriptive analyses indicated increases in professional self-efficacy surrounding participants' abilities to help clients/students navigating problem situations/behaviors (SE21-25, SE27-32) and relationship building (SE44, SE46, SE47). Our preliminary findings suggest increases in professional self-efficacy in the area of treatment and conceptualization for clients/students: collaborating with clients/students in setting intervention goals (SE50), defining the client/student's treatment objectives in specific terms (SE51), and asking clients/students to evaluate the effects of treatment on themselves (SE52).

While not all of the descriptive data above were statistically significant, qualitative data were captured to further contextualize the impact of the STSA program on students' trauma awareness, counseling skills, and self-efficacy. Qualitative responses were analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006, 2013), an iterative process, that allows respondents to capture their experience in their own words without prescribed limits and is captured immediately following their experience of the workshop. There were three primary themes: the impact of working together, the key "take home message" and the implications for practice. Three central themes emerged in respect of the key take home message, namely increased knowledge and understanding of the impact of trauma, concerns about the process of diagnosis and an optimism about the potential for change.

As one student stated, “This [learning experience] will change my approach to work by considering the impact of cumulative trauma and not by solely looking for one big traumatic event.”

This study indicated that students’ understanding of trauma, specific to effects on human development and psychological outcomes as well as increased from participating in the STSA program (TA3). Students also participated in various learning activities that focused on identifying resilience factors as well as strategies to improve resiliency in individuals who have experienced trauma (Gitterman & Knight, 2016; Marlowe & Adamson, 2011). Students indicated that their “understanding of protective factors and resilience as contributing factors to prevent and/or ameliorate the negative outcomes of trauma” as well as their “ability to implement a mutually empowering relationship within a therapeutic alliance” increased as a result of participation in the program. All of these examples indicate an increased knowledge in trauma awareness. Students’ also indicated an increase in understanding grounding techniques, specifically their ability to “implement interventions to assist clients’ with regard to their stress reactions, coping skills, and grounding/relaxation techniques (TA8, TCS9). Student surveys additionally suggested that students’ ability to identify signs and symptoms of secondary traumatic stress and implement strategies for self-care increased from participation in the study (TCS 10).

Two implications resulted from the design and implementation process of the STSA program. This included the usefulness of CBL as a teaching pedagogy, and the importance of implementing self-care strategies to mitigate trauma triggers for students in the program. With regard to content design, CBL guided the lecture, small and large group discussions, application

exercises, and reflection opportunities. Students continually used the provided case-study to work through the various learning exercises by understanding, applying, and reformulating information surrounding clients in the case related to real-world future practice. Mean averages indicated that all trauma competency measures improved. This, in addition to the significant increase in general trauma awareness, suggests CBL was an effective teaching strategy for students learning TFC in this STSA program. This is consistent with previous trauma literature which utilized CBL to assist student learning (Abrams & Shapiro, 2011; Layne et al., 2011).

While there are a number of positive implications from this study, limitations exist. Due to a small sample size, and lack of control variables, findings from this study may not be generalized to other STSA programs. Additionally, the potential for reporter bias existed, therefore faculty took additional measures to ensure anonymity of students’ surveys. Due to the short time frame between pre and post-test survey collection, it is not possible to infer causal relationships. However, qualitative data collected during the STSA program indicated students’ recognition of the STSA program as the major contributor to their increased trauma knowledge.

Future research regarding trauma training/education would benefit from exploring additional STSA experiences for Master’s level social work and counseling students. Additionally, trauma training/education programs would assist students’ learning and conceptualization of trauma by infusing neuroscience and resilience content/material in both on and off-campus learning. Lastly, future training and education programs in which trauma-focused care is a learning objective need to also include attention to design/implementation methods that create a felt sense of safety for

students who may have their own trauma histories and/or experience potential re-

traumatization (Carello & Butler, 2014; 2015; Miller, 2001; Shannon et al., 2014).

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COMMENTARY

Not Without a Fight

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Abstract

As lawyer and former Kentucky state legislator Harry M. Caudill reported, in his definitive *Night Comes to the Cumberlands*, the public schools in eastern Kentucky lagged far behind. A 1960 University of Kentucky study found that high school graduates in Harlan County were performing three years and five months behind high school graduates nationally and were in no position to compete for good jobs. They were an impoverished citizenry surrounded by rich resources. The legislature simply provided no source of revenue for poor school districts and the disparity between rich and poor would continue to grow - to the point that something had to be done. But it would take another thirty years for a substantial remedy to occur. That remedy did not come from any legislative awakening that recognized and cured longstanding fiscal deficiencies of the past. Rather, it was the result of a courageous nine-year political fight waged by local school superintendents, supported by a contemporaneous grass-roots policy effort, executed by creative legal statesmanship, and resolved by an activist Supreme Court decision. The historical record confirms that the effort to bring fiscal adequacy and equity to eastern Kentucky school students was not achieved without a fight. Its legacy will be the courts' determination that an adequate education is the fundamental right of each and every student; that the General Assembly is solely responsible for maintaining an efficient system of schools; and that those schools must be adequately funded to meet the state's goals..

Keywords: high school, graduation, equity, general assembly, kentucky

When the pragmatically liberal Governor Bert T. Combs passed his 3% retail sales tax, in 1960, the people on the Cumberland Plateau felt a surge of confidence. After decades of neglect, local school boards in eastern Kentucky were finally able to offer qualified teachers with a college degree a raise of \$900 dollars per year, and perhaps, stem the tide of good teachers who were leaving the region for bigger cities, or leaving the state for greener pastures in Ohio or Tennessee. The tax helped military veterans and funded new classrooms. Teacher standards were raised, a network of vocational schools and ten community colleges opened, and work began on the ambitious Kentucky Educational Television network which would greatly expand educational programming in rural areas.

As lawyer and former Kentucky state legislator Harry M. Caudill reported, in his definitive *Night Comes to the Cumberlands*, that the public schools in eastern Kentucky lagged far behind. A 1960 University of Kentucky study found that high school graduates in Harlan County were performing three years and five months behind high school graduates nationally and were in no position to compete for good jobs. They were an impoverished citizenry surrounded by rich resources.¹ The legislature simply provided no source of revenue for poor school districts and the disparity between rich and poor would continue to grow - to the point that something had to be done. But it would take another thirty years for a substantial remedy to occur. That remedy did not come from any legislative awakening that recognized and cured longstanding fiscal deficiencies of the past. Rather, it was the result of a courageous nine-year political fight waged by local school superintendents, supported by a contemporaneous grass-roots policy effort, executed by creative legal statesmanship, and resolved by an activist Supreme Court decision.²

The conflict began on New Year's Day, 1984, after incoming state Superintendent of Public Instruction Alice McDonald made it known that she would release veteran school finance expert, Arnold Guess, from the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE). Guess had supported

McDonald's opponent in the election, James B. Graham, and the politically-minded McDonald had made it clear that the department would be moving forward without him, so he resigned the day before her arrival. His liberation freed him to scratch an age-old itch. Guess and two of his Kentucky Department of Education colleagues, James Melton and Kern Alexander, had always been bothered by the inequitable and inadequate funding of Kentucky's public schools. But you don't bite the hand that feeds you so, as state employees, they never felt like they could act on their concerns. Over time, Alexander and Melton had left the department and now, with his own departure, Guess was in a position to try to do something about it.

Guess took a part time job with the Commonwealth Credit Union recruiting school districts to use credit union services. But that put him on the phone with superintendents from around the state. One of his early calls went to Superintendent Tony Collins of Wolfe County. After making his credit union pitch, Guess guided the conversation toward school district financial problems and he brashly told Collins that he had heard he had a big mouth and that he was always complaining about school funding. Guess asked Collins if he had the guts it would take to do something about it. After about twenty such calls Guess was encouraged to call a meeting of superintendents from property-poor districts to explore filing a suit.

By that time, a few court cases in other states had cast serious doubt on the prospects for plaintiffs seeking more equitable funding in federal court. Despite this trend, Guess thought a case could be made that Kentucky's existing funding scheme was unconstitutional. In his mind, the problem was inequities built into the state's system of finance. But he never could have guessed that his narrow concern would ultimately become the catalyst for revamping Kentucky's entire system of public education.

At first, they simply saw themselves as 66 superintendents of struggling school districts hoping to get \$400 million put into the state's underfunded Power Equalization Program, which would add funds for poor schools. The lack of equity between Kentucky's city schools and their country cousins was becoming embarrassingly obvious. But Governor John Y. Brown chose to reduce the Power Equalization Fund from \$40 million to \$31 million by executive order. Meanwhile, per pupil funding for students in Fayette County rose to eight times greater than funding for Whitley County students. But through the courage, tenacity, and reasoning of its leadership, the Council for Better Education would come to be seen as a surprisingly powerful force for all Kentucky school children and achieved a \$1.26 billion result with greater ramifications than anything they intended or could have imagined.

On April 12, 1984, Guess called together a group of twenty-three school superintendents from property poor districts to make his case. In a second meeting three weeks later, representatives from 28 school districts assembled to hear presentations from Guess, Melton, school finance experts from Virginia Tech, David Alexander and Richard Salmon, along with Jenkins Independent Superintendent Alex Eversole.³

Each superintendent agreed to ask their local board of education to fund \$.50 per child in Average Daily Attendance (ADA) to cover the expenses of filing a suit. Guess and Melton agree to handle communications for the organization through the Kentucky School Boards Association, where Melton had become Executive Director, and Council for Better Education bylaws were drafted. The group was incorporated by May. Bullitt County Superintendent Frank Hatfield was named president with Hardin County Superintendent Steve Towler serving as vice president, and Dayton Independent Superintendent Jack Moreland serving as secretary/treasurer. Lead by "a little core of truly convicted people," the Council launched a two-pronged attack: lobby the legislature for change, while threatening to sue.

Council members anticipated some hard feelings from legislators who did not want to be blamed for the existing conditions. Senator Mike Maloney (D-Fayette) warned that a suit would alienate legislators and the group took pains to explain that the suit would not be aimed at any particular lawmaker, and that the Council intended no malice, but rather, is only seeking to resolve unanswered legal questions regarding inequitable school funding. But Council members were surprised when they received a harsh reaction from Superintendent McDonald whose job, they thought, was to nurture the state school system. Despite the local school boards' well-established corporate powers, she demanded that no school funds should be used to fund any legal actions against the state and that she would sue any school district that did so.

In June, Senator Nelson Allen (D-Lewis Co.) called Council leadership before the Interim Joint Committee on Education where they were promptly lambasted for their litigious saber rattling by displeased legislators from across the Commonwealth. The main complaint seemed to be that the Council was inserting itself into the General Assembly's business. The Senate immediately tried to starve the Council to death by passing Senate Bill 102 that would have outlawed the use of school funds to pay for a lawsuit against them or Superintendent McDonald and would declare any board of education that did so guilty of first-degree official misconduct. That bill served to underscore the animosity of some legislators who thought the Council members ungrateful. Attorney General David Armstrong had opined in OAG 85-100 "...that a local board of education may expend school funds to support litigation efforts relating to the equity of distribution of financial resources..." so Council leadership approached House Education committee Chairman Roger Noe (D-Harlan), whose home school district was a member of the Council, with a request to kill the bill in his committee, and the action died in the House. Some legislative notice was taken of the Council's argument and HJR 106 was proposed. The bill would have established a 15-member Governor's Commission on School Finance which would recommend funding methods and guidelines for an efficient school system, but the measure died in committee.

Relations between Council members and the Superintendent McDonald remained contentious. Tempers flared between Tony Collins and Alice McDonald at a meeting of the Joint Education Committee. She said Collins had no business filing the suit and that it was the dumbest thing she'd ever heard of. So, Collins invited her daughter to attend school in Wolfe County. 'Don't be silly,' McDonald retorted. 'My daughter is going to go to Duke University. She needs a better education.' Collins then asked McDonald what made her daughter any better than his daughter? 'If my daughter's not going to get an adequate education, why should yours get one?' he demanded. Finally, Collins turned to the legislators and offered them a deal; that if they would say students in some parts of Kentucky deserve an inferior education while students in other parts deserve a superior education, that he'd withdraw the suit. That struck a nerve. Representative Joe Barrow (D-Woodford) said, 'You're crazy if you think I'm going to get up there and say that. I'd never get reelected again.'⁴ The next week the *Courier-Journal* came out with an editorial supportive of Guess and Melton and in favor of the Council's effort to answer the equity question once and for all.

For some legislators their hard feelings were expressed locally, and on a personal level. Superintendent Bob Gover came under pressure from members of his board of education who had been in conversation with the Warren County legislative delegation. Gover was asked to resign his position on the Council's board of directors and Warren County Schools withdrew from the Council; although, despite a request to do so, their dues were not refunded.

The Council's most consequential challenge was wrangling former Kentucky Governor and Federal Judge Bert Combs to be their pro bono attorney. Combs was not particularly easy to snag.

He was out of politics and liked it that way. Obtaining his consent to represent the Council took six months of persistence and hung on the values he learned from his parents as a child in Clay County. Combs' father was a practical politician, and his mother was an idealistic, religious woman who believed that God put you on this Earth for a purpose and that when the opportunity came for you to do something worthwhile, that God expected you to do it. Combs' agreement to represent the Council was announced in October and Jack Moreland saw it as a major turning point. Up until that time they were just a bunch of rabble-rousers. But after Combs agreed to represent their position, the Council for Better Education became a legitimate, bona fide organization, with legal counsel that was as good as any legal counsel in the Commonwealth, and they became something to be reckoned with.

The Council greatly benefited from powerful outside forces including the press and a host of civic, business, and education groups, all pressing for better schools – most notably the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence, of which Combs was already a member. But the Committee had a tenuous relationship with Gov. Collins since Edward Prichard, the committee's namesake, had actively worked for Louisville Mayor Harvey Sloane, Collins' opponent in the Democratic primary. When Combs signed on to represent the Council, he replaced Prichard, who was in declining health, and University of Kentucky law professor Tom Lewis who had advised the group to that point. Two weeks later the Prichard Committee launched its Town Forum. But even before that, Combs had arranged for his daughter Lois Combs Weinberg to pick up a \$50,000 donation from coal operator B. F. Reed to kick start the Prichard Committee and fund KET's broadcast of the statewide forum. With introductions by Combs, Governor Martha Layne Collins, Prichard Committee Executive Director Robert Sexton, and Superintendent McDonald, the strategy worked like a charm. The Prichard Committee was able to say that 20,000 people showed up at 145 different locations representing all of the school districts in the state. The Press reported it as a massive outpouring for better schools. The Prichard Committee did not join the suit, but Combs and Sexton continued to meet throughout the trial to organize evidence.

Governor Collins immediately put together a statewide helicopter and bus tour, with former governors and other celebrities to talk up the need to improve Kentucky education. She came forward with a reform program and called for a special session of the General Assembly for 1985. Council members agreed that any suit should wait until the legislature had an opportunity to fund the Power Equalization Program to a more appropriate level. That effort fell short, and the Council filed suit.⁵ But members of the General Assembly were not about to take the affront lying down.

Hardin County Superintendent Steve Towler's board of education members had come under pressure from Joe Prather who was then the President Pro Tem of the Senate and a defendant in the suit. Prather felt he was one of their own but was not properly notified by Towler that the Council was going ahead with the suit. For his part, Towler hadn't seen the need to do so. He didn't think it best to schedule a meeting with someone to tell them that you are suing them. Soon after the suit was filed, in November 1985, Prather was in the Capitol rotunda for the announcement of the suit and when word reached him that Prather was up on the second floor and very upset that he had not been warned in advance. But unlike Gover in Warren County, Towler and Hardin County remained committed to the effort. The board suggested Towler make a gesture of conciliation toward Prather. Towler decided to step out of the spotlight by resigning from the board, but he remained active. Bert Combs would later recall the angry Prather saying, 'This is a legislative matter, and the judiciary ought to stay out of it. And Combs ought to stay out of it. And if Combs was so damn smart, why didn't he fix it while he was here?' Combs countered, 'It's been

about 25 years ago and if I'd been a fortune-teller, I would have. But I didn't have the Wisdom of Solomon. And neither did Joe Prather.'⁶

Bert Combs had spent some time early on thinking about the best venue for filing. He believed that filing in U. S. Federal Court would be preferred since the case would come before lifetime federal judges who did not have to stand for re-election in Kentucky, and therefore, would be less susceptible to political pressures. But the Supreme Court's ruling in the Rodriguez case eliminated that option with its declaration that education is not a fundamental right under the U. S. Constitution. Since the suit would have to be brought in state court, the law required the Council to file in Franklin County. That gave Combs a 50-50 chance of catching Judge Ray Corns who was very familiar with the testimony he would bring forward in the case. Combs even assumed that Judge Corns would be sympathetic to the Council's cause, since he was already aware of the problems.⁷

By February 1986, Franklin Circuit Court Judge Ray Corns had been assigned the case, by lot, but there was some thought that he might declare himself ineligible to hear it. Combs was lead attorney for the plaintiff Council for Better Education and he added Debra Dawahare as associate counsel - a relatively new Wyatt, Tarrant & Combs attorney who would come of age with the case. William Scent continued to represent the state government as he had for some time. As is common in Frankfort, the judge and lead attorneys knew each other. But the connections between the attorneys in this case ran very deep indeed. Scent first became acquainted with Combs when he was on the Court of Appeals and Scent was a young lawyer in the Revenue Department. Scent used to fill out Combs' tax returns for him, and Scent was a Combs man, supporting him from 1955 on. In 1959, Scent did the legal work for Combs' gubernatorial campaign. When Combs was elected governor, Scent became his Revenue Commissioner and drafted Combs' 3% sales tax bill.

Judge Corns reminded the attorneys that he had been the Kentucky Department of Education attorney for 16 years and that he had coauthored a textbook on school finance with Kern Alexander who would be presenting testimony for the plaintiffs in the case. The judge offered to step aside, but both sides agreed that he should hear the case and 'call it as he sees it.'⁸

After determining where to sue, Combs had to figure out who he was suing - and how. It turns out that in the history of Kentucky jurisprudence the issue of how one goes about suing the General Assembly had remained relatively unexplored. Combs thought that the General Assembly certainly had to be made defendants because they were complaining that the General Assembly was violating the constitution. But the General Assembly had 138 members and this type of case tended to rock along for a while. They knew there would be resignations, new elections, and deaths, and if they tried to make all 138 people defendants, keeping the court up-to-date with the changes would have been daunting. Combs knew the suit would be strongly, perhaps bitterly defended, and that every technical question that an ingenious lawyer could dream up would be raised. Indeed the defense argued that the plaintiff's complaint failed to state a claim against any of the defendants; that the court had no jurisdiction because the subject matter was purely a 'political' one; that all school boards should have been joined as parties to the defense; that all plaintiffs lacked standing to bring the action; that, specifically, the plaintiff Council for Better Education, Inc., had no legal authority to sue; that the plaintiff school boards similarly had no legal authority to sue; that a class action was improper; and as would be expected, the defendants denied all of the alleged constitutional violations and the facts underlying such alleged violations.

One of the arguments made was that the Council couldn't sue the General Assembly except by suing each member - that the court could not compel actions of people not before the court. But as a practical matter, they just couldn't handle a case like that. Combs was familiar with the federal

model, however, where the House of Representatives in Washington had been sued - on constitutional questions in particular - by making the congressional leadership a party to the suit. That was his chosen approach. He also believed the governor had to be made a defendant because the constitution requires the governor to report to the General Assembly on the state of the Commonwealth and to make recommendations to the General Assembly. And since she had announced her strong objections to the case, he added the Superintendent of Public Instruction for good measure.⁹ They made it very clear in the complaint that all of these people were made defendants in their official capacity not as individuals - that they were not seeking relief against them as individuals.¹⁰ On Monday June 2, 1986, Judge Corns heard oral arguments from the defense and required the addition of the State Board of Education as an indispensable party to the suit.

McDonald proved to be one of the more colorful characters in Frankfort at the time. She was a fierce opponent of Council for Better Education leadership and attempted on several occasions to intimidate the superintendents and quash the effort. As state superintendent she appeared less inclined to press for improvements to the schools than she was to maintain her political relationships within the General Assembly. Despite this, the troubles of McDonald's administration would contribute greatly to the elimination of the office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, which legislators ultimately came to see as part of the problem with Kentucky's schools. McDonald's extensive use of Department of Education personnel in support of her own political aspirations prompted an investigation by the state Personnel Board. The investigation revealed widespread abuses and said the McDonald administration was as arguably the most corrupt operation of a political spoils system ever.

The Alice McDonald case was offered to the U. S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Kentucky who declined to review the matter. But the public did respond. At half-time of the 1987 Kentucky High School Sweet 16 Tournament, McDonald was scheduled to present the trophy for the best Cheerleading squad before a packed house at Rupp Arena. But when they introduced her, everyone stood up and booed to the point that she never came out and one of her deputies made the award.¹¹ Lexington Herald-Leader Editor, John Carroll recalled McDonald's administration with hopefulness and disappointment. Carroll liked McDonald and believed that she came into office with a very clear understanding of what was important and had to be done. But he also found her to be pathologically political. She just could not refrain from shaking down employees, coercing people, and playing political games. Carroll reasoned that every now and then you see somebody who just is constitutionally incapable of doing things properly, and she was one of them. She would later be arrested for shoplifting which Carroll considered to be just more of the same.¹²

Choosing plaintiffs was another crucial part of structuring the case. Specifically, the Council had to identify individuals who had been damaged according to the evidence that would be produced in the trial court. Combs wanted someone tough enough. He wanted people who would not succumb to pressure and go hide behind a log when the going got rough. But most importantly he wanted students that were being damaged by the state's failure to provide an adequate and uniform system of schools, and whose parents would agree to their names being used. Combs set out to convince the court that there were children who had standing and who were being discriminated against, regardless of school board members, superintendents, or parents.

The Council was immediately forced to fend off motions from the defense that were intended to laugh the case out of court. With motions for summary judgment, and dismissal, Scent argued for the defense that the Council for Better Education did not have standing to bring the suit, and that school boards were creatures of the legislature. He claimed that you can't sue your creator.

Scent argued that these school districts would have enough money if they didn't waste it - even inferring that poor management and under the table stuff was going on. Combs countered, 'Well, here's an 8yr old child, Jimmy Duff. Has Jimmy Duff done anything? Has he stolen any money? Has he exercised any poor management? He is the plaintiff.'¹³ Judge Corns overruled the defendants' motions without much delay and the plaintiffs were granted standing to bring the suit.

The complaint was filed on May 28, 1985 and listed the Council for Better Education, seven Kentucky school districts, and nineteen student-plaintiffs who were not only suing as individuals, but who also represented a class of all similarly situated students attending so-called poor school districts.¹⁴

To underscore Scent's argument of school district mismanagement, the legislature launched a Management Assistance Program meant to identify a number of Council member districts as needing assistance.¹⁵

The heart of the Council's case was the meaning of a phrase - from Section 183 of the state constitution - "an efficient system of common schools throughout the state" and its relationship to the issues of equity and adequacy. Clearly, when the Council leadership first approached Bert Combs with the idea of filing this suit, equity was foremost in their minds since they were acutely aware of the lack of uniformity. The Council presented evidence in court showing gleaming chemistry labs in the Fort Thomas schools and contrasted them with dilapidated facilities in eastern Kentucky districts. But Combs believed that they had a better shot on adequacy. The word "efficient" clearly inferred adequacy, and uniformity came into being by reason of the phrase 'throughout the state,' which was not as mandatory. So, they built a case meant to attack both points. The case was argued more from an adequacy point of view, rather than equity, because they didn't want anyone going off on the idea that you had to have equitable mediocrity; that you had to take money away from Jefferson County so that Martin County could have more. Combs' theory was that no district in the state was over funded. 'Raise the tide and all ships will rise.'¹⁶ This creative legal strategy launched a new wave of school finance cases nationally.

Always cautious not to breach the separation of powers, the Council for Better Education ultimately sought a declaratory judgment. Simply put, they wanted the court to advise the legislature that the current funding system was unconstitutional, but then leave it to the legislature to fix in a special session called by the governor. They complained that the General Assembly and the Executive Branch controlled the public schools and their total financial resources, that inequities among school districts were due to inequities in assessed valuation of property per pupil, and that the consequences were devastating for thousands of Kentucky school children, and for the Commonwealth as a whole. The plaintiffs further complained that under Kentucky law, school children have a fundamental right to an adequate education, which school children trapped in poor districts do not receive because of the funding system's dependence on local property values, which in turn left them inadequately supported and powerless to extricate themselves.

The legislature claimed that its actions in the 1985 special session and 1986 regular session had corrected the problem and made much of the fact that several of the plaintiff districts never levied any of the permissive taxes, claiming that if they had, the disparities would not have existed.¹⁷ To punctuate its argument, the defense asked plaintiffs to admit that some plaintiff districts (Elliott County, Knox County, McCreary County, Wolfe County, Dayton Independent and Harlan Independent) had ever levied any of the permissive taxes allowed by law.¹⁸

Bert Combs knew that Robert Sexton believed in the Council's cause, and had testified effectively for the plaintiffs, so he encouraged the Prichard Committee to take a stand by filing an amicus curiae brief.¹⁹ The Prichard Committee was accustomed to making public statements on

education issues and asked Ed Prichard's former law partner Phil Shepard, to draft the brief along with Committee member Phillip Lanier.²⁰ The brief filed on March 9, 1988 urged the Court to hold that education is a fundamental right under the Kentucky Constitution, to declare that the constitutional obligation to provide for an efficient system of common schools has not been met, and to reject the defendants' attempt to assert that waste and mismanagement of local school districts provides a defense to the plaintiffs' claims that the constitutional mandate for public education has been violated.²¹

By the time of the final oral arguments (April 18, 1988) a statewide election had been held, and state education policy was being hotly debated behind the scenes. The new defendants included Governor, Wallace Wilkinson, replaced outgoing Governor, Martha Layne Collins and former Rowan County Superintendent and Council member John Brock replaced Alice McDonald as Superintendent of Public Instruction. Legislative officers and State Board of Education members were also substituted. While the trial continued, the General Assembly began meeting with its new governor and fresh frictions quickly emerged - not aimed at the Council for Better Education - but regarding statewide education policy.

Judge Ray Corns reached his momentous decision on May 31, 1988, declaring that it was the mandatory duty of the General Assembly to provide adequate educational opportunity to Kentucky school children, and that children could not be penalized educationally because of where they live.²² Due to the importance of the case the entire legal community quickly resolved that a final opinion would have to come from the Supreme Court.

As Superintendent of the Rowan County School District, John Brock was a plaintiff since he was a member of the Council for Better Education. Upon his election to the state superintendency, he became a defendant in the Council's action - but not for long. He directed Kentucky Department of Education attorney Gary Bale to tell the judge that he did not wish to defend against that suit.²³ Governor Wilkinson followed suit, leaving members of the legislature as the only Appellants when the case skipped the Kentucky Court of Appeals and was instead expedited directly to the state Supreme Court. Underscoring the importance of the case, and perhaps anticipating a special session in January 1989, the Kentucky Supreme Court scheduled oral arguments for December 7th, waived page limits on the attorney's briefs, required them in two weeks, and allowed one hour per side for oral arguments instead of the usual fifteen minutes.²⁴

In the meantime, having lost their 'mismanagement' argument at the circuit court, legislators sought to prove their point in another, more vindictive, fashion by calling for State Auditor Bob Babbage to conduct an investigation of the 66 Council districts who had filed the suit and report any mismanagement. Superintendent Brock reacted strongly to the punitive audits threatening Babbage with a lawsuit if he proceeded.²⁵

For his part, Babbage was acutely aware of the legislators' anger and motivation, but he read the law literally. As he saw it, the State Auditor's job was to audit the government on behalf of the taxpayers, and the legislature could call for an audit of any public institution at any time. The Attorney General agreed. But rather than auditing all 66 districts as requested, Babbage decided to audit a sample of three districts from each of Kentucky's six Congressional districts. Brock and the 18 districts selected for audit went berserk together. State newspapers had fun with the fuss, one publishing a political cartoon titled, 'School Lunch Menu' Babbage and Brock share a knuckle sandwich."²⁶ The Council for Better Education ultimately approved of the way the audits were handled.²⁷ Most audited districts were found to be doing a pretty good job, but they also learned of places where they might save significant money - as much as five and six figures in some cases.

On June 8, 1989 the Kentucky Supreme Court released a sweeping Opinion in *Rose v. Council for Better Education*, which went well beyond the fiscal issues contested by the plaintiffs in circuit court by invalidating every school law and declaring the entire system of schools to be unconstitutional.²⁸ Bert Combs would later quip, “My clients asked for a thimble full and instead they got a bucket full.”²⁹

In crafting the court’s Opinion, Chief Justice Robert F. Stephens was strongly influenced by two delegates to Kentucky’s Constitutional Convention of 1890. Delegate W. M. Beckner had described the common schools as “A system of practical equality in which the children of the rich and the poor meet upon a perfect level and the only superiority is that of the mind.” Similarly, Delegate Moore opined that, “Common schools make patriots of men who are willing to stand upon a common level. The boys of humble mountain homes stand equally high with those from the mansions of the city. There are no distinctions in the common schools but all stand upon one level.”³⁰ Justice Stephens settled on “Each child, every child in this Commonwealth must be provided with an equal opportunity to have an adequate education. Equality is the key word here. The children of the poor and the children of the rich, the children who live in poor districts and the children who live in rich districts must be given the same opportunity and access to an adequate education.” An adequate education for each and every Kentucky student was declared to be a fundamental right under the Kentucky Constitution. The court’s focus on funding adequacy and equity throughout the state would soon reshape the system and provide fresh opportunities for many thousands of students on the Cumberland Plateau.

A brief period of uncertainty followed the decision. Legislative leaders were shocked to discover that the constitutional mandate for providing an adequate school system was entirely theirs and that the obligation could not be satisfied by simply delegating it to local school boards. The only mandate that had seemed to resonate with legislators was a resolve not to raise taxes but fixing the schools was going to require a large infusion of new resources. It was unclear whether the legislature would follow the Supreme Court’s ruling or engage in a constitutional struggle. Following the decision, Senator Michael Maloney (D- Lexington) needled Dawahare by raising the possibility that the legislature might simply ignore the decision saying, ‘Well, what are you going to do – put me in jail? I’d like to see the Council for Better Education try that’.³¹ But legislators soon reasoned that the court’s ruling could provide political cover for raising taxes and turned their attention to school reform.

Wallace Wilkinson was a self-made millionaire, who had run for governor as a no-tax-increase candidate. He had devised his own reform plan without input from legislative or education groups, said it was the only plan he would support, and then made it clear that he expected the legislature to pass it. But Wilkinson remained noncommittal on the tax issue unless he got unqualified support. There were many areas of agreement between Wilkinson and various education advocacy groups. Significantly, the KEA had even agreed to increased accountability in return for increased financial support. Wilkinson promised that if state education groups would support his plan first, then he would pass the biggest tax increase anyone had ever seen. But the Prichard Committee decided that it would not support any reform plan that did not come with dollars already attached to it and the legislature wanted a more comprehensive plan. House Speaker Don Blandford found Wilkinson’s personality and desire to dominate the legislature difficult to work with.³² Legislators and state education leaders alike did not trust Wilkinson to make good on his new revenue promise once their political leverage was gone and it got to the point that they didn’t want Wilkinson to get any credit.³³

Overall, interest group involvement in Kentucky school reform, particularly those directly involved with education, proved to be very weak. The General Assembly's growing strength was only made stronger when Judge Ray Corns made his ruling. The legislative leadership made it clear to all other interest groups that if indeed, as the judge ruled, the responsibility for an efficient system rested exclusively with the General Assembly, then they would decide who was in (and not in) the debate. The only uninvited entity that the legislature had to keep in the loop was the Governor, due to his responsibilities for the all-important state budget. Left unfunded, the best reform package in the world would not produce an efficient result.

The legislature passed the Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990 less than a year after the Kentucky Supreme Court ruling. Remarkable for its ambition, KERA's reforms went well beyond finance and also reshaped curriculum, assessment and accountability, district employment, and school governance. Among the most significant and controversial changes was the replacement of grades K–3 with the multiage/multiability Primary Program. Instead of the customary letter grades a new kind of report card using a qualitative assessment of student work was mandated. School-based decision-making councils were created to ensure representation of parents and teachers in school leadership and to localize matters of curriculum and instruction. Monetary rewards were distributed to schools that excelled on the Kentucky Instructional Results Information System (KIRIS), which was designed to measure school performance more than individual student performance. Anti-nepotism regulations altered some long-standing employment practices.³⁴

Also significant were the expanded powers given to the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) to intervene in troubled school districts. Suddenly, KDE could remove and replace any superintendents or board of education members who committed bad acts or who were determined to lack the capacity to move the district forward. For the first time, KDE was authorized to place troubled school districts under state management. Working in tandem, the Kentucky Office of Education Accountability (OEA), a watchdog agency attached to the Legislative Research Commission, was created to assure that Kentucky schools were efficiently operated without waste, duplication, mismanagement, and political influence by monitoring the reforms, reporting progress, and intervening whenever necessary to overcome resistance to KERA's mandates. Through the combined efforts of KDE and OEA, the legislature sent a strong message to school district personnel that any effort to ignore or undermine the implementation of KERA would be vigorously opposed. Since maintaining funding adequacy and equity were at the heart of the legislature's constitutional mandate, the OEA was also charged to analyze funding equity and report any issues to the legislature. But over time, the legislative response to OEA reports of a widening equity gap among school districts was less vigorous.

Arguably, no group would come to benefit more from education reform than the historically marginalized children of eastern Kentucky. However, due to the Appalachian peoples' tendency toward resistance to externally imposed reforms, adoption of school reform in southeastern Kentucky was slow. Information about KERA was seen as a particularly valuable, and at the same time, dangerous commodity. It was hoarded at the district level and seldom trickled out to the principal and teachers. Appalachian teachers knew little about KERA before 1994, other than that it had been decreed from afar, represented yet another attempt by the state to intervene in local affairs, and that it had generated additional funds, including moderate teacher salary increases. More than that, their superiors decided, they need not know.³⁵

With KERA came the dreaded "outsiders" serving in several capacities: as Distinguished Educators sent to raise test scores in schools designated as being "in crisis;" as OEA investigators sent in to audit books and monitor practices; as professional development instructors; as

independent site-based decision-making trainers; and as consultants for the superintendent screening committee.

KERA combined two seemingly contradictory impulses. Local schools would be held accountable for meeting higher standards of student achievement, but they would also be given greater autonomy and flexibility to achieve those goals. KERA sought to cultivate local stakeholders who had the capacity to engage in public discourse and action in their local districts. Although systemic reform requires effective cooperation between local and state levels, the state government, the Kentucky Department of Education and the legislature's Office of Education Accountability were seen as inherently at odds with local governance. The Appalachian peoples' concern for autonomy, independence, and self-reliance tended to trump any impulse toward concerted action and slowed the cultivation of ownership for local reform efforts. The more the state tried to regulate this state/local coupling, the more local educators resisted.

The new system of accountability also carried with it fresh data that could be used to confer prestige or to declare bankruptcy. These became effective levers for change. Low test scores gave school superintendents ammunition with which to motivate their most complacent colleagues to action. Faculty effectively used these same numbers to legitimize their claims that reforms were overdue and that they as a poor, rural, mountain district should be given priority for new funds and programs.

The sweeping opinion of the Kentucky Supreme Court and the passage of KERA elevated Kentucky's public schools from a lightly regarded system to one that quickly became nationally renowned for the scope of its reform effort – a stark contrast to Kentucky's historically weak commitment to public education.

Predictably, credit for achieving this historic result was claimed by various legislators - including some who bitterly opposed the efforts of the Council for Better Education - and there is no doubt that many people contributed to the outcome. Arnold Guess and his fellow school finance experts were indispensable catalysts who sparked the effort. The judicial activism of Judge Raymond Corns and Justice Robert Stephens made the outcome possible. Council members attributed their success to Bert Combs. For his part, Combs acknowledged the contemporaneous state-wide policy activism already being advanced by Bob Sexton and the Prichard Committee. But he also pointed to the group of courageous pioneers whom he said deserved more credit than he did, including Council presidents Frank Hatfield (Bullitt County) and Jack Moreland (Dayton Independent) along with a number of eastern Kentucky superintendents who initiated the movement and persisted throughout. The historical record confirms that the effort to bring fiscal adequacy and equity to eastern Kentucky school students was not achieved without a fight. Its legacy will be the courts' determination that an adequate education is the fundamental right of each and every student; that the General Assembly is solely responsible for maintaining an efficient system of schools; and that those schools must be equitable throughout the state – including eastern Kentucky - and adequately funded to meet the state's goals.

¹ Caudill, Harry M., 1962, *Night Comes to the Cumberlands*, Boston: Little, Brown and Co., p. 372-378

² See generally, Richard E. Day, "Each Child, Every Child: The Story of the Council for Better Education, Equity and Adequacy in Kentucky's Schools." Ed. D. diss., University of Kentucky, 2003; which chronicles the activities of the Council for Better Education from its inception in 1984 through the Supreme Court's landmark ruling in *Rose v Council for*

Better Education, 790 S. W. 2d. 186 (1989). This chapter, based largely on oral history interviews and legal research, provides some insight into the effort required to bring about such an historic result.

- ³ Melton was a former district superintendent who later served as Associate Superintendent of Public Instruction, and Executive Director of the Kentucky School Boards Association. Alexander became President of Western Kentucky University (1985-1988) and Murray State University (1994-2001) before holding distinguished Professorships at Virginia Tech and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Guess was a former district superintendent and later Associate Superintendent of Public Instruction. All were school finance experts.
- ⁴ Tony Collins, Interview by William McCann Jr., Tape Recording. 28 February 1990. Oral History Collection, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky.
- ⁵ Robert Sexton, Interview by Catherine Fosl. Tape Recording. 10 October 2000. Oral History Collection, University of Kentucky. See also, *Council for Better Education, et al. v. Martha Layne Collins, Governor, et al.*; Civil Action No. 85-CI-1759.
- ⁶ Bert Combs in Council for Better Education. Testimonial Banquet Honoring Bert Combs. Tape Recording. 10 August 1990. Author's Collection.
- ⁷ Bert Combs, Interview by Richard Day. Tape Recording. 18 July 1990. Oral History Collection, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky.
- ⁸ Raymond Corns, Interview by Richard Day. Tape Recording. 19 July 1990. Oral History Collection, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky.
- ⁹ Bert Combs, Interview by Richard Day. Tape Recording. 25 July 1990. Oral History Collection, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky.
- ¹⁰ Debra Dawahare, Interview by Richard Day. Tape Recording. 7 January 1990. Oral History Collection, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky.
- ¹¹ Each Child, Page 131
- ¹² John Sawyer Carroll, Interview by William McCann Jr. Tape Recording. 23 May 1990. Oral History Collection, University of Kentucky.
- ¹³ Bert Combs, Interview by Richard Day. Tape Recording. 25 July 1990. Oral History Collection, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky.
- ¹⁴ Civil Action No 85-CI-1759, Complaint, filed May 28, 1985.
- ¹⁵ Frank Hatfield letter to Bert Combs, 2 December 1986.
- ¹⁶ Debra Dawahare, Interview by Richard Day. Tape Recording. 7 January 1990. Oral History Collection, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky.
- ¹⁷ Bert Combs, Interview by Richard Day. Tape Recording. August 10, 1990. Oral History Collection, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky.
- ¹⁸ In the Hopper, #126, June 1986.
- ¹⁹ Bert Combs, Interview by Richard Day. Tape Recording. 18 July 1990. Oral History Collection, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky.
- ²⁰ Robert F. Sexton, Interview by Catherine Fosl. Tape Recording. 10 October 2000. Oral History Collection, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky.
- ²¹ Bert Combs, Interview by Richard Day. Tape Recording. Oral History Collection, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky, July 25, 1990.
- ²² Raymond Corns, Interview by Richard Day. Tape Recording. 29 May 1990. Oral History Collection, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky.
- ²³ John Brock, Interview by William McCann Jr. Tape Recording. 9 November 1989. Oral

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- History Collection, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky.
- ²⁴ Debra Dawahare, Interview by Richard Day. Tape Recording. 7 January 1990. Oral History Collection, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky.
- ²⁵ John Brock, Interview by William McCann Jr. Tape Recording. 9 November 1989. Oral History Collection, University of Kentucky, Lexington Kentucky.
- ²⁶ Robert Babbage, Interview by William McCann Jr. Tape Recording. 20 December 1990. Oral History Collection, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky.
- ²⁷ Jack Moreland, Council for Better Education. Testimonial Banquet Honoring Bert Combs. Tape Recording. 10 August 1990. Author's Collection.
- ²⁸ *Rose v. Council for Better Education*, 790 S. W. 2d 186.
- ²⁹ Ronald G. Dove, "Acorns in a Mountain Pool: The Role of Litigation, Law and Lawyers in Kentucky Education Reform." *Journal of Education Finance*, (1991), 21.
- ³⁰ Kentucky Constitutional Debates (1890) at 4460 – 4463; and at 4531.
- ³¹ Debra Dawahare, Interview by Richard Day. Tape Recording. 7 January 1990. Oral History Collection, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky.
- ³² Don Blandford, Interview by William McCann Jr. Tape Recording. 5 September 1990. Oral History Collection, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky.
- ³³ Robert F. Sexton, Interview by Catherine Fosl. Tape Recording. 10 October 2000. Oral History Collection, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky.
- ³⁴ Richard E Day and Jo Ann G. Ewalt, "Education Reform in Kentucky: Just What the Court Ordered" (2013). In *Kentucky: Government, Politics and Public Policy*, University Press of Kentucky, 265-266.
- ³⁵ Maureen K. Porter, "Moving Mountains: Reform, Resistance, and Resiliency in an Appalachian Kentucky High School," (1996), Ph.D. Dissertation, Stanford University, 476.

PRACTICE

Developing an Interdisciplinary Collaborative Approach for Higher Education Teaching: A Conceptual Framework

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Abstract

Collaborative knowledge and skills do not occur in a vacuum. Collaboration is critical across disciplines at all levels of skill development including both pre-service and practitioner levels. Licensure across a variety of careers in the fields of education and healthcare require fundamental skills sets in collaborative practices. However, common practice continues to focus on specialized training that overlooks opportunities for student-centered growth across programming. Researchers and educators have called for more opportunities to practice collaborative teaming at the pre-licensure level across disciplines. National accrediting bodies require students to learn and apply collaborative skills with others across disciplines. By focusing on overlap in collaborative competencies across fields, higher education supports interdisciplinary collaborative practices across programming standards. The purpose of this paper is to introduce a conceptual framework that promotes four key knowledge and skills in the areas of teaming, roles, ethics, and communication across disciplines at the pre-licensure level.

Keywords: interprofessional collaboration, interdisciplinary collaboration, higher education

Introduction

Collaborative teaming can be enjoyable and productive. Approaches to building a competent and effective workforce through meaningful learning opportunities in higher education is key. While discipline-specific standards require that practitioners develop collaborative competencies within their specialization, common practice continues to focus on specialized training that discounts opportunities for growth across curriculum (Dobbs-Oats and Wachter Morris, 2016). Students must have the opportunity to collaborate with others in order to learn and apply skills beyond their singular fields of study (American Occupational Therapy Association [AOTA], 2015; Council for Exceptional Children [CEC], 2021; Howell, 2009; McLeskey et al., 2017; Sheppard et al., 2020). One solution is to establish collaborative learning partnerships across disciplines at the higher education level by using knowledge and skills that extend beyond a focused specialty.

Collaboration is critical across disciplines at all levels of skill development especially at the pre-licensure level. Pre-licensure professionals are in the process of developing competency-based skills outlined by their respective professional organizations which often includes collaborative practices. Two examples where collaborative competencies intersect include healthcare and educational service delivery models such as occupational therapy and special education. Specifically, pre-licensure professionals obtaining a license to practice occupational therapy must meet entry level school-based practice standards established by the American Occupational Therapy Association [AOTA] (2015). Whereas teacher candidates in special education must meet standards-based teaching practices as defined by the Council for Exceptional Children (2021). Kolbe and colleagues (2015) emphasize that collaborative partnerships across both the medical and educational models help to improve client/student-centered outcomes. Pre-licensure professionals must not only understand the individual and their family, but also understand how to work together within a dynamic culture that includes cultural competency and collaborative efforts

across disciplines (AOTA, 2015; CEC, 2021; Dobbs-Oates and Wachter Morris, 2016; Felton and Lambert, 2020).

Common practices in higher education emphasize silo learning with limited cross-disciplinary collaboration (Dobbs-Oates and Wachter Morris, 2016; Hartwell et al., 2017). The World Health Organization (WHO, 2010) has stressed that interdisciplinary practices are critical to ensure quality service delivery. There has been a notable international effort to apply interdisciplinary collaborations within health sciences that attempts to generalize skill sets into other areas. However, complicating the matter, practitioners approach evidence-based practices using two very distinct lenses: the medical model or the educational model (Sheppard et al., 2020). Less attention has been given to higher education initiatives that embrace collaborative learning. Collaboratives are imperative.

Purpose of this Paper

Researchers and educators have called for more opportunities to practice collaborative teaming at the pre-licensure level across disciplines (Dobbs-Oates and Wachter Morris, 2016; Tsilimingras et al., 2018). The WHO (2010) published *A Framework for Action on Interprofessional Education and Collaborative Practice* that supports a practice-ready workforce. Kolbe and colleagues (2015) propose that programs in higher education pursue partnerships across both models that encourage, support, improve, and evaluate meaningful collaboration. Cross-disciplinary programs that promote knowledge and skills which build self-awareness, embrace equity and inclusion, foster relationship building, and promote communication across disciplines strengthen collaborative competencies necessary to improve outcomes. The purpose of this paper is to introduce a conceptual framework that promotes four key knowledge and skills in the areas of teaming, roles, ethics, and communication across disciplines at the pre-licensure level.

Developing A Conceptual Framework That Promotes Collaboration

Strong collaborative teaching partnerships in academia can be multi-faceted, requiring others to work in tandem to resolve processes through cooperation across disciplines in which one may not be familiar. These complex undertakings work best with creative solutions that may extend beyond a singular scope of practice. For example, current trends in healthcare have moved toward an interprofessional model that emphasizes knowledge and skills needed for effective collaboration in the healthcare industry (Dobbs-Oates and Wachter Morris, 2016; Interprofessional Education Collaborative [IPEC], 2009; IPEC, 2016). While this framework promotes easily transferable skills from a pre-licensure program to a professional workforce, it's primary focus lies within the healthcare field. Similarly, professional standards in education such as the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC), Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), and Collaboration for Effective Educator, Development, Accountability and Reform (CEEDAR) stress the significance of collaborative competencies with limited direction on how to collaborate across disciplines. Yet, both practitioners must work collaboratively within community and school-based settings.

Similarly, postsecondary teaching practices are limited in scope. Challenges exist when both acquisition and application occur within a focused discipline, limiting opportunities for shared experiences and learning opportunities beyond a singular model. Emerging research supports explicit application of a competency-based model that can be implemented across both clinical and school-based settings (i.e., Dobbs-Oates and Wachter Morris, 2016; Hunt et al., 2001; Johnson

and Freeman, 2014, Kolbe et al., 2015). Using the IPEC framework and educational teaching standards as a foundation, we developed a universal model that bridges knowledge and skills across both fields of study and promotes collaborative practices at the pre-licensure levels. In keeping with the fundamental components within the interprofessional education (IPE) literature (Dobbs-Oats and Wachter Morris, 2015; IPEC, 2016; Tsilimingras et al, 2018), the four key concepts that support collaboratives including teaming, roles, ethics, and communication are addressed.

Teaming: Knowledge and Skills

The development of knowledge and skills related to teaming is critical across disciplines and practices. IPEC provides a foundation to guide quality professionals to develop competencies prior to entering the workforce (e.g., IPEC, 2016; Tsilimingras et al., 2018). Professional standards in education (e.g. Council for Exceptional Children [CEC], 2021; Council for Chief State School Officers [CCSSO], 2013; McLesky et al., 2017) address teaming within leadership and collaborative skill building that promotes learner growth within schools. To that end, programming in higher education requires that knowledge and skills for collaborative teaming are fostered across disciplines. We define teaming as a combined action of two or more people that utilize principles of team dynamics to achieve outcomes (See Table 1). Collaborative cross-discipline learning objectives that promote teaming include:

- demonstrating shared engagement of inclusive practices
- addressing conflict and crisis management
- prioritizing individual and team performance/ improvement
- utilizing effective teaming
- demonstrating versatility

Through teamwork, pre-licensure professionals engage with others, manage conflicting values, evaluate responsibilities, and reflect on personal actions that contribute to common outcomes. Some examples of teaching and learning strategies that address teaming include: developing shared learning experiences, integrating experiential learning activities, addressing group dynamics, and modeling use of best practices across disciplines. Elements focus on team-based outcomes that are timely, efficient, effective, and equitable (e.g. IPEC, 2016). Allocating dedicated time to devote for collaborative teaming is critical (Hunt et al. 2001). Time must be devoted to practicing mutual communication, fostering trusting relationships, sharing unique experiences, and providing opportunities for reflection.

Roles: Knowledge and Skills

In all teams there are specific roles that facilitate or hinder the progress toward collaborative cross disciplines shared learning outcomes. Cole (2018) explains that group process influences one's role identification, behaviors and performance. It is important that everyone's roles are clarified to ensure successful outcomes. According to IPEC (IPEC, 2016; WHO, 2010), key competencies ensure pre-licensure professionals understand discipline-specific roles and the roles of other professionals within a collaborative team. We define roles as: behaviors or functions expected by persons assigned or self-selected to achieve certain tasks in specific situations within one's own scope of practice (See Table 2). Professional accreditation standards for educators and healthcare providers such as Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education [ACOTE] and InTASC provide clear expectations that outline practitioner roles (ACOTE, 2018; CCSSO,

2013). Teaching practices in higher education that promote understanding how professional roles influence scope of practice are needed. Knowledge and skills that facilitate roles include:

- communicating with team members to clarify roles and responsibility
- integrating scope of knowledge that is culturally responsive
- recognizing and identifying personal strengths and limitations
- engaging with professional development opportunities

Best practices in higher education that clarify roles and responsibilities include activities such as: role: playing/practicing assigned roles during group work, integrating strength-based learning activities, embracing diversity/equity/inclusion activities, developing integrated visual matrices, and assigning discipline-specific simulated roles (e.g., Cole, 2018; Cook-Sathers et al., 2014; Dabell, 2021; IPEC, 2016; Lopez and Louis, 2009; Manning et. al. 2021; Tsilimingras et al., 2018).

Ethics: Knowledge and Skills

Ethics provide a foundation for pre-licensure practitioners to develop knowledge and skills within their respective fields that facilitate core values across disciplines. While some ethical practices vary across disciplines, critical elements remain consistent. The Ethics core competence within the IPEC (2016) framework is broadly defined as the knowledge and skills that maintain and support a climate of mutual respect and reflect specific shared values. We define ethics as a moral and/or legal policies and practices that govern a person's behavior within a specific discipline (see Table 3). Key collaborative cross-discipline learning objectives that develop ethical practices at the post-secondary level include:

- embracing cultural diversity
- working cooperatively with all stakeholders
- developing trusting relationships
- acting with integrity, and maintaining scope of practice

The variations and similarities across ethical practices is critical when developing collaboratives that respect scope of practice. The National Education Association (2020) recently updated the *Code of Ethics for Educators* that emphasizes serving the needs of students and preserving the profession. Ethical considerations in healthcare focus primarily on beneficence, malfeasance, autonomy, and justice (AOTA, 2020; Varkey, 2021). Despite some variations, identifying unified components across disciplines is possible. For example, core values such as: acting with honesty and integrity, embracing cultural diversity, and developing a sense of trust are universal. Faculty and instructors in higher education promote shared ethical practices by integrating evidence-based teaching practices such as: self-reflective activities, clinical observations, teach-back training, intentional relationship building, and professional development (e.g., Acquah and Commins, 2015; Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation [CAEP], 2021; CCSS0, 2013; Lang, 2016).

Communication: Knowledge and Skills

The last element to effective interdisciplinary collaboration requires stakeholders to establish and to utilize non-technical language that does not exclude others and fosters mutual understanding. Stakeholders include those who work together to achieve a common outcome. Examples of stakeholders within a cross-disciplinary model include patients, families, caregivers, community members, educators, healthcare providers, legislators, and other advocates across various fields. We define communication as two or more people connecting using various methods

to convey clear, respectful messages. IPEC (2016) stresses that skill sets in communication allows stakeholders to establish a common non-technical language which promotes efficiency, reduces redundancy, and promotes creative productivity across disciplines.

Tsilimingras et al. (2018) stress that communication includes shared learning and allows pre-licensure professionals to develop key skill sets. IPEC (2016) notes that each member should develop responsible team-based communication skills that are responsive to the needs of everyone and support a common outcome. Table 4 provides examples of communication knowledge and skills such as:

- communicating information using non-technical language
- listening actively and encourage ideas and opinions of others
- using respectful, deferential language appropriate for a given situation
- recognizing impact of culturally relevant communication

Oftentimes, the various fields of study use ambiguous terms that have different meanings across collaborators. The University of California, Davis School of Education [UC Davis] (n.d.) states that obscure language and terms interferes with the collaborative process and can complicate issues with equity and inclusion. Integrating communication elements within the curriculum ensures course work that allows students to recognize how one's own experiences can promote positive working relationships. Taylor (2020) introduces using the intentional relationship model. This model addresses interactive styles and modes that include advocating, collaborating, empathizing, encouraging, instructing, and problem-solving. Teaching strategies that strengthen communication across disciplines include using common, non-technical language, incorporating active listening activities, engaging with conflict resolution, and developing reflective practices and teaching methods (i.e., ACOTE, 2018; CCSS0, 2013; Cole, 2018; Harris, 2019).

Discussion

The scope of discipline-specific coursework is evolving (Johnson & Freeman, 2014). Best practices encourage cross-discipline collaboration skills at the pre-licensure level. Collaborative opportunities have potential to create positive lasting outcomes for faculty members in higher education (Baldwin and Cheng, 2006). Various fields are adopting standards that require pre-licensure professionals to enter their respective fields with established skills that foster collaboration (AOTA, 2015; CEC, 2021). Higher education accreditation measures emphasize collaborative efforts be implemented beyond a singular limited scope of practice (ACOTE, 2018; CAEP, 2022). Current trends in higher education recommend faculty and instructors pursue methods that address collaborative practices within classroom instruction (Blask 2011; Hunt et al., 2001; Kolbe et al., 2015). However, barriers to collaboration still exist when addressing interdisciplinary collaborative practices.

Barriers to Collaborative Cross- Discipline Learning Objectives

Conflicts are imminent when people and organizations come together (Baldwin and Cheng, 2006). Researchers have identified several barriers when implementing collaborative practices. For example, Tsilimingras et al. (2018) state students are likely to be resistant to perspective taking when learning new concepts outside their field of practice. Blask (2011) posits that time commitments were found to be a major barrier to the collaborative process. Other barriers include funding, leadership support, lack of training, imbalance of power, and clarity of scope (Baldwin and Cheng, 2006; Rawslinson et al., 2021). Students developing collaborative skills within

classroom settings report challenges with communication, unequal participation in group activities, and uneven competency skills across the group (Le et al., 2017). Le and colleagues noted that teachers struggle with consistent assessment measures of group projects that require collaboration.

A study conducted by edBridge Partners and Hart Research Associates (2014) found that district administrators and college leaders struggled with prioritizing collaboration due to other pressing challenges, limited facilitator support, and budgeting issues. Other barriers to teaming and collaboration in higher education programs extend to the professional field through challenges such as time management, physical access, differing levels of education, interpersonal conflicts, and lack of administrative support for shared projects (e.g. Baldwin and Cheng, 2006; edBridge Partners and Hart Research Associates, 2014; Rawlinson et al., 2018).

Possible Solutions

Practitioners at the pre-licensure level must develop unique skill sets to ensure initial competencies in collaborative teaming. Reed and colleagues (2017) explain that such practices exist when team members from various backgrounds work together to provide comprehensive services and improve outcomes. Rawlinson and colleagues (2021) suggest possible solutions for effective interdisciplinary collaborative teaming including delivery of frequent feedback, validation, trust and mutual respect, common vision, and team cohesion. The integration of information technology is emerging as a viable option to expand interdisciplinary team initiatives and communication (Sidpra et al., 2020). Use of online learning modalities supports course-based learning objectives, but also offers flexibility for students to acquire additional skill sets beyond the classroom. Technology, as defined in *Quality Matters* (2018), includes tools such as software and applications that promote student centered interaction for both content delivery and providing feedback. In addition, technology opens avenues for pre-licensure professionals to engage with others beyond a singular scope of practice. Yet, variability with access to technology is also a concern. It is important to note that even though some generations are digital natives, there still exists disparity in understanding technology and problem-solving glitches for collaboration. For some, key technological skills require explicit instruction prior to engaging in collaborative efforts.

Future Considerations

Even though healthcare has established IPEC as a framework, practical applications that extend cross-discipline collaboration throughout education remain uncharted territory (University of California, Davis, n. d.). The acquisition of discipline-specific knowledge and skills has expanded beyond a singular professional scope of practice with limited direction. Using an intentional and explicit approach when implementing interdisciplinary collaborative knowledge and skills across healthcare and educational practices is critical. Implementing interdisciplinary collaboration competencies within the higher education curriculum design will undoubtedly yield stronger outcomes for all stakeholders. Current trends are expanding competencies within other disciplines including educational models. Some considerations for future research include addressing how faculty embed learning experiences across disciplines, the impact of culturally responsive pedagogy at the pre-licensure level, and how additional teaching strategies can promote collaborative teaming. Lastly, opportunities to explore learning objectives that promote collaborative skills in higher education is imperative.

Conclusion

Established collaboratives need to be mutually beneficial to both the instructors' and students' professional learning goals. Transparency is necessary to define key concepts across fields and develop crucial learning objectives. In addition, collaborative work needs to be developed with intentionality and purpose. Current trends have highlighted the critical need for effective interprofessional collaboration. Quality collaborative partnerships improve outcomes (Kolbe et al., 2015; World Health Organization [WHO], 2010). The WHO (2010) has long held that strong collaboration practice teams are essential to mitigate challenges. Service delivery models are becoming increasingly more inclusive of educational and health care providers. It is through interdisciplinary collaboration education that students gain real world insight from others outside their own scope of practice (e.g., WHO, 2010). Tsilimingras et al. (2018) found that using fundamentals of IPEC was a necessary part of an effective diverse interprofessional team. We believe creating cross-fields of study within higher education can be part of this solution. Students who develop interprofessional skills through coursework ultimately have better outcomes with collaborative teaming. To build an effective collaborative framework, common knowledge and skills should be practiced across disciplines.

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RESEARCH

When a Paycheck Isn't Enough

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Abstract

Faced with the challenge of providing high-quality instruction every day, school administrators have sought a variety of penalties and incentives to ensure that healthy teachers come to school every day and sick teachers stay home. School districts reasonably expect teachers to come to school when they are healthy in order to improve student achievement. However, as many districts are experiencing severe shortages of high quality substitute teachers, some have attempted to entice teachers to come to school every day in order to receive some type of financial “perfect attendance” award. While well intentioned, these policies have the potential to lead to “presenteeism,” the practice of coming to work when ill. Organizations suffer costs associated with reduced productivity when employees are not working at their best, and there is the potential for spreading illness and leading to the unintended consequence of higher overall absence rates. This study analyzed all districts in a southern U.S. state to determine any relationship between financial incentives for perfect attendance and school quality factors. The study sought to determine any relationship between the presence of financial incentives and such proxies for school quality as student attendance, chronic absenteeism, college admissions, teacher turnover, and graduation rates. No significant relationship was identified that would support the presence or absence of incentives.

Keywords: presenteeism, financial incentives, teachers, attendance, compensation

Ensuring that every classroom is staffed by a highly qualified teacher is the challenge that school leaders face every day. Recognizing that high quality teachers are the most important in-school factor related to student learning (Miller, 2012), school administrators constantly balance the reasonable expectation that healthy teachers will come to school while encouraging teachers who are experiencing illness to stay home. While this may not seem unreasonable, every school administrator knows that there are some healthy teachers who will use their sick days--guaranteed by contract, policy, or statute—for purposes unrelated to an illness. Administrators anticipate higher than normal absences on Mondays and Fridays, during Christmas shopping season, and on opening day of baseball season. Employees often justify this use of sick days as “mental health” days. While teachers tend to work 180 day calendars and have much “unscheduled” time throughout the summer and holidays, the very disciplined structure of the school year

and absence of “vacation days” makes teachers captive to a very rigid system that ignores exceptional life events. It often forces teachers to lie about their sick days in order to participate in out-of-the-ordinary events, such as family weddings that require travel and spouses’ business trips that offer a rare expense-paid trip that are scheduled inconveniently during the school year.

The issue of teacher absences is a significant challenge for school administrators. Although the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2020) reports that educators’ rate of absences (2.2%) is currently lower than the general workforce population (3.0%) and lower than reported in 2003-2004 when 5.6% of American teachers were absent on a daily basis, the issue is still significant for school districts. A Civil Rights Data Collection Survey reports that 36% of American teachers were absent 10 or more days in 2009-2010 (Miller, 2012). Educators and their unions have collectively bargained a curious arrangement of time off for “sick time” and “personal days,” and such time is

generally awarded in bulk at the beginning of the contract year. Industry has often sidestepped the stickiness of differentiating and determining whether an employee is legitimately ill, on vacation, or attending to personal matters through a concept of “PTO,” or paid time off which is generally earned incrementally with each day or month worked. The view is that time off from work is “time off” regardless of the purported reason. Since a number of states accept unused “sick days” towards a teacher’s final pension calculation, it is unlikely that school districts will ever adopt the concept of “PTO” that does not distinguish between “sick days,” “personal days,” and other types of leave.

Instructionally, “time on task” has been known to be one of the most significant factors for student achievement. Interruptions due to the teacher’s absence cause a break in the continuity of high quality instruction. While some substitute teachers are retired teachers, newly minted teaching graduates unable to secure a full time position, or others with sterling credentials, the nature of substitute teacher quality ranges from excellent to “warm body.” Highly qualified substitute teachers may mitigate the loss of instruction by the regular teacher (Cook, 2008), but the problem still exists where the quality of substitutes varies greatly. Given the severe shortage of substitute teachers generally, schools often must accept the “warm body” for legal liability reasons as children must be supervised by a certified teacher. In the absence of enough substitute teachers or late cancellations by teachers, classes sometimes are split up and distributed to other teachers in the school. Even with the most qualified substitute teacher, much of the value of instructional continuity depends on the quality of the substitute teacher plans left by the classroom teacher—and often leaves much to be desired. Planned absences by a teacher for professional development,

doctors’ appointments, and other legitimate absences give the classroom teacher time to appropriately plan for a substitute teacher. Unplanned absences leave the substitute teacher left to make sense of the lesson plan book—if there is one—or to attempt to pick up where instruction appears to have left off. And while elementary classroom content may be within the grasp of most adults, highly specialized secondary school content such as calculus, foreign languages, Advanced Placement courses, and other technical content can pose serious challenges to even the most skilled substitute teacher.

While school administrators officially preach the need for high quality instruction every day by the regular classroom teacher, the superintendent and chief business official are always cognizant of the budget and the costs that teacher absences incur on the district (Bein, 2020). A teacher absence results in the cost of the substitute teacher, the normal cost of the regular teacher’s salary and benefits for a day away from work, and other indirect administrative costs of securing the substitute teacher, processing their pay, and the time that colleagues must spend supporting the substitute teacher. Miller (2012) reports that teacher absences cost public school districts \$4 billion per year.

School district board policies typically require a doctor’s note for absences extending three or more days. In an effort to reduce the misuse of sick days, a number of school districts across the United States offer teachers some type of financial incentive to entice them to maintain regular attendance. These schemes may be in the form of a “carrot”, such as a bonus for “perfect attendance,” prize drawings, gift cards, retirement “buy-backs,” or other financial incentives. Jacobson (1989) was the first to study the relationship between financial incentives and teacher attendance. He found that the presence of a lottery system

positively influenced teachers' regular attendance. Hassink & Koning (2009) studied the effect of a lottery system in a large Dutch manufacturing plant. They found that participation in a lottery likewise reduced absenteeism. However, once an employee won the lottery and was thereafter ineligible for future prizes the employees' absenteeism again rose. While these schemes are intended to reduce "fake" teacher absenteeism whereby healthy teachers are absent from their jobs for one or more days claiming illness, these incentives may have a number of unintended consequences. There is the possibility of spreading illness to colleagues and students when teachers come to school sick and thereby actually increase the absentee rate.

When employees are coaxed into coming to work when ill, the consequence may be the unintended effect of creating a culture of presenteeism. Presenteeism is the practice of coming to work when one is actually experiencing illness. Employees who are induced or "bribed" to come to work when experiencing illness actually impose costs on the employer through reduced productivity and potentially spreading the illness to others—thereby possibly increasing the rate of legitimate illnesses in the organization.

This topic can be an emotional and highly charged issue for school employees. Once given, this benefit or perquisite ("perk,") can be difficult to call back. In a Facebook discussion with a former sixth grade student who is now a middle school teacher, the teacher expressed outrage at the notion of abandoning such a benefit as he viewed it as a reward for his "work ethic" of coming to school every day. He did not see the faulty logic that his admirable "work ethic" should be sufficiently rewarded by his union-negotiated salary and benefits for his regular school attendance.

Since teacher absence rates are not publicly reported in this southern U.S. state,

this study only explores whether the state's school district policies that offer financial incentives for perfect attendance are correlated with negative unintended consequences related to student attendance, student achievement, graduation rates, and other publicly available proxies for school quality.

The hypothesis of this study is that financial incentives for regular attendance at work, such as perfect attendance awards, may reward teachers for coming to school when ill are correlated with unintended negative consequences such as lower student attendance, student achievement, graduation rates, and other indicators of school quality. Whereas earlier research (Jacobson, 1989) studied the impact of financial incentives on reducing teacher absenteeism, this study explores the relationship between financial incentives and unintended consequences by the potential effect of ill employees coming to work and spreading their illnesses. If a relationship is found, the "perfect attendance award" could then be renamed the "come to school sick and make others sick" award.

Theoretical Framework

Presenteeism is the theoretical lens through which this study is conducted. Presenteeism is the practice of coming to work when ill whether due to loyalty, work ethic, fear of job loss, incentives for perfect attendance, or other motivation to come to work every day even when ill. Hemp (2004) defined the issue as:

Presenteeism, as defined by researchers, isn't about malingering (pretending to be ill to avoid work duties) or goofing off on the job (surfing the Internet, say, when you should be preparing that report). The term—which has gained currency despite some academics' uneasiness with its somewhat catchy feel—refers to productivity loss resulting from real health problems.

Presenteeism is related to absenteeism in that absenteeism is concerned with employees not coming to work for a variety of reasons—legitimate or otherwise. Presenteeism would seem to be a problem every employer would like to experience. However, the employer incurs costs associated with reduced productivity of the ill employees as well as the potential of spreading illness among coworkers and resulting in higher overall absence rates in the organization. Teachers fall into the category of employees that are most prone to presenteeism due to the nature of their work. Experienced teachers are likely to tell you that it is far easier to come to school sick than to invest countless hours every day making substitute lesson plans for that unknown day when they wake up sick. Those teachers will tell you that it is simply easier to drag yourself to school and teach the best you can, rather than invest time in substitute lesson plans that may never get used or to then have to reteach material inadequately taught by the substitute teacher. Aronsson et al. (2000) reported:

Members of occupational groups whose everyday tasks are to provide care or welfare services, or teach or instruct, have a substantially increased risk of being at work when sick. These are occupations where relationships with other persons play an important part in work outcome.

Methods & Data Sources

Every school district in this southern U. S. state was contacted by phone in the winter of 2021 to determine if financial incentives of any kind were offered to employees during the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 school years, which were the most recent years that the state department of education posted various categories of publicly reported data for school quality. One hundred seventy-one school districts were contacted to determine

if they offer a perfect attendance financial bonus. Nine districts did not respond to our inquiries after three attempts. Six “special” schools in the state were not included in the study. It should be noted that these years were pre-COVID and unrelated to the issues associated with face-to-face attendance during the recent pandemic.

Data from the state’s website were collected for the following indicators of school quality: student attendance, chronic absenteeism, college admissions, teacher turnover, and graduation rates.

The structure of the data would normally suggest a MANOVA analysis. However, because of some missing data points, the statistical consulting team decided to use Mood’s Median Tests and Mann-Whitney Tests.

Results

One hundred sixty-two school districts responded that they do not offer any type of financial incentive to employees for perfect attendance. Twelve school districts responded that they do offer employees some type of financial incentive for perfect attendance. If school district data were not complete for one of the two studied years, those school districts were not included in the analysis for that variable and therefore the “n” may be different for certain quality factors.

In the Mood’s Median Tests and the Mann-Whitney Tests, the only significant relationship identified was between chronic absenteeism and student attendance, which would be expected. No other significant relationships were identified.

Discussion & Significance

The analysis failed to identify any significant relationship between financial incentives for employee perfect attendance and school quality factors. In other words,

while offering employees a financial incentive for perfect attendance might promote presenteeism, no adverse outcomes were identified. If indeed employees are coming to work ill, there does not appear to have a negative impact on school quality.

Conversely, there is no evidence to suggest that districts offering a financial incentive for perfect attendance achieve any better outcomes than those districts not offering financial incentives. Districts may

feel compelled to offer financial incentives for employee perfect attendance for other reasons, such as the limited availability of qualified substitute teachers or the legal protection of having qualified teachers supervising students. However, student success appears unaffected by a district's financial incentives tied to employee attendance.

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PRACTICE

Servant Leadership: Basic Propositions

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Abstract

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Keywords: servant leadership

Introduction

The study of Leadership, its theory and practice, has an extensive and rich history (English, 2005). Its roots extend far back into the past, involving the study of “Great Leaders” who proceeded this era, in a search for common aspects and principles that hold relevance for current application. The field of Education has adopted, and often co-opted, various practices, procedures, and processes, which could potentially yield greater productivity among organizational members (Black & English, 1987, Taylor, 1911, McGregor, 1960, Barnard, 1938, Deming, 1993, Blackbourn, et al, 2013, Payne, et al, 1995, and English, 2003). Additionally, a combination approach using several aspects of leadership theory drawn from a number of different perspectives has sometimes been employed to address issues and concerns of administrative interest. Servant Leadership (Wallace, 2008; 2009a; 2009b; 2012 ;) is one such example, one of a number of models which is currently finding a place within the field of Educational Leadership.

What is Servant Leadership?

Wallace (2008) defines Servant Leadership by way of our intentional actions, stating that it is, “Using those talents we have been blessed with in unselfish ways to make a positive difference in the World”.

Servant Leadership is a covenant between the leader and those he leads. If a leader’s work is based on a sense of responsibility and/or commitment, or if it is seen as an obligation, the result will eventually be frustration, resentment, and anger. However, if the leader’s work resides in the heart of a servant, the result will be satisfaction and joy.

What Servant Leaders Do

They Listen

Kent Keith, former executive director of the Greenleaf Servant Leadership Center, and author of the paradoxical commandments in his book, *Anyway* (Keith, 2014), lends valuable insight into

the art of authentic, empathetic listening. Quoting Robert Greenleaf, Keith stresses, "...only a true natural servant automatically responds to any problem by listening *first*." (Keith, 2014).

Traditional definitions of leadership often overlook the emotional intelligence of sensing what others need, and then interacting appropriately. Keith addresses this critical attribute of being a skilled and effective listener first—before we plunge into exploring solutions.

*Listening is the premier skill of servant-leaders.

*You can be a good listener if you care about others and what they have to say.

*There are techniques that you can practice that will help you to be a better listener.

*Listening can help you to build relationships, solve problems, seize opportunities—and grow as a person and as a professional. (Keith, 2014).

Discerning and caring leaders—CEOs, managers, doctors, nurses, teachers, school administrators, coaches, pastors, counselors, secretaries--whatever the role in life, at work, leisure, and at home, our most important contribution to the other person's well-being is often to simply listen. And without judgment or a quick answer, but instead with an unselfish focus on the other person's needs.

Larry Spears, perhaps the foremost researcher and author in the servant leadership arena, and Executive Director of the Spears Servant Leadership Center, defines listening as an essential for servant leaders. "Leaders have traditionally been valued for their communication and decision-making skills. While these are also important skills for the servant-leader, they need to be reinforced by a deep commitment to listening intently to others. The servant-leader seeks to identify the will of a group and helps clarify that will. He or she seeks to listen receptively to what is being said. Listening, coupled with regular periods of reflection, is an essential component in the growth of the servant-leader." (Spears, 2013).

They Understand Individual Differences

Servant Leaders understand that, while there are many commonalities among people, each person is an individual and must be approached as such. The Servant leader who listens intently and receptively will soon be able to discern this and attempt to respond as such. Putman (2012) states that, "it would be convenient if all individuals were encountered at similar points in their worldview". However, the reality of working with others is that you have to approach each person at a given, individual point and work forward from there." Ossorio (2006) stated that all persons live in a Real World that has been constructed via experience and thought and that often differs significantly from Reality, or what actually happens. The Real World has rules, relationships, culturally accepted practices and is navigable through each person's individual level of competence in those culturally accepted social practices. This Real World is constantly being reconstructed based upon new information and the person's consideration of that information within the context of events and the practices of an organization's culture. From this perspective a person's Real World is never totally accessible to others. For the Servant Leader, this situation presents a problem in their desire to meet the needs of individual stakeholders.

Fillingim, Bunch, Blackburn (2012), Payne (2004), Hamby, Blackburn, Edmundson, Hampton, & Reardon (1997) and Blackburn, Papasan, Vinson, & Blackburn (2001), Lynch & Kordis (1988) suggest a template for understanding these individual differences in worldview by focusing on observable behavior, value systems, and developmental needs. This model (Graves, 1969; 1970; 1972; 1974) can allow the Servant Leader to understand where each organizational member is "coming from", his or her preferred ways of learning and working, and those conditions that the individuals find to be "motivating". The model can also help the Servant Leader identify the methods and means of helping individual organizational members grow and develop in a

positive manner. Graves' Theory is based on a Socio-biological framework that involves a paradigm and worldview that is imbedded in the neural structure of every individual. Individual behavior is reflective of the particular developmental level at which a person is currently functioning.

Stephen Covey (1998) stated that one should "first seek to understand, then seek to be understood". This perspective requires that any successful Servant Leadership include an understanding of self and of other individuals. The foundation of this approach should involve several critical elements: Among these are:

1. Each individual constructs his own "world" within which he has a "place" and can "act in an intentional way".
2. Individuals vary in terms of the value systems embedded within their worlds.
3. An individual's perception of appropriate and inappropriate behaviors is determined by that individual's values.
4. The value system of a given individual can be determined through observational assessment.
5. Understanding a given individual's value system allows for any interactions to be strategically structured to enhance positive outcomes.

To better understand the nature of "World Construction", the following graphic can be used as a model for the interrelationship between an individual's "world" and his behavior.

Paradigm → World View → Beliefs → Values → Behavior

This model allows one to infer, from observable behavior, what a person values, what he believes, how he sees the world, and the paradigm which he is utilizing. Extensive research (Graves, 1970; 1972; 1974; Hamby & Keeney, 1991; Hamby, Blackbourn, Edmundson, Hampton, & Reardon, 1997; Blackbourn, Papon, Vinson, & Balckbourn, 2001; Fillingim, Bunch, & Blackbourn, 2012)) indicates commonalities among the paradigms utilized by individuals which allows for assignment of these persons to specific groups or Developmental Levels. Knowing a person's functional Developmental Level contribute to a more in-depth understanding of what to expect when dealing with individual persons. The most common Developmental Levels found within current organizational structure include:

They Possess Integrity

Rader (1987) defines integrity as a consistent correspondence between internal values and external behavior. While no academic discipline or professional practice yields much discourse, integrity is a comprehensive and fundamental element in all aspects of the human experience. Integrity underpins each and every relationship in both the personal and professional relationships of all individuals. Indeed, integrity permeates all aspects of our life activity, including that of our personal identity.

Brown (2014) expands on Rader's propositions concerning integrity and further delineates three different dimensions of integrity in Servant Leadership. The quality and depth of these three dimensions are critical to the effectiveness of any Servant Leader. Brown's list includes:

1. Personal Integrity or Character
2. Vocational Integrity of Competence
3. Organizational Integrity or Contribution

While Integrity is a co-equal element in effective Servant Leadership, its role may be the most critical of all. A Servant Leader with integrity displays behavior that is consistent with his speech, the organizations goals, and the shared values of organizational members. Essentially, the leader means what they say, acts accordingly, and “do what they say they are going to do”. These conditions affect the organizational members, their perception of leadership, and the other critical elements of effective Servant Leadership. Integrity builds Trust. Greater trust leads to more openness in Communication. More open and accurate Communication leads to greater understanding of all stakeholders and an improved organizational culture as service becomes the foundation for action.

Integrity is a moral characteristic of leadership and the cornerstone of all other essential characteristics of the Servant Leader. Trust cannot exist without leadership integrity. Positive relationships are built on the trust that has its foundation in integrity. How will a vision be developed and implemented without the personal leadership integrity to inspire and motivate stakeholders? How effective will coaching and mentoring efforts be if there is even the slightest perception of a lack of integrity in the leader? Integrity is not only the foundation of effective Servant Leadership, but also the “glue” that holds the diverse characteristics together.

They Build Trust

Servant leaders realize that a culture of care and trust is a non-negotiable in creating high performing, inspiring organizations. Steven M. R.Covey’s *The Speed of Trust* suggests that this core value is the key to workplace harmony and healthy production, and in our personal lives as well (Covey, 2006). Indeed, Corsba (2004) identifies Trust as the **key** element is a leader’s success, essentially a “make or break” quality of effective leadership.

Organizational health depends on a trusting environment. In *The Advantage* (2012), Patrick Lencioni says such a healthy culture trumps everything else in business, and emphasizes four disciplines: 1) Build a cohesive leadership team; 2) Create clarity; 3) Over-communicate clarity; 4) Reinforce clarity (Lencioni, 2012). Such fierce attention to concise, clear focus can prevent an array of toxic issues, and can fuel a workplace that eliminates misconceptions that can lead to distrusting assumptions.

Often, the leader is oblivious to various personal tendencies, including how he/she is coming across to fellow employees and also family at home. What can result is an ignoring or denying of blind spots, and if not addressed, poor treatment of others around us (Arbinger Institute, 2010).

There is a difference in driven and called leaders. One can become ego driven, while the other is centered on matters of the heart. Investing in and empowering people is among the range of answers to growing high performing organizations, and doing so creates a culture of success and significance (Blanchard, 2007). When such synergy happens, trusting relationships and collaborative work increase, and people enjoy their work and time they spend with others.

Robert Greenleaf introduced the concept of servant leadership in the personal and corporate domains in the 1970’s, as his writings called for leading through serving, and a humility that models not doing what is popular and personally advantageous, but actively caring for others out of goodness and a selfless approach to life. His caution of ambiguity in the organization, and his challenge to be good stewards of our various institutions modeled the importance of creating trust as essential (Greenleaf, 1977).

Larry Spears defines the core value of building trust as ‘community’. “The servant-leader senses that much has been lost in recent human history as a result of the shift from local communities to large institutions as the primary shaper of human lives. This awareness can cause

the servant-leader to seek to identify some means for building community among those who work within a given institution. Servant-leadership suggests that true community can be created among those who work in businesses and other institutions. Greenleaf said: ‘All that is needed to rebuild community as a viable life form for large numbers of people is for enough servant-leaders to show the way, not by mass movements, but by each servant-leader demonstrating his own unlimited liability for a quite specific community-related group.’” (Spears, 2013).

Further, Corsba (2004) lists seven principles of building and maintaining trust. The Servant Leader must constantly weigh all potential decisions to determine if they reflect humility and service or ego and personal ambition. To fail to do so, continually risks the betrayal of the trust invested in that leader. Without trust, even the most potentially effective relationships eventually go awry. Spouses feel betrayed to the vows of marriage. Parents discard the innocence of their children’s belief in them. Friends become competitive. Employees become jealous of each other. Bosses lose the respect of their employees. Organizations lose the support and loyalty of the larger community. In other words, trust is the ‘ethics’ of the relationship...The integrity of the relationship...Servant leaders understand this, and keep their promises and commitment—regardless of personal emotions, gain, or loss. They understand that trust flows from reputation and reputation from character. Reputation is what people think you are. Character is what you actually are. An environment of trust leads to a feeling of safety, in which all can express who and what they are honestly-leading to the establishment of strong relationships.

They Understand and Value Relationships

Servant Leaders by listening, observing, & engaging in critical thinking can begin to understand the needs of others in the organization. Once the specific needs of individual organizational stakeholders can be determined, then Servant Leaders can begin to build in helping organizational members meet those needs & achieve their goals. Successful relationships form the foundation of organizational effectiveness and productivity.

Several years ago, one of the authors of this study passed by the office of a junior colleague. He paused and asked the young professor, “Are you doing any writing?” to which his colleague replied, “Too much going on. I can’t find the time.” The senior faculty member paused and then asked, “Would you like to work with me on a few writing projects I have pending? The response from the junior professor was startling, “You know,” he said, “I have been at this University for 3 years & you are the first person who has ever offered to help me.” A fruitful professional relationship developed between the two faculty colleagues that has extended over the past 15 years. Additionally, the former junior faculty member has become a mentor to several new, incoming faculty as well as many of his doctoral students helping them in the Research/Publication Process. An underlying and unknown feature of this scenario is that the senior faculty member was approached in a similar manner by his major professor during his doctoral program and was approached again when he was an incoming faculty member at the university and was asked the same question by his Dean. In essence, the relationship described originally was a continuation of previous positive and productive relationships. In each case, the mentor recognized and addressed a need in a colleague, building and developing a relationship to foster growth and productivity

Essentially, the mentor assumed the role of a Servant Leader by making a deposit in the junior faculty member’s “Emotional Bank Account” (Covey, 1998). By addressing those needs in others and build the emotional connections between themselves and others. The key to emotional bank accounts is for deposits to exceed withdrawals, otherwise one, “breaks the bank”. Emotional Bank Accounts relate directly to building trust through the Leader being supportive, dependable, and

consistent. They work both ways for those involved and allow the relationship that has been built to be maintained and even grow through difficult and stressful situations in the organization.

They Have a Vision

Servant Leaders understand the importance of not only having a vision for where the organizations they are leading are going, but they also understand the importance of effectively communicating this vision to those around them. According to Kouzes & Posner (2012), Servant Leaders look into the future and have a sense of what is possible when others work together to achieve mutually agreed upon goals and objectives. Looking forward into the future, is a skill in which not all leaders possess.

However, Blackburn, Fillingim, Thomas, McClland, Payne, & Cox (2010) state that the ability to be visionary is a skill that can be developed by a leader and can be facilitated among organizational members. The specific process for fostering visionary skills in individuals includes the steps of: 1) Understanding, 2) Appreciation, & 3) Process. Basically, this involves the Servant Leader guiding the organizational members through an understanding of the meaning or definition of the Vision and why the Vision is important to the success of the organization. Appreciation involves knowing the history of the organization, how it came to be at its current point, and where the Vision is expected to take the organization in the future. The interrelationship of the current Vision with the organization's history is a critical component of becoming visionary, as "He who controls the past, controls the future" (Orwell, 1949). Appreciation further involves a conception of Paradigms, Paradigm Shifts, and Change Waves.

Finally, the Process stage actually involves the organizational members in a dialogue that includes their perspectives on what is the organization's purpose and goals, how it can better serve individuals both external and internal stakeholders, how long any proposed change will take, and how all members can be most productive. The answer to these, and any other questions, can then be used to draft a shared Vision Statement that could be presented to organizational stakeholders for approval. Because the organizational members are all involved in a process that facilitates critical visionary thinking, the resulting Vision Statement is a creation of the group, not a mandate sent down from administrators.

Successful Servant Leaders are not only able to envision the obstacles and challenges their respective organizations may face, but they also must develop a vision for the ways in which their organization will react to and respond to the obstacles and challenges. According to McEwan (2003), creating a vision requires leaders to reflect upon the philosophy of leadership in which their personal leaderships styles based (Lashway, 1996). Servant Leaders follow a philosophy of leadership which places the utmost importance on investing their time and effort into others. By investing their time and effort into those around them, Servant Leaders inspire others to buy into the vision in which they have for their organization.

Bringing organizational members together to work toward a common goal is daunting and having a vision without the people to implement it is useless (McEwan, 2003). Not only do Servant Leaders need people to implement their vision, but they also must be able to communicate their vision in a way which gains buy in and trust.

They Understand that Organizations are Primarily About People

English (1992) reminds us that people are the heart and soul of any organization. They are the most important resource that any organization possesses. They are the core of successful organizational functioning and are literally the "face" your organization presents to the public. Yet,

too often they are considered by leadership to be of “low concern” (De Luce, 2019). In this study, by Bridgewater Associates, highly successful leaders from companies as varied as Microsoft, Amazon, & Tesla, were given a measurement instrument similar to the Myers-Briggs. The results indicated a degree of variance between all the factors except one—Concern for Others. In each case the responses of the leaders surveyed were very similar in that they held low concern for others.

Servant Leaders put the needs of organizational members at the forefront of their leadership style and work diligently to create “People Friendly” organizations. People friendly organizations place the needs, the well-being, the morale, and the perspectives of the employee on an equal level with productivity and the “bottom line”. Needless to say, this is a “natural” for the Servant Leader.

In essence, the atmosphere and culture of the organization should reflect the Servant Leader’s moral integrity. The Servant Leader leads from the heart, leading all organizational stakeholders, both those who are problematic and those who are not.

Recently, a local high school hired a new principal who embodied Servant Leadership. He assumed the position, following the ten-year tenure of a principal who led from a hierarchical perspective. At the initial faculty meeting, he spoke to his teachers about his philosophy and practice with regard to serving them, the students, the parents, and the community, as well as his expectations for servanthood among the faculty. Each faculty member then received a plastic bracelet in the school colors with the word “INAM” on one side. The new principal explained that the term meant, “It’s not about me”. This was the credo he wanted to adopt for organizational operation. It was not about him as the principal, but about the teachers, their support and resource needs. The teachers were encouraged to adopt the credo as; it’s not about them, but about the instructional and emotional needs of the students. He expressed the hope that each day he would have the opportunity to make each one of his teacher’s and student’s day a little better and that they would look for such opportunities in their work as well. Through becoming “other” oriented, the entire school culture could become one of service, acceptance, and inclusion—essentially becoming “people friendly”. They would become an organization that not only cared for each other and their students, but the parents and the entire community as well.

Summary

So, one might ask, “If I do all of the things identified and associated with Servant Leadership will my organization thrive because of adopting this perspective?” It is the opinion of the authors that Servant Leadership is more than the adoption of a specific set of practices and their incorporation into an organization’s culture. What remains absent is the element that underpins successful Servant Leadership— that is “Commitment”. This commitment is a focus and an allegiance to not only the guiding principles of Servant Leadership, but also to the organization, the organizational members, the organizational goals, and (most importantly) the greater good of the community at large. The principles of Servant leadership are not items one can “plug in” and leave to operate on their own. They are essential to every process and system within the organization. Indeed, they are the foundation of organizational operation and success.

Commitment involves a faith and a trust in the guiding principles of Servant Leadership and an associated responsibility to care for and operate in a manner that focuses on the best interests of others. The principles of Servant Leadership are a means by which the leader internalizes the elements, methods, and means of successful organizational functioning and sets the stage for continuous growth of the organization and its members. True Servant Leadership is a reflection of Steven Covey’s premise that, “Nothing happens external to the individual, until something

happens to him internally”. Indeed, Covey (1998) states that, “Anyone can be a Servant Leader. Any one of us can take the initiative; it does not require that we be appointed as a leader; but it does require that we operate from moral authority. The spirit of Servant Leadership is the spirit of moral authority”, and for the vast majority of us this requires a change in our orientation and action away from pragmatic, political leadership. Indeed, Zacharias & Vitale (2014) states “that before a leader can do, a leader must be”. At the most fundamental level, to be effective the Servant Leader must incorporate the entirety of Servant Leadership into the essence of who he is.

Essentially, Servanthood should be apparent our private lives, our habits, our daily activities, as well as our results. This requires a fundamental change in not just philosophy and practice, but in the leader’s very inner nature. It requires true humility and a heart for others. From this perspective, Servant Leadership is not a choice, it is a calling (Blackbourn & Kritsonis, 2009). It is important to note that the term “leader” appears only four times in the entire New Testament, while the term “servant” appears over 1,000 times.

Change has always been an “inside job” and meaningful organizational change involves meaningful personal change. This change is the dividing line between true leaders and those who pose as such (Gies, 1997). It is a change that emphasizes the value of people as individuals and ultimately the center of any process, program, or paradigm (Toffler, 1980). It is the differentiation of superficial change to fundamental change. The key to understanding and incorporating Servant Leadership as one’s essential trait of thinking and operation may be found in the words of E. Stanley Jones (1975) by considering that the Servant Leader and the other organizational members “enter into a fellowship” where they can agree on their similarities or agree to differ, but, always agreeing to untie with mutual respect to serve others.

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