



Getting It Right: Educator Preparation Programs

PEABODY COLLEGE

CAPSTONE PROJECT BY
CARMEN MONTERO GRAF

Dedication

For my *Hispanic heritage* that I hold dear,

For my *Father* who showed me the meaning of *unconditional love and support*... I hope you can see me now,

For my *Mother* who demonstrated a *work ethic* like no other,

For my *Brother and Sisters* who simply said “*you can do it,*”

For my *Husband* who provided the *opportunity and sustained belief,*

For my *Children-- All Five--*who show me each day the *power of love and family,*

And for me... just because *I wanted to.*

About the Author

With over fifteen years in education, Carmen has been privileged to teach at the pre-K and elementary levels. Her roots in teaching began at Head Start in Ohio and a move to the South landed her in Raleigh, North Carolina, where she currently serves as principal of a high poverty, high promise school. Her passion to support students living in poverty stems from her childhood experience and fuels her daily to seek ways to mitigate and overcome barriers for the students she serves. She holds a Bachelor’s Degree in Child Development from Meredith College and a Masters of School Administration from the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill. She is scheduled to earn a doctorate degree from Vanderbilt University in May 2021.



Photo Credit: Meredith College Website

This project is the culmination of doctoral work over the past three years through the Vanderbilt University Peabody College. I selected an area of study that I was passionate about to research as well as to deepen my understanding of the preparation components of educator preparation programs needed to enhance teacher effectiveness in the classroom. I selected a small private college that is in proximity to my work location and one that produces a modest number of teacher candidates that often take teaching positions in my current school district so I could capitalize on the proximity of location and learn first hand about the college's practices for supporting teachers. With the Covid-19 pandemic in full impact, I selected to use a mixed-methods approach for data collection using a survey to collect quantitative data and conducting interviews with completers of the teaching preparation program to allow me to develop a descriptive analysis that is rich and insightful into the effective characteristics of teaching preparation programs.

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Executive Summary

BY CARMEN MONTERO GRAF

Research provides strong evidence that teachers make the most significant contribution to student achievement (Chetty, Friedman, and Rockoff, 2014; Darling-Hammond, 2014; Arrowson, Barrow, & Sanders, 2007; Marzano, Toth, & Schooling, 2018), exemplifying the need to ensure that teacher preparation programs produce teachers who are effective in the classroom. Teacher preparation programs vary considerably at institutions of higher learning across the country, yet the teacher preparation program at Meredith College has a long-standing institutional history of excellence and has developed a conceptual framework for its teaching program that includes the vision of the Meredith College Department of Education and is divided into three themes: teaching, learning, and leading. The Meredith College Education Department seeks to become the premier teacher education program in the Southeast. Its programs strive to be responsive to the needs of public schools, rigorous both in content and pedagogy, and innovative in design and delivery. With this vision in mind, I conducted research on the Meredith Education Program through a review of public documents, surveyed recent graduates of the program



(Year 1, 2, and 3), and conducted follow up interviews with teachers to give a deeper insight into the characteristics of their teacher preparation that they believe most benefited them in the classroom while in the program (practicum and student teaching placement) and after graduation, during their initial teaching experience. I then completed a program evaluation seeking input from program completers, department staff, and college senior-level executives to gain a broader understanding of the vision of Meredith's educator preparation program and goals.

93% of participants reported they were prepared for the realities of the classroom in their first year of teaching.

- **Research Question 1**
 - How prepared are the graduates from the Meredith College of Education Program for the first three years of teaching?
- **Research Question 2**
 - What specific components of the teacher preparation program most support or facilitate those outcomes?
- **Research Question 3**
 - How can the Meredith College Education Department better recruit, prepare, and support teacher candidates for their first three years of teaching?

From the study, graduates overwhelmingly had positive responses towards their level of preparedness for the classroom with 93% of participants responding that they were prepared for the realities of the classroom in their first year of teaching. This positive participant response at Meredith reflects the strength of the current program model while other data indicate areas of possible focus for the Meredith College Education Department. The findings to the research questions are as follows:





Research Findings

Finding 1

MEREDITH COLLEGE PROGRAM COMPLETERS ARE SATISFIED WITH OVERALL PREPARATION, CONTENT PREPARATION, AND DIFFERENTIATION PREPARATION.

Results indicate the answer to the first research question with an overwhelmingly positive response of 93% of participants responding favorably in both survey and interviews they were prepared from their coursework and experiences at Meredith College and had the skills to be effective in the classroom.

Results indicated that 100% felt prepared to deliver content instruction to students in the classroom based on the survey and one-on-one interviews with respondents. Year 1-3 respondents indicated high levels of preparedness to teach their content area across all areas of their licensure. This finding is a strength of the Education Department at Meredith College.

Year 1-3 teacher program completers indicated high levels (94.4%) of agreement on their level of preparation to diversify their instruction to meet student needs. Upon deeper reflection in one-on-one interviews, Year 1-3 teachers indicated a high value on preparation activities to support their instruction of English language learners (ELL) and English Second Language learners (ESL). Participants in the study placed high value of the class that focused on ESL, the resources provided in that class, and the opportunity to implement recommended strategies and practices with small groups of identified students in a practicum setting.

***"I knew I was prepared to teach the content. I wasn't worried about that at all. Meredith prepared me."
-Year 2 Program Completer***

93%

of completers surveyed responded they are satisfied with overall preparation, content preparation, and differentiation preparation for working with ESL students.

61%

of completers believe that they were prepared to teach students to learn how to read.



Photo Credit: Meredith College Website

Finding 2

THERE IS AN INDICATED NEED FOR ADDITIONAL AND SPECIFIC INSTRUCTION IN READING AND FOR INTEGRATING TECHNOLOGY INTO THEIR INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY.

Both interviewees and survey respondents indicated a desire for more reading instruction in order to be more effective in Year 1 of teaching with students. Program completers also indicated the need to be fluid and adaptive with multiple tools, platforms, and apps for technology integration to increase their effectiveness in the classroom upon program completion.

Finding 3

MEREDITH COLLEGE PROGRAM COMPLETERS LIKED THEIR COLLEGE SUPERVISORS, BUT THEY DESIRED MORE SPECIFIC FEEDBACK.

Program completers shared in interviews that they were comfortable with their college supervisor, but desired specific and timely feedback about their strengths and areas for improvement in placements and during their student teaching experience.

Finding 4

MEREDITH COLLEGE PROGRAM COMPLETERS REPORTED A HIGHER NEED FOR PREPARATION AND EXPERIENCES TO TEACH DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS.

This finding came directly from program completers during interview sessions. Respondents shared their desire to impact all students and their challenges with meeting the needs of students who fall into the subgroup of disadvantaged. Program completers want more opportunities to work with students with diverse learning needs.



Finding 5

SUPPORT STRUCTURES AFTER PROGRAM COMPLETION ARE WANTED AND NEEDED BY PROGRAM COMPLETERS.

Program graduates desire support structures and resources from the Meredith Education Department *after* program completion and into the first three years of teaching. Most completers were not aware of the support program offered by Meredith College called the Beginning Teacher Support Program. Although 100% of the respondents indicated a need for the program of support and stated that they would access the program and resources if they had it, only 16.6% of respondents indicated they had knowledge about the program.



100% of respondents indicated a need for support structures; however, only 16.6% of respondents were aware of the current college after completion support program.



1

DEVELOP, TRAIN, AND UTILIZE A STANDARD TREATMENT PROTOCOL FOR PROVIDING TEACHER CANDIDATE FEEDBACK.

Using an established standard protocol for observing and providing feedback for program participants during field placements and student teaching experiences will support the desire for more specific feedback from college supervisors. All supervisors should be trained and given exemplars of high-quality feedback to ensure feedback is specific, gives an opportunity for the student teacher to improve on targeted skills, and considers the context of each placement. The protocol should also reference and align with the Meredith Teacher Conceptual Framework to ensure that there is feedback in the areas that the college feels are most critical to the development of their teacher candidates.

2

DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT AN OPPORTUNITY FOR COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE (COP).

This recommendation is or may be partially in place with the Meredith College Beginning Teacher Support Program referenced earlier in the presentation; however, there is an opportunity for the program stakeholders to scale program impact with more outreach and communication processes about the program level of support and opportunities. There is a high level of interest in this type of support and using the current literature and research around a community of practice from Lave and Wenger (2015), the MC Education Department could be strategic in how much and what type of support is offered. The design of the community of practice will look different depending on the purpose and needs of the participants. Meredith College stakeholders could determine to implement one of the four

types of CoP or more than one type depending on the needs of the current members. Seeking additional information from current students in their formal student placements in addition to the information from the participants who indicated the desire to receive assistance during this study to develop a network would be the starting point of quality improvement action steps for program stakeholders with this recommendation.

Recommendation 3

ENSURE INTEGRATION OF READING INSTRUCTION AND TECHNOLOGY INTO EACH COURSE IN MEANINGFUL AND AUTHENTIC WAYS.

This recommendation stems from the interviewees' desire to become more effective in providing reading instruction to meet the needs of diverse learners. Teaching students to read requires the use of multiple strategies and familiarity with pedagogy and practice. Interviewees and survey respondents indicated the need for additional instruction on how to teach students to read. Additionally, this recommendation comes from the interviewees' desire to become more adaptive and flexible with their technology and to be able to use these skills from Day 1 in the classroom. The current context of Covid-19 exacerbated the need for teachers



to be fluid and adaptive with multiple platforms, apps, and tools. Preparing teachers by having them use such tools in assignments, tasks, and projects will build a skill set that has breadth and depth, ultimately benefiting the teacher and students in the classroom. This recommendation is tightly aligned to the best practices in the literature and the Learning to Teach Framework component of Practices and Tools (Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2007).



Recommendation 4

THE PROGRAM STAKEHOLDERS IN THE MEREDITH COLLEGE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT SHOULD CONSIDER PLACEMENTS FOR ITS FORMAL STUDENT TEACHING IN SCHOOLS WHERE THE STUDENT POPULATION IS DIVERSE AND THAT HAS EXCELLENT MENTOR TEACHERS.

Goldhaber, Krieg, & Theobald consider excellent mentor teachers those who have value-added that is two standard deviations above the average (2017). Having the opportunity to work with students from diverse backgrounds, i.e. race, culture, gender, etc. allow for these novice teachers to put theory, pedagogy, and practices that they have read and learned about into practice, giving them opportunities to succeed and to problem solve and implement different strategies if they don't initially succeed. This recommendation is tightly aligned to the vision of what an effective teacher is and does in the classroom of the College President, Dr. Jo Allen, and is aligned to the Meredith College Teacher Conceptual Framework Vision which states:

"In making instructional decisions, teachers understand that teaching and learning must be relevant to the students; therefore, they create student-centered classrooms and design instruction that addresses the backgrounds and needs of all students inclusively. They practice culturally responsive teaching, are open to cultures and ideas other than their own, connect the content they teach to the lives and the communities of their students, and affirm the cultural practices that students bring to the classroom. They differentiate instruction to meet the needs of students with exceptionalities"

as well as the Learning to Teach Framework component of Tools (Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2005).

Limitations

This capstone project has limitations. Although research began in the Spring of 2020 the Covid-19 pandemic also emerged and impacted the role of the teacher in the classroom. Interviews were conducted in the Winter of 2020-21 and participant feedback and data points reflect the influence of the pandemic on education, the delivery of instruction, teacher needs, and overall feelings of preparedness. Additionally, it should be noted that interviews were conducted over Zoom and Google Meet. However, even with the limitations of conducting this research during a global pandemic and the use of video platforms for interviews, the information presented in this project has the potential for a positive impact on the Meredith College Education Program should the primary stakeholders choose to act upon the findings and recommendations from a quality improvement perspective.

Introduction

BY CARMEN MONTERO GRAF

The importance of effective teachers in classrooms has certainly been debated by stakeholders across the world and there is strong research that emphasizes the impact that an effective or ineffective teacher has on student achievement (Cheety, Friedman, & Rockoff, 2014; Aaronson, Barrow, & Sander, 2007; Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005; Rockoff, 2004). “Since teachers have the most direct, sustained contact with students and considerable control over what is taught and the climate for learning, improving teacher knowledge, skill, and dispositions through professional development is a critical step in improving student achievement” (King and Newman, 2001, p. 45).

For over twenty years, the public has been vocal about the changes needed in education and teacher education programs. In a national survey roughly “nine out of ten Americans believe the best way to lift student achievement is to ensure a qualified teacher in every classroom” (Haselkorn and Harris, 1998 as cited in the National Academy Press, 2001). In 2014, the U. S. Department of Education stated “too many future teachers graduate from prep programs unprepared for success in the classroom” and called for support and the development of a system that encourages all teacher preparation programs to improve.

The feelings and perceptions of the public were reiterated in the 2019 Gallup Survey in which 52% of American public participants responded in favor of including student performance in teacher evaluations. Increasing the rigor of the entrance requirements was favored by three out of four respondents. A third perception of two out of three participants also believes that increasing the rigor of college teacher preparation programs would produce more effective teachers (Gallup, 2019). Undoubtedly, the role of the teacher is to impact student learning, thus the importance of high-quality teacher preparation programs to produce high quality and effective teachers to enter schools prepared to impact students in the classroom.

"Roughly 9 out of 10 Americans believe the best way to lift student achievement is to ensure a highly qualified teacher in every classroom"



Recent research on teacher quality associates high-quality teaching with higher levels of student achievement (Chetty et al., 2014; Rivkin et al. 2005; Rockoff 2004; Sanders, 1997). Additionally, findings from the recent New York City School District by Boyd et al. (2009) where 31 teacher preparation programs were reviewed through document analyses, interviews, surveys, and value-added scores, indicated a relationship between teacher preparation in one subject area then the program tended to be successful in preparing teacher candidates to teach other subject areas as well. The focus on the practice of teaching in the classroom in teacher preparation programs also yielded more prepared teachers in the classrooms, along with the incorporation of a final project element, such as a portfolio presentation, research paper, or cumulative project element was associated with more prepared and effective teachers. With the idea of well-prepared teachers and their impact, along with the perceptions of Americans about the importance of a qualified teacher in every classroom, I want to focus on the current characteristics of teacher preparation programs, specifically seeking to identify the characteristics that define and produce well-prepared and highly-qualified teachers that positively impact student outcomes.



Geographic Context

Raleigh is the capital city of North Carolina. It is known for its proximity to multiple universities and colleges, including Meredith College, the thirteenth female Baptist college in the nation. The number of technology and scholarly institutions around Raleigh, Chapel Hill, and Durham make the area known as the Research Triangle. As of 2011, Time Magazine ranked Raleigh as the third most educated city and WalletHub listed Raleigh as the 2nd most educated city in the US-based on the percentage of residents who held college degrees. This can most likely be credited to the presence of universities in and around Raleigh (McCann, 2019). Raleigh also boasts the largest public school system in North Carolina, the Wake County Public School System, referred to as WCPSS.

School System Context



Wake County Public School System (WCPSS) has a total student enrollment of 162,907 students. Enrollment consists of 83,271 male and 78,912 female students. The school system serves a diverse student population of 45.3% White, 22.3% Black, 18.4% Hispanic, 9.8% Asian, 3.8% Multi-Race, 0.2% American Indian, and 0.1% Pacific Islander, (WCPSS District Facts, 2019). There has been a strong emphasis on the district's strategic plan, Vision 2020, that sets a district goal of annually graduating at least 95% of its students ready for productive citizenship as well as higher education or a career" (WCPSS District Facts, 2019). WCPSS' graduation rate has increased over 10 percentage points over the past 10 years, from 78.4% in 2009 to 89.1% in 2018. Most subgroups have made substantial gains and have led to a narrowing of the graduation gap between subgroups. Despite these gains, graduation rates for Hispanic/Latino and Black students still fall behind those of White students by 17.4% and 10.5%, respectively. With a persistent gap in performance and student outcomes, the need for highly effective teachers who have the skills to positively impact students is significant. WCPSS employs 10,421 teachers, while some candidates come from out of state and even out of the country to teach in the district, many graduate from the surrounding area universities and college teacher preparation

programs, thus the need to examine closely the teacher preparation program characteristics and effectiveness in preparing candidates to meet the diverse needs of students in the classroom.

Organizational Context

Meredith College, the largest private school for women in the Southeast, is a four-year, human sciences higher education institution situated in Raleigh. It owes its beginnings to Thomas Meredith, who in 1838, alongside other North Carolina Baptists, required the foundation of a female theological school of high regard (Maxwell, 2016). It was not until 1889 that the Baptist Convention approved such a theological school. In 1891 the Baptist Female University was established under the protection of the Southern Baptist State Convention. The first graduating class of 1902 comprised of ten graduates. The school's name was changed to Baptist University for Women in 1904, and lastly to Meredith College, to pay tribute to Thomas Meredith, in 1909. Today, the student body nears almost 2,000 and now includes men at the graduate level. The college offers over 80 undergraduate majors, minors, and concentrations and 27 coeducational graduate and certificate programs. The student to staff ratio is 11:1



allowing the potential for personalized learning for students. The average class size is 16. Meredith College holds many accolades including being consistently ranked both a top regional and national college by U.S. News and World Report along with being

- ranked in the top 25% of liberal arts colleges in the country by high school counselors, according to U.S. News and World Report
- ranks among the top 20% of colleges in the country by Forbes
- is one of the “Best Colleges in the Southeast” according to The Princeton Review
- is one of the Top Ten Colleges in North Carolina according to USA Today College
- was among the “Top 50 Alma Maters of National Board Certified Teachers.” Meredith was one of only two private institutions in the U.S. to make the list, which is compiled

by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (Meredith College Quick Facts, 2020).

The mission statement for the Education Department is to “prepare reflective practitioners who have the 21st-century knowledge, skills, and values to effectively teach all students” (Appendix #1; Meredith College, 2020). There is a focus on reflection as an essential characteristic of improving the quality of teaching. This reflective practice allows graduates, called Meredith teachers, to “examine the dilemmas of classroom practice within the cultural contexts in which they teach, ...question assumptions they bring to teaching and strive to understand how their actions impact their students” (Meredith College, 2020). The Education Department touts that its teaching alumni to perform at high levels on statewide teacher performance measures (EVAAS, CAEP

Components 4.1-4.3) and progress on to hold school, district, and state-level leadership positions. Many Meredith alumni earn awards in their schools and school systems each year. Meredith alumni have been recognized as “North Carolina Principal of the Year, North Carolina Secondary Assistant Principal of the Year, Gilder Lehrman North Carolina History Teacher of the Year, and recipient of the Milken Educator Award, known as the ‘Oscar’ of teaching” (Meredith College Quick Facts, 2020). Meredith College does not offer a major in education, rather, it requires a program of general education that “assures that all teachers will be broadly educated and able to meet the needs of all students in an era of change” and using that philosophy as a model, students do not major in education, but complete a self-selected liberal arts major (Meredith Education Program Requirements, 2020). Teaching licensure is offered in 18 areas across Birth through Kindergarten (B-K), Elementary Education (K-6), Middle Grades (6-9), Secondary Education (9-12), and Special Subjects. Meredith College also offers three Master's programs: Master of Education, Master of Arts in Teaching, and Master of Special Education. This research study will focus only on the Bachelor's level of education degree, as the goal is to gain insight into the preparation program and experiences during the first three years of teaching after program completion.

The vision of the Meredith College Department of Education “embodies teaching, learning, leading” (Meredith College, 2020). The vision references the desire to be responsive to the needs of public schools, in which 78% of their program graduates begin teaching in a public school within one year of graduation. “We are proud of our Education program, but even more so we are proud of our graduates. They are dedicated teachers and leaders in their schools who work to meet every student where they are and help them to grow academically, emotionally, and socially,” said Assistant Professor of Education Heather Bower, who serves as Department Head. “We are thrilled to watch them grow into those teachers while they are with us and then support them in their own classrooms” (Meredith College, 2020).

It should be noted, as I consider context, this capstone project was researched and completed during the time of the Covid-19 global pandemic. This is an important, unexpected, external factor that influenced the primary stakeholders in the Education Department at Meredith College, the participants, and the researcher to varying degrees.

Area of Inquiry

Effective teacher preparation programs are crucial to the production of high-quality teacher candidates to fill the needed role of teachers in private, public, and charter schools across our nation. The quality of teaching is the most important factor impacting student achievement (Marzano, Toth, & Schooling, 2018; Darling-Hammond, 2006; King & Newman, 2001). Recent concerns with the teacher supply, quality, retention, and attrition have charged debates in the educational community, with policymakers, and the public as to how best to prepare teachers to be effective in the classroom. With these debates come reform efforts and top-down initiatives for improvement and teacher preparation programs found themselves reevaluating their programs in order to adjust to new demands and directives. Data regarding job-mortality of teachers in their first five years of teaching (Garcia, E. & Weiss, E., 2018; U.S. Department of Education, 2014; Darling-Hammond, 2006) indicates a high proportion of teachers leaving the education field prompting a deeper and more intensive review of how best to support teachers while in their teacher preparation programs and immediately after completion, into the first five years of teaching.

The Meredith College Education Department strives for continuous improvement and through their efforts, they desire to make necessary

changes that can lead to stronger preparation of teacher candidates, increased retention of candidates in the program leading to higher completion rates, and “teachers who can be effective from day 1 in the class and that stay in the classroom providing a top-notch education to students across North Carolina” (J. Allen, January 12, 2021). Continuous improvement efforts in organizations have a significant amount of research and findings.

In education, continuous improvement can refer to a school, district, or other organization's ongoing commitment to quality improvement efforts that are evidence-based, integrated into the daily work of individuals, contextualized within a system, and iterative (Park, Hironaka, Carver, & Nordstrum, 2013). Quality improvement methodology is being applied in education toward the goals of making education more efficient, effective, and equitable. Quality improvement efforts can lead to collective impact when done in iterative cycles across an organization (Bryk, Gomez, Grunow, & LaMehieu, 2015). With the current research and methodology in mind regarding quality improvement and program evaluation, the researcher sought to better understand the teacher preparation phenomena in a close examination of the current components of the Meredith Education Teacher Program,

the perceptions of recent graduates on their level of preparedness for their first three years of teaching, and the program senior management vision of increasing collective impact to better recruit, prepare, and support teacher candidates.

Literature Review

A review of related literature demonstrates three areas where teacher preparation programs tend to fall short: inconsistencies with program preparation components, a lack of coherence in what educators need to know and what educators should be able to do in the classroom, and lastly how best to deliberately prepare and continuously support teachers from making the transition from their program to the classroom successfully and effectively (Goldhaber, Krieg, & Theobald, 2017; Goodwin, A., Smith, L., Souto-Manning, M., Cjeruvu, R., Tan, M.Y., Reed, R., & Taeras, L., 2014; Armstrong, 2007; Darling-Hammond, 2005).

To better understand the research, we must take a historical perspective of teacher preparation to develop a sense of context for the purpose of teachers and teacher preparation programming.

Historical Review

During the nineteenth century “normal schools” or a school that offered teacher training, but not a college degree, were being established across America. Getting their origin from France and the phrase *ecole normale*, meaning “standard or model school” (Alston, 2016). These teacher-training institutions, the first of which was established in France by the Brothers of the Christian Schools in 1685, were intended to set a pattern, establish a “norm” after which all other schools would be modeled for teacher preparation (Boyd, 2017; Hilton, 2008; Haeussler & Null, 2007). During this time, men often moved on from teaching positions to more higher-paying jobs (Darling-Hammond, 2016; Hilton, 2008) allowing for women to move into the role and fill the need for teachers in schools. Many of these normal schools eventually became known as today’s teacher colleges or universities.

Massachusetts was the home of the first normal school in 1839 (Alston, 2016) and by the beginning of the Civil War, twelve normal schools were operating. The focus of teacher preparation was on subject matter knowledge combined with a small portion of instruction on pedagogy (Ogren, 2005).

By the start of the 1900's the number of public school teachers doubled from 200,000 to over 400,000, creating a high need for the consistent preparation of teachers (Labaree, 2004). The work of common school champions such as Horace Mann and other normal school supporters pushed for expansion and by 1910 there were 180 normal schools spread across the United States. Teacher preparation in normal schools was expanding and focused on the subject matter, pedagogy, and now field experience. The subject matter preparation was becoming more specific and included history, math science, and English. The pedagogical focus and field experience work now included observation and practice teaching (Larabee, 2004; Ogren, 2005), now known as "student teaching" in elementary schools.

Inconsistent Program Components

Teacher preparation continued to evolve into the twentieth century and now is regulated and formalized within higher education. Colleges and universities today offer liberal arts curricula and there are approximately 1,200 teacher preparation programs across the U.S. Typical characteristics and structures of teacher preparation are present across the 2,000 programs; however, there is a variance present in how each teacher education program meets

the requirements for each structural feature (Armstrong, 2007; Levine, 2006; Boyd, et. al, 2009). The balance between pedagogy and content knowledge continues to be a challenge for teacher preparation programs. Some proponents of teacher educator programs believe that subject knowledge courses as the primary preparation of teacher preparation programs is better. Research confirms that there is little definitive evidence that more specific-subject courses improve teacher performance in the classroom and leaves this area open for further research before strong conclusions can be drawn (Wilson, Floden, & Ferrini-Mundy, 2001). Additionally, there has been an increased push for more pedagogical courses and work for novice teachers in programs "to give the opportunity to take in such areas of instructional methods, learning theories, foundations of education, and classroom management" and research confirms that there is some evidence suggesting that the content methods matters for teacher effectiveness, the results give little insight into which aspects of pedagogical preparation are most critical (Wilson, Floden, & Ferrini-Mundy, 2001).

Lack of Coherence

Wilson, Floden, and Ferrini-Mundy (2001) from the Center of Teaching and Policy conducted research on more than 300 peer-reviewed, published reports about teacher preparation. They examined 57 reports closely as they sought to find answers to critical questions about teacher preparation. Their findings provided guidance for important areas to be pursued and some collections of work that point towards how we can improve, but ultimately, they confirm that the research is “uneven in some areas and lays the groundwork for rigorous research to come”. Goldhaber, Krieg, and Theobald (2017) researched the educator program component of the student teaching experience specifically. This research team found the student teaching experience as the most important aspect of a highly effective clinical program (Goldhaber, et. al., 2017; Boyd, Grossman, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2009; Ronfeldt, Schwarz, & Jacob, 2014).

In addition to identifying the components of the educator teacher preparation program and the need and importance of the student teaching experience, variance into what the student teaching experience should include is also debatable by those invested in teacher preparation. Darling-Hammond references the student teaching experience as “graduated responsibility... gradually taking on more and more independent practice...with the mentors still there, giving advice and counsel and helping to problem solve” (2001), while others feel strongly the time with students is an important factor in teaching preparation and thus preparation programs are extending the student teaching experience from a semester-long to a full year-long student teaching experience (Pomerance, L. & Walsh, K. 2020). The National Council on Teacher Quality released findings of its comprehensive study in the October 2020 Teacher Prep Review stating the “quality of clinical practice opportunities remains a problem of deep concern” citing that “most traditional programs still earn a C, showing no signs of progress since 2013” (Pomerance, et. al., 2020). Regardless of the amount of time dedicated to the student teaching experience or the emphasis on varying components, higher learning institutions continue to be challenged in providing a quality clinical experience for their teacher candidates.

It is these variations in what constitutes an effective teacher preparation program that has led to an increased level of debate, regulation, and increased ideas on how to measure effectiveness that contributes to an overall lack of coherence in how best to prepare teachers and what teachers should know and be able to do.

Dr. Arthur Levine, former President of the Woodrow Wilson Foundation, served as president and professor of Education at Teachers College, Columbia University, confirms that there are “competing beliefs and on issues as basic as when and where teachers should be educated, who should educate teachers, and what education is most effective in the preparing teachers” (2006) and he goes on to reinforce the belief that the “quality of tomorrow will be no better than the quality of our teacher force.” Even through all of this variance, one constant remains: the importance of effective and prepared teachers. Thus the importance of identifying how best to move forward in preparing teacher candidates in education programs.

“

**The quality of tomorrow
will be no better than the
quality of our
teacher force.**

”

Arthur Levine, 2006

How best to support the transition from teacher candidate to educator

With high job-mortality rates of teachers within the first five years of teaching, it is critical that support and resources be firmly established in order to keep highly effective teachers in the field (Henry, Purtell, Bastian, Fortner, Thompson, Campbell, and Patterson, 2013; Ingersoll & Merrill, 2010; Darling-Hammond, 2005). Current estimates reflect teacher attrition rates in the mid forty percent range. Linda Darling-Hammond, researcher, and professor in education and teaching describes effective teacher preparation practices, stating “the better-prepared teachers are, the longer they are likely to stay teaching and the more likely they are to actually enter teaching” (2001). Too many teachers, both novice and veteran are leaving the profession (Ingersoll, 2001). To support teachers remaining in the field after program completion, many colleges and universities have established intensive support programs that include professional development opportunities, access to college and university resources, and mentoring. These intensive support programs are in addition to the many inductions or beginning teacher support programs offered in school districts when new teachers begin

working and are often associated with specific schools or districts, until the shift in new standard with accreditation.

The Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) standard requires that teacher preparation programs follow their program completers into their first years of teaching seeking information on the impact on student growth and achievement, satisfaction with preparation, and demonstration of effective teaching practices in the classroom. The accreditation and licensing requirements give higher learning institutions frame and articulate what their graduates should know and be able to do (Darling-Hammond, 2016). These mandates from CAEP are relatively new, and they are changing the way in which teacher preparation programs prepare and track their graduates. “While the main incentive of meeting the CAEP’s policy is accreditation, knowing how well their graduates were prepared for the teaching profession, as well as holes that need to be filled-in in order to for better preparation and satisfaction, may provide teacher preparation programs with the information they need to improve their programs” (Tygret, 2018, p. 710).

Research Questions and Conceptual Framework

Three research questions were posed for this capstone study. All three questions were crafted to guide the investigation into the teacher preparation program of the college, while question three lent itself to deeper learning and probing about the needs of the teachers as they enter the teaching profession and begin to establish themselves as educators in the classroom.

The table below organizes the research questions and aligns the method of data collection with the area of inquiry.

Table 1**Research Question, Method of Data Collection, and Area of Focus**

Research Question	Method of Data Collection	Area of Inquiry
How prepared are the graduates from the Meredith College of Education program for the first three years of teaching?	Teacher Survey Teacher Interviews MC Completer Annual Survey	Perception of Preparedness Effectiveness in the classroom
What specific components of the teacher preparation program most support or facilitate these outcomes?	Teacher Survey Teacher Interviews MC Completer Annual Survey	Components of the EPP MC Education Department Conceptual Framework Organizational Improvement
How can the Meredith College Education Department better recruit, prepare, and support teacher candidates for their first three years of teaching?	Teacher Interviews Leadership Interviews MC Completer Annual Survey	Components of the EPP Meredith Professional Support Program

Research Question 1

- **How prepared are the graduates from the Meredith College of Education Program for the first three years of teaching?**

This question addresses the perceptions of preparedness of Year 1, 2, and 3 completers of the education program at Meredith College. This question was formulated to give the opportunity for participants to share their perception of their own level of preparedness in multiple areas, including classroom management, lesson planning, and unit design, analyzing data, instructional decision making, and providing differentiated instruction in order to meet the diverse learning needs of students. Understanding the perceptions of program completers will give insight to both the professors who teach the education and methods courses and the Department Head, who will make decisions about programming, areas of needs, supports, and resources.

- **Research Question 2**

- **What specific components of the teacher preparation program most support or facilitate those outcomes?**

Question 2 again focuses on teacher perception of the level of preparedness. However, it offers completers of the education program the opportunity to share specific aspects and characteristics of the education program that influenced their effectiveness or vice versa, aspects or characteristics that did not facilitate the positive outcomes. This question allows an opportunity for reflection, not only from completers, but also from program stakeholders, including those who directly influence course programming, resources utilized in coursework, and the experiences in which teacher candidates have opportunities to engage in.

- **Research Question 3**

- **How can the Meredith College Education Department better recruit, prepare, and support teacher candidates for their first three years of teaching?**

Question 3 addresses teacher perception about the level of support needed to effectively teach in a classroom during the first three years of teaching after completing the Meredith Teacher Education Program. Due to the high job mortality rate of teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2016) 44% of teachers leave the education field within the first five years of teaching. Since Meredith College offers support and resources to all completers of their program for five years after program completion, the data collected from their question will support programming, identifying potential areas of strength for replication and areas of need for further support.

This research question also focuses on the recruitment and preparation of teacher candidates. The responses and data collected from this inquiry will allow for reflection on the types of support available to teacher candidates entering the education program as well as during their participation in the program. Program stakeholders and leadership can utilize this data for future decisions in programming, and allocation of supports and materials, as well as give an indication of potential areas of success and areas for further investigation.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

To build a framework for understanding what components must be included in an educator preparation program, I draw on the Learning to Teach Framework from Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden (2007). This framework allows for an understanding of the concept of educator preparation programs and offers a deeper understanding of how new teachers learn best. Darling-Hammond and Baratz-Snowden sought to identify the components of effective educator preparation programs in their work with the National Academy of Education Committee on Teacher Education, *A Good Teacher in Every Classroom* (2007). Although Darling-Hammond and Baratz-Snowden identify additional practices and concepts that are relevant to educator education programs, the focus on the components they include in the Learning to Teach Framework are those which support and yield strong student achievement. Thus, the framework is represented as Figure 1 and encompasses the following: vision, knowledge, practices, dispositions, tools, and the learning community.

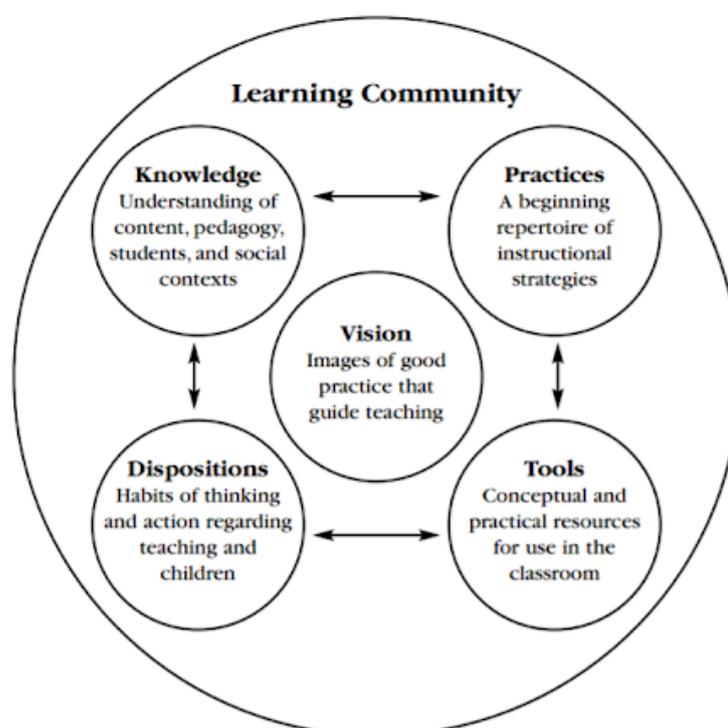
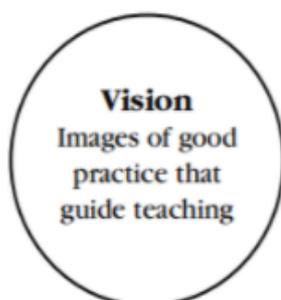


Figure 1: A Framework for Learning to Teach

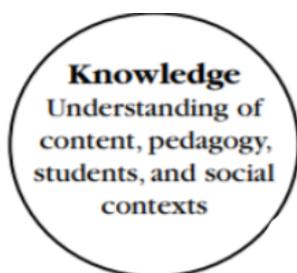
Table 2: The Learning to Teach Framework Components and Description

Reproduced from the Learning to Teach Framework by Linda Darling-Hammond and Baratz-Snowden, 2007 from the National Academy of Education Committee on Teacher Education, A Good Teacher In Every Classroom, 2007).

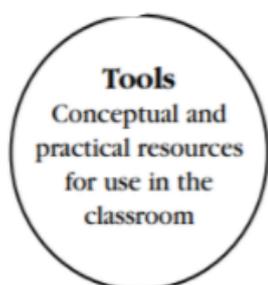
Framework Component	Framework Component Description
Learning Community	Symbolizes teacher learning, like student learning is contextual
Vision	Images of good practice that guide teaching
Knowledge	Understanding of content, pedagogy, students, and social contexts
Tools	Conceptual and practical resources for use in the classroom
Practices	A beginning repertoire of instructional strategies
Dispositions	Habits of thinking and action regarding teaching and children



The **Vision** Component is at the heart of the framework and it “involves the teacher’s sense of where they are going and how they are going to get students there” (Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2007, p. 120). Images of good practice support beginning teachers to reflect and assess their own teaching and their student’s learning.



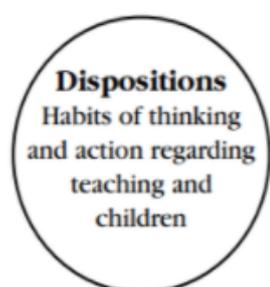
The **Knowledge** Component encompasses a teacher’s understanding of content, pedagogy, students, and the social context. How a teacher makes this knowledge accessible for students requires a deep understanding of how others learn and how to validate this learning within different social contexts requires an understanding of learners and their development.



Teachers need to develop and utilize tools in the classroom that allow them to put what they know into practice, thus the **Tools** Component of the framework. These tools can be conceptual such as learning theories and ideas about teaching or practical tools such as assessments, instructional delivery formats, curriculum guides, or other instructional material. These tools allow teachers to work more effectively.



The **Practices** Component of the framework works in sync with the Tools component. A teacher must be able to put into place practices for use in the classroom. Practices range from the planning of learning by designing learning activities and lesson plans to establishing norms for student discourse that foster effective communication skills. Darling-Hammond and Baratz-Snowden remind us with this component of the framework that a teacher “must not only know the content of the practices but also when, where, how, and why to use particular approaches” (2007, p. 122).



Habits of thinking and action about teaching, children, and the role of teacher fall in the **Dispositions** Component of the framework. Here teachers connect knowledge of the subject matter to the tools and practices that impact student learning in the classroom. Dispositions could include the teacher’s ability to reflect and learn from practice, persistence in implementing strategies with a student until they succeed, or adaptability to change a lesson in order to meet student needs more effectively.

The **Learning Community** Component encompasses all of the other components and it symbolizes that teacher learning, like student learning, is contextual. The Learning Community situates the teacher in professional learning communities, among teachers who are more experienced, and those teachers who have found success in the classroom with their practices. This learning community can be “especially powerful influences on learning, especially when there is a collective knowledge and common goals” (Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2007, p. 123).

Organizational Improvement

Teacher education program reform has called for the development of coherent connections between the consistent visions of effective teaching to implement practice for the last 20 years (Darling-Hammond, Hammerness, Grossman, Rust, & Shulman, 2005). Systematic organizational improvement in schools is complex. It is informed by personal, contextual, pedagogical, sociological, and social knowledge (Goodwin & Kosnik, 2013). The Meredith College Education Department seeks to make continuous improvements to its programming in order to offer the best learning opportunities for its program participants. In their efforts to seek current practices for organizational improvement, the researcher identified the work and growing body of research on organizational improvement.

Improvement often involves a systematic approach that follows a specific methodology but there are different approaches to be considered. One such approach from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching draws on the research on improvement science to show how a process of disciplined inquiry can be combined with the use of networks to identify, adapt, and successfully scale up promising interventions

in education (Bryk, A., Gomez, L., Grunow, L., LeMahieu, P., 2015). Organized around core principles, the approach is used to accelerate the learning of the professionals in the organizational setting. The Six Core Principles of Improvement provide a framework for change are as follows:

1. Make the work problem-specific and user-centered.
2. Variation in performance is the core problem to address.
3. See the system that produces the current outcomes.
4. We cannot improve at scale what we cannot measure.
5. Anchor practice improvement to disciplined inquiry.
6. Accelerate improvements through networked communities.

As the stakeholders in teacher preparation programs focus their efforts on meeting and exceeding CAEP standards and better preparing their teacher candidates to be effective in classrooms, the Six Core Principles will be relevant for consideration as a process approach for making improvements based on its flexibility in working across various organization types. This research project connects the Six Core Principles of Improvement to the work of the Meredith College Beginning Teacher Support Program.

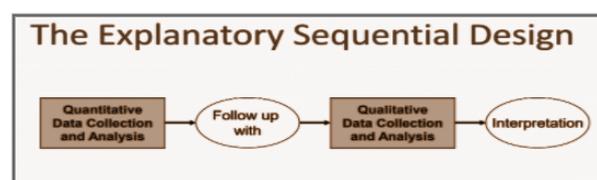
Project Design

Mixed methods research is a methodology for conducting research that involves both quantitative and qualitative research methods (collecting, analyzing, and integrating) in a single study. This type of research can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the issue better than looking at either quantitative or qualitative separately (Creswell, 2007). This study utilized a mixed-methods approach that combines qualitative and quantitative methodologies to answer all three research study questions. A mixed-methods approach allows the opportunity to consider more carefully what your quantitative results mean. When combined with quantitative techniques (Small, 2011; Yoshikawa, Weisner, Kalil & Way, 2008,), gathering qualitative data and using qualitative analysis ideally helps you better understand your topic of study and conduct stronger research (Sladek, 2017). The combination of both qualitative and quantitative methods complemented the study of the characteristics of the Meredith Teacher Preparation Program, as this allows the researcher to gain “coherence, depth, and density of the material each respondent provides” (Weiss, 1995, p. 3), ultimately providing the researcher with a fuller understanding of the experiences of the respondents with the use of qualitative methods of interviews while the survey data provided

objective and standardized questions and responses permitting comparisons among subgroups of respondents, allowing for Meredith College teacher completers' responses to be compared to those of other teacher graduate programs, allowing for quantified analysis. Drawing on the work of Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) John Driscoll created a visual of the explanatory sequential design, which this study sought to implement.

The visual of the mixed-methodology is Visual #1 below and it demonstrates the explanatory sequential design emphasis of initially collecting and analyzing the quantitative data in Phase 1 and then moving to the qualitative data collection process and analysis in Phase 2, allowing for a fuller, more rich and robust understanding of variables, components, and perceptions in the interpretation component.

Visual 1: The Explanatory Sequential Design as Connected to Phase 1 and 2 of Research Design



Credit: J. Driscoll, 2007 Nova SouthEastern University Abraham Fischler School of Education, 2007.

The sources of evidence used to develop inferences about program quality each have strengths and limitations. Data collected from internal and external sources provided perspective into the context of the program-specific characteristics. Appendix # 2 provides a detailed list of internal documents requested from Meredith College Education Department and Meredith College.

Additionally, this study synthesizes relevant research on existing evaluation approaches of teacher preparation programs and analyzes issues relevant to the college and the field itself. Considering the challenges of a small private institution relative to the challenges faced by larger public institutions gives perspective and contributions to the validity of the research design. Therefore, understanding the positionality of Meredith College, specifically, the Education Department can provide cognizance and valuable insight.

Lastly, this study utilized secondary analysis of survey data collected in the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 academic school years collected by the Meredith Education Department from all completers of the education program. This allowed for an additional layer of analysis of the phenomenon of improving educator preparation programs based on program completer feedback. Here, secondary analysis occurred in the review and analysis of “exit survey data” and NCTER data initially collected by the Education Department.



Quantitative Methodology

The Education Department at Meredith College is relatively small, particularly in comparison to neighboring universities and institutions that are much larger and produce more graduates; however, the department has been consistent in producing program completers since inception. The relatively small size of the program has allowed for the Education Department to implement data collection practices that are efficient, such as administering an Exit Survey to all program completers in conjunction with the application for their teaching license, ensuring that the Department receives timely data across all areas of licensure and from all eligible candidates. This data is reviewed by the Education Department Head as well as the teaching professors. A review and analysis of data points from the 2018-2019 and the 2019-2020 Department Data Summaries were conducted (see Appendix Data Summaries).

In addition to the Exit Survey, the Education Department also uses the Midterm North Carolina Teacher Candidate Evaluation Rubric (NCTCER) as a key performance indicator. The Education Department collects and monitors data points from the NCTCER at midterm and year-end. The Education Department utilizes midterm scores for program evaluation “because all students (teacher candidates)

must be proficient or above at the end of the semester in order to receive a license” (Bower, H., 2021).

Both the Exit Survey and the NCTCER Midterm give data that lend itself to analysis and interpretation of currently enrolled students in the Education Department at the college. The third key performance indicator utilized by the Education Department is collected and provided by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. Annually, the NCDPI collects and summarizes the number of graduates in their first three years of teaching who score at each level on Standards 1 through Standard 5 on the North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Rubric. This report also provides summary data for how many teachers met, exceeded, or did not meet the expected growth targets on End of Grade or End of Course Tests in Standard 6 based on EVAAS effectiveness formulas. This data is important to the Education Department as it reflects program completers competence and effectiveness in multiple counties across NC,

and in various school districts, giving a perspective into overall teacher impact. To complement the established KPI's of the Education Department, I decided to delve deeper into the specific data points being measured with a survey tool developed to focus on specific areas of educator program preparation to explore and gain further feedback from program completers. The survey development was based on the current conceptual framework by the Meredith College Department of Education called the Teaching Learning, Leading Framework pictured below (Visual #1) and the Learning to Teach Framework based on the work of Darling-Hammond and Baratz-Snowden (2005). Although Meredith College currently utilizes its own conceptual framework, a comparison of similarities and differences to the Learning to Teach Framework allows for comparison in specific teacher preparation program components where additional research can be sought and applied as guidance in the Departments's continuous improvement efforts.



APPENDIX TABLE 4

Visual Comparison of Meredith College Education Department Conceptual Framework to the Learning to Teach Framework by Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden (2007).

Meredith College Department of Education Conceptual Framework	Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden Learning to Teach Framework
 <p>The logo is a circular emblem divided into four quadrants. The top-left quadrant is green with the text 'GLOBAL AWARENESS'. The top-right quadrant is blue with the text 'CONTENT KNOWLEDGE'. The bottom-left quadrant is purple with the text 'STRONG LEADERSHIP'. The bottom-right quadrant is red with the text 'STUDENT GROWTH'. In the center, the text 'TEACHING, LEARNING, LEADING' is written across three lines.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Practice global awareness through culturally responsive, inclusive, and connected pedagogy. 2. Understand the content they teach. 3. Contribute to student growth and learning. 4. Exhibit leadership. 	 <p>The diagram is a circular flowchart titled 'Learning Community'. It features five interconnected nodes: 'Knowledge' (Understanding of content, pedagogy, students, and social contexts), 'Practices' (A beginning repertoire of instructional strategies), 'Tools' (Conceptual and practical resources for use in the classroom), 'Dispositions' (Habits of thinking and action regarding teaching and children), and 'Vision' (Images of good practice that guide teaching). Arrows indicate relationships between these nodes.</p> <p>Figure 3. A Framework for Learning to Teach</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Knowledge: Understanding of content, pedagogy, students, and social contexts. 2. Practices: A beginning repertoire of instructional strategies. 3. Tools : Conceptual and practical resources for use in the classroom. 4. Dispositions: Habits of thinking and action regarding teaching and children. 5. Vision: Images of good practice that guide teaching.

Similarities	Differences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Refer to culturally responsiveness or dispositions needed to be effective in the classroom with children, -Discuss content knowledge and pedagogy, - Reference the practices for effective instruction to support student learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The Teaching, Learning, and Leading framework has leadership as a primary focus for candidates. -The concept of vision of good teaching is specified clearly in the Learning to Teach framework; whereas, vision of effective teaching is implied in the Teaching, Learning, and Leading Framework.

The comparison and differences will support the identification of areas of strengths and potential needs for the Meredith Education Department stakeholders.

Survey questions were adapted based on prior research and question development from the Louisiana Believes Teacher Education Preparation Program Survey 2016 and the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality (2012). These questions were previously utilized to survey large quantities of teachers in the beginning years of teachings giving validity to question framing.

A survey was created and deployed to 89 recent Year 1, Year 2, and Year 3 program completers using the Qualtrics platform with a 10 day response period. The method of sampling of the survey participants is non-probability. This method of sampling provided a range of Year 1 through Year 3 program completers in multiple licensure areas (B-K, K-6, Art K-12, Music K-12, Mathematics 6-9, Spanish K-12, Social Studies 9-12, Theatre K-12, Language Arts 6-9, HPE K-12, Dance K-12, FCS 7-12). The response rate was 23%, which is above the national norm for out-of-organization survey completion. Personal email accounts were used for the initial contact between participant and researcher. Participation was optional and no identifying data regarding the participant was collected in the survey.

Participant Sampling

Year 1 through Year 3 program completers were selected for participation in the survey as they are expected to provide instruction to students either face-to-face instruction or virtually (remote) and are being evaluated on the North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Rubric. Survey responses were received from four Year 1 completers, nine Year 2 completers, seven Year 3 completers. From the survey deployment, the 20 responses received met the criteria for eligibility. While respondents vary in licensure area, the lower number of total responding participants in each licensure area accounts for the variance.

The survey provided an array of questions focusing on preparation for differentiation, content area, classroom management, technology integration, and preparation for remote learning. The survey questions were closed and responses were based on the Likert scale.



APPENDIX TABLE 5

Summary of Characteristics of Sampled Respondents	
Total Number of Received Survey Responses	20
Total Number of Program Completers Recruited	89
Total Number of Completers with B-K Licensure	6
Total Number of Program Completers with K-6 Licensure	36
Total Number of Program Completers with Speciality Licensure	24 (4 Music, 5 Art, 3 Spanish, 3 HPE, 2 Theatre, 2 FCS, 5 Dance)

The survey results were summarized, read through in a first pass to become familiar with the data, and coded first seeking categories of patterns and then moving to seek overarching themes from the data. The table below summarizes the categories and themes determined from the survey data set.

APPENDIX TABLE 6

Emergent Categories and Themes from Survey Data Set	
Category	Theme
Student conduct/behavior	Preparedness
Confidence in Content	
Evaluation (teacher)	
Student Teaching Experience	Practice
Assessment and feedback	
Setting learning goals	
Analyzing student data	
Planning for instruction (CC, content)	Differentiation
Meeting student needs (ELL, Spec. Ed)	
Technology use/integration	Implementation
Meredith conceptual framework	A vision of High-Quality Teaching

The categories and themes were then compared to both the current Teaching, Learning, and Leading conceptual framework being utilized by the Education Department at Meredith College and the Learning to Teach framework for further analysis. It was at this point in the project that I employed qualitative methodology to support a deeper understanding of the quantitative data collected.

Qualitative Methodology

Qualitative context. Primary qualitative data collection initially began with preliminary meetings and information gathering with the Department Head of the Education Department at Meredith College in February of 2020. This informal session included an overview of the Education Program, an initial sharing of a current study that the Department is conducting in which it is tracking, interviewing, and observing 4 students per year for three years in order to see impact and areas of need in the program, and discussion of current areas of programming. Due to the impact of Covid-19, the need to alter the original collaborative project involving the tracking and observing of four students was required, and focused the project on the interviews using remote platforms and the data collection from quantitative survey, both actions could be taken without school site visits due to school closures.

Qualitative interviews were conducted with graduates in Year 1, 2, and 3 of the Meredith College Education Program completion to address all three research questions. Four interviews of Year 1 completers, three interviews of Year 2 completers, and three interviews of Year 3 completers were conducted. The number of interviews is approximately 50% of the total number of respondents to the quantitative survey. In addition to Figures 1 and 2, extensive literature was considered to inform and guide the development of protocols for interview sessions, the transition to virtual interview sessions, and the theming and coding of the interview data to support analysis. Teacher Interview Instrument are included in Appendix # 4.

A participant teacher interview guide was developed to support the interview process. The guide was developed to provide structure and consistency during the qualitative interview process. The guide was developed based on the recommendations for best practices from the Harvard University Department of Sociology resource “Some Strategies for Developing Interview Guides” (n.d. Retrieved 11/2020). The question types included direct, indirect, structured, follow-up, probing, specifying, and interpreting questions. These question types allowed the participants to tell their stories and allow the researcher to follow the respondent honestly. The teacher interviews were scheduled and conducted within a two-week window with all participants

and were conducted using the Zoom and Google Meet platforms. The interview sessions lasted on average 30-45 minutes, although two interviews conducted spanned one full hour each. This time difference was based on the variance in the length of responses of the participants. The participants had either K-6 licensure (8 interviewees) or specialty licensure areas (2 - 1 FCS and 1 Spanish). This selection of participants for interviews allowed for a focus on the elementary classroom for probing and specifying questions further, while giving the specialty licensure perspective as well. Additionally, interviews with the Meredith College President Jo Allen and the Education Department Head were conducted. These interviews focused on the education department as a whole, the use of key indicators to measure the success of the program, and the conceptual framework. These interviews were conducted in the two-week window as the teacher interviews and lasted approximately 45 minutes each.

Thematic Approach

Interview questions were framed around the Learning to Teach conceptual framework (Appendix # 1). Interviews were conducted through two platforms, Zoom and Google Meet. Participants selected the format with which they felt most comfortable for the online interview. The interview guide was utilized and supported the consistency of questions asked to each interviewee. Participant responses were captured and transcribed using the Otter.ai program. Using a deductive thematic approach I analyzed the transcription data. This allowed for the identification of keywords, phrases, and broad categories. This data was then organized into a concept matrix where interview extracts were then color-coded by broad themes and organized by the areas of vision, tools, dispositions, content knowledge, practices, and learning community. Additional themes of challenges, such as teaching during the pandemic and the shift to online instruction versus face to face, also surfaced as a theme.



Finding 1

MEREDITH COLLEGE PROGRAM COMPLETERS ARE SATISFIED WITH OVERALL PREPARATION, CONTENT PREPARATION, AND DIFFERENTIATION PREPARATION.

This finding is connected to the knowledge, practices, dispositions, tools, and vision components from the Learning to Teach Framework. Quantitative results indicate a high level of agreement from respondents. Overwhelmingly, program completers agreed at 56.25% and strongly agreed at 37.5% with the statement “I was prepared for the realities of a classroom in my first year of teaching” for a total of 93.75% agreement. This data was also reflected in participant interview statements. A Year 1 completer in her first year of teaching fourth grade in a public school said, *“From Day 1 I was ready and felt confident. I knew what to do in the classroom and could do it.”* This sentiment was echoed in a Year 2 program completer with K-6 licensure, who shared, *“I wasn’t worried about my content knowledge. I knew I was ready for my classroom.”* A Year 3 program completer also confirmed by indicating strongly agree on the survey and shared, *“My student teaching placement really let me have ownership of the class. I received a lot of feedback, daily, if not after every lesson. So I know that I was doing well and what I needed to work on. I was confident I would do well in my classroom.”*

Interviewees shared a strong sense of preparedness from their participation in the program for their knowledge of content and their practices or methodologies. This was evident in their responses when they referenced specific classes, such as the required ESL class, or specific assignments, such as tutoring students in schools. Using formulas to calculate the mean (1.67), standard deviation (.58), and variance (.33) from survey response data, I was able to confirm positive levels of satisfaction for program preparedness. These findings directly connect to research question 1. Specifically, an absolute strength of the Meredith Education Department programming falls in the area of content preparation. Here, all interviewees, 10 in total in Year 1-3 responded and shared that they were confident in their abilities and skills to teach their content, regardless of licensure area of K-6 or specialty (6 K-6 licensure, 1 FCS, 1 Spanish).

Interviewee responses echoed content preparedness in their responses, *“I was FCS and I had many hands on opportunities to teach lessons and try out skills. This helped me in thinking through things as if I was in my own classroom. I think it made me feel like I was ready to take on my classroom.” -FCS Licensure Year 2.*

The ESL and content courses offered students the knowledge and strategies to implement in the tutoring classrooms with students. This time to practice allowed for the program completers to put into action the practices learned and develop their vision of what effective teaching looks like. A K-6 licensure Year 3 program completer shared, *“My content knowledge was strong. The learning curve for me came with the [district] EL program, not the content of teaching ELA.”* This finding was also confirmed in the Meredith College Completer Survey in both 2018-2019 and 2019-2020. The Completer Survey is sent to all program completers who graduated 1 and 4 years ago. The survey items are rated on a 1-4 scale, with 1 being low. Relative strengths of the program are those items with means above 3.6 and relative focus areas are those with means below 3.0. “Content knowledge in your licensure area” was identified by the Education Department staff as a relative strength in 2018-2019 and in 2019-2020. See Appendix item Completer Survey for a list of identified strengths and focus areas.

This finding is connected to the components of dispositions and practices in the Learning to Teach Framework. Nine out of ten interviewees referenced the following opportunities to differentiate instruction: ESL class, time to practice in the classroom with ESL students, and the resources provided in class and implemented in practice with ESL students. A Year 2 interviewee shared, “The ESL class was really helpful to me. I was able to learn a skill in class and then go and practice with small groups of students. It was helpful to see how students responded to me and my strategies.” A Year 3 interviewee referenced the value for the materials and resources in the ESL class, “The materials used in the ESL class are the materials that I used in my classroom in my first year of teaching. They were relevant and I was able to reproduce and use them again this year.” Participants in the study indicated a high value of the class, the resources provided, and the opportunity to implement recommended strategies and practices with small groups of students. Respondents shared the importance of trying different strategies and practices with students in an effort to support their language acquisition and general academic learning. The Meredith Education Department administers an Exit Survey to all students as they complete the program. Each survey item is rated on a scale of 1-4, with 1 being low. Relative strengths are those items with means above 3.5 and relative focus areas are those with means below 3.0. Completers in 2018-2019 ranked lower scores for (3.3) Teaching students who are learning English and this was an identified area of focus for the Meredith Education stakeholders. In the 2019-2020 Exit Survey this area (3.3) was not identified as an area of focus from the program completers, however, (3.2) teaching children with special needs was identified as a focus area and on the 2018-2019 computer survey.

Finding 2

THERE IS AN INDICATED NEED FOR ADDITIONAL AND SPECIFIC INSTRUCTION IN READING AND FOR INTEGRATING TECHNOLOGY INTO THEIR INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY.

Year 1-3 respondents (20 total) indicated high levels of overall preparedness at 95% on the quantitative survey for providing differentiated instruction, however, respondents also indicated the need for better instruction in reading and for integrating technology. Reading instruction scored lower than expected on the survey responses. 61.11% of participants felt they were prepared to teach students how to read and 16.68% of participants reported that they somewhat disagreed, disagreed, or strongly disagreed with this statement. In interviews, participants spoke highly of a class focusing on the components of reading; however, the majority of completers also included they would have liked to have more opportunities to work with students and apply those skills with students of diverse learning needs. A Year 2 completer shared, “I thought I was ready to teach students how to read and I got this student really struggled. I wasn’t for sure what to do...I couldn’t use the materials that I originally had in my student teaching because they weren’t anywhere close to what he needed. I remember thinking, ‘I need to ask for help!’”

Interviewees also discussed working with a particular subset of students in their student teaching experience “having a lesson go well and then getting in my classroom with students that had gaps in their foundational reading and not knowing really how to teach reading at this basic level” (Year 1 completer). A Year 3 completer expressed the same sentiments with the reading instruction, “It’s harder than you think to really teach a student to read. There is a lot that goes into the reading process and kids come to it at different levels of experience. My first year I didn’t know what I was doing exactly, my second was better because I had experience, but this year, I feel like I have the knowledge now and the tools and resources to meet most needs. The reading class was good, but I think we needed more than one real class focusing on reading.”

Due to the context of being in the Covid-19 pandemic, participants shared their strengths and areas of need regarding being prepared to effectively teach in a remote or virtual setting. While no educator preparation program could have predicted the impact on education and teaching that Covid-19 would have, it is worth noting that almost half (44.45%) of program completers felt that they had the skills and were prepared to move forward and become successful with virtual and remote instruction. These respondents shared examples of tools and technology they were either exposed to in coursework or during their student teaching experience.

Technology integration was also a concern for Year 2 and Year 3 completers. 36.8% of survey respondents reported that they somewhat disagreed, disagreed, strongly disagreed with the statement, “my student teaching experience prepared me to know how to provide instruction virtually or in a remote setting.” This finding may be impacted by the change from in-person to remote and virtual learning due to the Covid-19 pandemic and sudden school closures, however, interviewees all shared thoughts on their level of preparedness for use of technology. Year 1 completers are in their first year of teaching and engaged in the student teaching component amidst the pandemic having had their placements shift from in-person school-based to a remote setting. Year 1 completers shared the following sentiments, “I was a little nervous at first to teach online because so many of my tasks are hands-on, but I found other ways to do it and since my mentor teacher was trying to figure it out too, we had each other.” A Year 2 completer shared, “Ugh! I don’t know what to do! And I wasn’t that familiar with some of the tools that I needed to know”, and a Year 3 completer shared, “It had been a while since I had my technology class, so I really can’t recall any of the tools they used in that class...maybe Google classroom but I am not certain of that. I just knew I had to figure out what to do if I wanted to be successful.” When asked probing questions, respondents shared, “If I had known then what I know now (about Covid-19 and remote teaching) I would hope that Meredith focuses more on the tools that teachers need to know so they can be ready for their first day of teaching” (Year 2 completer). It should be noted that the Meredith College Education Department Summary for 2019-2020 did not indicate “preparation for using lessons integrating technology” (Item 9.2) as a relative strength or focus area on the completer survey or exit survey; however, it was identified as a relative strength by program completers in 2018-2019.



Finding 3

MEREDITH COLLEGE PROGRAM COMPLETERS LIKED THEIR COLLEGE SUPERVISORS, BUT THEY DESIRED MORE SPECIFIC FEEDBACK.

Program completers shared in interviews that they were comfortable with their college supervisor, but desired specific and timely feedback about their strengths and areas for improvement in placements and during their student teaching experience.

Research question two focuses on the components of the program that facilitate positive outcomes and connected with the vision component of the Learning to Teach Framework. Research from Goldhaber, Krieg, and Theobald, (2019) finds that “one student teaching placement practice appears to generate even larger returns: placing student teachers in classrooms with effective mentor teachers.” Meredith Education program completers reported “strongly agree” and “agree” at 83%. A Year 1 completer shared, “My cooperating teacher really supported me and she was amazing in the classroom. She let me teach the lesson and always gave me feedback-- the good and the not-so-good! But I valued that she took the time to make me be better so that I could be effective in the classroom”



and a Year 2 completer shared, “My first placement was not a good fit. Immediately I communicated with my supervisor at Meredith and within a week or so I had a new placement. This second placement was more supportive and she gave me guidance on what I needed to do to improve. She helped me rebuild my confidence.” Working with excellent mentor teachers supports teacher candidates in developing their own vision of effective teaching with images and experiences of high quality practices that will guide their own teaching. Several studies have now confirmed the importance of being assigned to a mentor who is highly effective (in value-added terms) with his or her own students.



Feedback from college supervisors (not mentor teachers) also was a finding with substantial importance to interview participants. When asked during interview sessions about the types of feedback they would receive about their practice from their college supervisor, participants indicated “minimal” (Year 1 completer) “some” (Year 3 complete), or “surface level” (Year 1 completer). All participants noted that their supervisors were supportive of their efforts, but that the feedback was not targeted or specific enough. One Year 2 interviewee noted, “I don’t think she wanted to hurt my feelings” while another Year 1 completer said, “She told me I was great and didn’t have an area to make improvements on, however, I really don’t know if I was really that good”.



Finding 4

MEREDITH COLLEGE PROGRAM COMPLETERS REPORTED A HIGHER NEED FOR PREPARATION AND EXPERIENCES TO TEACH DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS.

This finding came directly from program completers during interview sessions. Respondents shared their desire to impact all students and their challenges with meeting the needs of students who fall into the subgroup of disadvantaged. Program completers want more opportunities to work with students with diverse learning needs.

In addition to having excellent mentor teachers in a student teaching placement, interviewees shared reflections on preparedness to teach students with diverse learning needs and referenced their placement schools specifically lacking diversity, “One thing that I lacked in my placement was a diverse student population. This didn’t help me when I began my first classroom and faced some challenges, particularly students with behaviors. I had some idea of what to do from classwork but I didn’t see any of that in my placement so I never got to work on that with my cooperating teacher” -Year 2 Completer K-6 licensure. In qualitative interview sessions, seven out of ten interviewees shared

sentiments related to not being prepared or having little exposure to students with diverse learning needs. A Year 1 completer shared, “Meredith attracts a certain population of students. We are predominantly white and middle class. The schools we are placed in mirror that population. I had to ask to be in a Title I school because I knew that was where I wanted to work when I graduated” - Year 1 Program Completer with K-6 licensure. The areas of classroom management and cultural proficiency were also emerging themes from participant interviews related to working with disadvantaged students. What was interesting is that participants talked about both of these concepts in tandem, ie. meaning, “I felt like I wasn’t prepared for the types of behaviors I would see” and in the same sentence, say “I thought I was prepared for classroom management, but I had to try many more things than the few I learned about in my coursework and then I felt stuck”- Year 2 Program completer. Interviewees spoke to their placements as being limiting in providing diverse experiences of working with students and sought to identify if it was their own lack of opportunity to work across multiple types of school (affluent, high needs, diverse populations, etc.) that was the limiting cause rather than a lack of preparation of strategies.

Seeing excellent mentor teachers in action with diverse students supports the teacher candidate in developing their images of good teaching and dispositions for working with challenging students. This finding aligns with the Vision and three components of the Learning to Teach Framework: vision, practices, and dispositions.

Finding 5

SUPPORT STRUCTURES AFTER PROGRAM COMPLETION ARE WANTED AND NEEDED BY PROGRAM COMPLETERS.

Program graduates desire support structures and resources from the Meredith Education Department *after* program completion and into the first three years of teaching. Most completers were not aware of the support program offered by Meredith College called the Beginning Teacher Support Program. Although 100% of the respondents indicated a need for the program of support and stated that they would access the program and resources if they had it, only 16.6% of respondents indicated they had knowledge about the program. Interview responses reflected a lack of awareness of the Meredith College Beginning Teacher Support program after program completion and a strong desire for support after program completion. Nine out of ten interviewees were not aware of the support program that the Education

Department offers called Meredith College Beginning Teacher Support. When asked about the types of support they desired interviewees shared, “I would have loved to have other teachers to talk with other than my team. I wouldn’t have wanted to go to my principal for some of my questions, I would want to hear and brainstorm with other teachers about classroom management and challenging student behaviors” (Year 2 Program Completer with K-6 licensure). Another program completer shared, “Even today I would love to have a group of people with licensure to rely on and collaborate with consistently. There aren’t many of us, so it would be great if there was a formal group that I could access” Year 3 Completer with FCS licensure.



Recommendations are meant to offer ideas, strategies, and possible processes to consider in program quality improvement efforts. The recommendations come from a comprehensive review of literature, identified best practices, and participant feedback. The client should consider seeking additional information and triangulation of data points presented here with their internal data sources to ensure alignment.

1

DEVELOP, TRAIN, AND UTILIZE A STANDARD TREATMENT PROTOCOL FOR PROVIDING TEACHER CANDIDATE FEEDBACK.

Using an established standard protocol for observing and providing feedback for program participants during field placements and student teaching experiences will support the desire for more specific feedback from college supervisors. All supervisors should be trained and given exemplars of high-quality feedback to ensure feedback is specific, gives an opportunity for the student teacher to improve on targeted skills, and

considers the context of each placement. The protocol should also reference and align with the Meredith Teacher Conceptual Framework to ensure that there is feedback in the areas that the college feels are most critical to the development of their teacher candidates. This recommendation is situated around the components of the Learning to Teach Framework, particularly the knowledge, dispositions, and vision of components.

2

DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT AN OPPORTUNITY FOR COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE (COP).

This recommendation is or may be partially in place with the Meredith College Beginning Teacher Support Program referenced earlier in the presentation; however, there is an opportunity for the program stakeholders to scale program impact with more outreach and communication processes about the program level of support and opportunities. There is a high level of interest in this type of support and using the current literature and research around a community of practice from Lave and Wenger (2015) the MC Education Department could be strategic in how much and what type of support is offered. The design of the community of practice will look different depending on the purpose and needs of the participants.

Meredith College stakeholders could determine to implement one of the four basic types of communities:

Helping Communities: provide a forum for community members to help each other with everyday work needs.

Best Practice Communities: develop and disseminate best practices, guidelines, and strategies for their members' use.

Knowledge Stewarding Communities: organize, manage, and steward a body of knowledge from which community members can draw.

Innovation Communities: create breakthrough ideas, new knowledge, and new practices.

Meredith College stakeholders could determine to implement one of the four types of CoP or more than one type depending on the needs of the current members. Seeking additional information from current students in their formal student placements and the participants who indicated the desire to receive assistance (10 out of 10 interviews in Year 1-3) and developing a network would be a starting point for program stakeholders with this recommendation. This recommendation draws on the learning community and dispositions components from the Learning to Teach Framework.

Recommendation 3

ENSURE INTEGRATION OF READING INSTRUCTION AND TECHNOLOGY INTO EACH COURSE IN MEANINGFUL AND AUTHENTIC WAYS.

This recommendation stems from the interviewee's desires to become more adaptive and flexible with their technology and to be able to use these skills from Day 1 in the classroom. The current context of Covid-19 exacerbated the need for teachers to be fluid and adaptive with multiple platforms, apps, and tools. Preparing teachers by having them use these tools in assignments, tasks, and projects across multiple classes will build a skill set that has breadth and depth, ultimately benefiting the teacher and students in the classroom. This recommendation is tightly aligned to the best practices in the literature and the components of tools and practices from the Learning to Teach Framework.



Recommendation 4

THE PROGRAM STAKEHOLDERS IN THE MEREDITH COLLEGE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT SHOULD CONSIDER PLACEMENTS FOR ITS FORMAL STUDENT TEACHING IN SCHOOLS WHERE THE STUDENT POPULATION IS DIVERSE AND THAT HAS EXCELLENT MENTOR TEACHERS.

Goldhaber, Krieg, & Theobald consider excellent mentor teachers as those who have value-added that is two standard deviations above the average (2017). Having the opportunity to work with students from diverse backgrounds, i.e. race, culture, gender, etc. allows for novice teachers to put theory, pedagogy, and practices that they have read and learned about into practice, giving them opportunities to succeed, and opportunities to problem solve and implement different strategies if they don't initially succeed. This recommendation is tightly aligned to the vision of what an effective teacher is and does in the classroom of the College President, Dr. Jo Allen, and is aligned to the MC Teacher Conceptual Framework Vision which states:

“In making instructional decisions, teachers understand that teaching and learning must be relevant to the students; therefore, they create student-centered classrooms and design instruction that addresses the backgrounds and needs of all students inclusively. They practice culturally responsive teaching, are open to cultures and ideas other than their own, connect the content they teach to the lives and the communities of their students, and affirm the cultural practices that students bring to the classroom. They differentiate instruction to meet the needs of students with exceptionalities”

as well as with the Learning to Teach Framework component of Tools (Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2005).



CONCLUSION

Educator preparation programs must be effective in preparing and graduating teacher candidates in order to meet the demand for high-quality teachers in public, private, and charter schools across our nation. Several components must be firmly in place in order to support the breadth and depth of the requirements of an effective educator program in order to produce well-prepared and confident teacher candidates ready from Day 1 to enter and be successful in the classroom. The areas identified are content courses, pedagogy, time to practice, excellent teacher mentors, and integrated components of technology and differentiation. Each identified component holds additional areas of emphasis that need to be considered in teacher preparation, such as meeting the needs of diverse learners, i.e. ELL, Special Education, and advanced and gifted support. Ultimately, teachers will be measured against their effectiveness with all students, thus being well prepared to seamlessly support students from diverse cultures and with various backgrounds will significantly support teacher effectiveness.

Educator preparation programs must ensure they are providing the breadth of teacher content courses while providing the necessary learning opportunities to learn and apply educational and human development learning theories in practice in the classroom and school setting. It is these colleges and universities that have the continuous challenge of ensuring their programs develop the necessary components of a highly effective educator preparation program to generate well-prepared teacher candidates. A significant influence and responsibility fall to the state and federal departments that enact legislature, rules, and mandates to educator preparation programs. It is these stakeholders in educator preparation programs that ultimately set evaluative measures that will drive educator preparation programming at the college and university level. While there is no one size that fits all for how best to educate the myriad of diverse students in schools, there is no one size educator preparation program model that will meet the need of all prospective teacher candidates (Cochran-Smith, 2006); however, we must ensure that all educator preparation programs implement the federal and state mandates and teaching standards to build or strengthen their educator preparation programs to ensure that they are prepared to teach, lead, and learn before they leave their programs and take their first steps into the classroom in front of a group of students as the teacher.

LIMITATIONS

This capstone project has limitations. Although research began in the Spring of 2020 the Covid-19 pandemic also emerged and impacted the role of the teacher in the classroom. Interviews were conducted in the Winter of 2020-21 and participant feedback and data points reflect the influence of the pandemic on education, the delivery of instruction, teacher needs, and overall feelings of preparedness. Additionally, it should be noted that interviews were conducted over Zoom and Google Meet. However, even with the limitations of conducting this research during a global pandemic and the use of video platforms for interviews, the information presented in this project has the potential for a positive impact on the Meredith College Education Program should the primary stakeholders choose to act upon the findings and recommendations from a quality improvement perspective.



About the Author

With over fifteen years in education, Carmen has been privileged to teach at the pre-K and elementary levels. Her roots in teaching began at Head Start in Ohio and a move to the South landed her in Raleigh, North Carolina, where she currently serves as principal of a high poverty high promise school. Her passion to support students living in poverty stems from her childhood experience and fuels her daily to seek ways to mitigate and overcome barriers for the students she serves. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Child Development from Meredith College and a Masters of School Administration from the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill. She is scheduled to earn a doctorate degree from Vanderbilt University in May 2021.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this executive summary and capstone project.

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Appendix

Appendix 1. Meredith College Education Department Mission Statement



Mission

The **mission** of the Meredith College Department of Education is to prepare reflective practitioners who have the 21st century knowledge, skills, and values to effectively teach all students. Graduates of the Department of Education, whom we term Meredith teachers, believe that reflection is essential to improving the quality of their teaching. They are able to examine the dilemmas of classroom practice within the cultural contexts in which they teach. They are able to question the assumptions they bring to teaching and strive to understand how their actions impact their students. Meredith teachers are able to engage in reflection not only within their own classrooms but also within a community of professionals who have the common goal of improving student learning.

Vision

The **vision** of the Meredith College Department of Education embodies **teaching, learning and leading**. We seek to become the premier teacher education program in the Southeast. Our programs strive to be responsive to the needs of public schools, rigorous in both content and pedagogy, and innovative in design and delivery.

Appendix 2. Table 1 Research Question, Method of Data Collection, and Area of Focus

Table 1

Research Question, Method of Data Collection, and Area of Focus

Research Question	Method of Data Collection	Area of Inquiry
How prepared are the graduates from the Meredith College of Education program for the first three years of teaching?	Teacher Survey Teacher Interviews MC Completer Annual Survey	Perception of Preparedness Effectiveness in the classroom
What specific components of the teacher preparation program most support or facilitate these outcomes?	Teacher Survey Teacher Interviews MC Completer Annual Survey	Components of the EPP MC Education Department Conceptual Framework Organizational Improvement
How can the Meredith College Education Department better recruit, prepare, and support teacher candidates for their first three years of teaching?	Teacher Interviews Leadership Interviews MC Completer Annual Survey	Components of the EPP Meredith Professional Support Program

Appendix 3: Figure 1 The Learning to Teach Framework

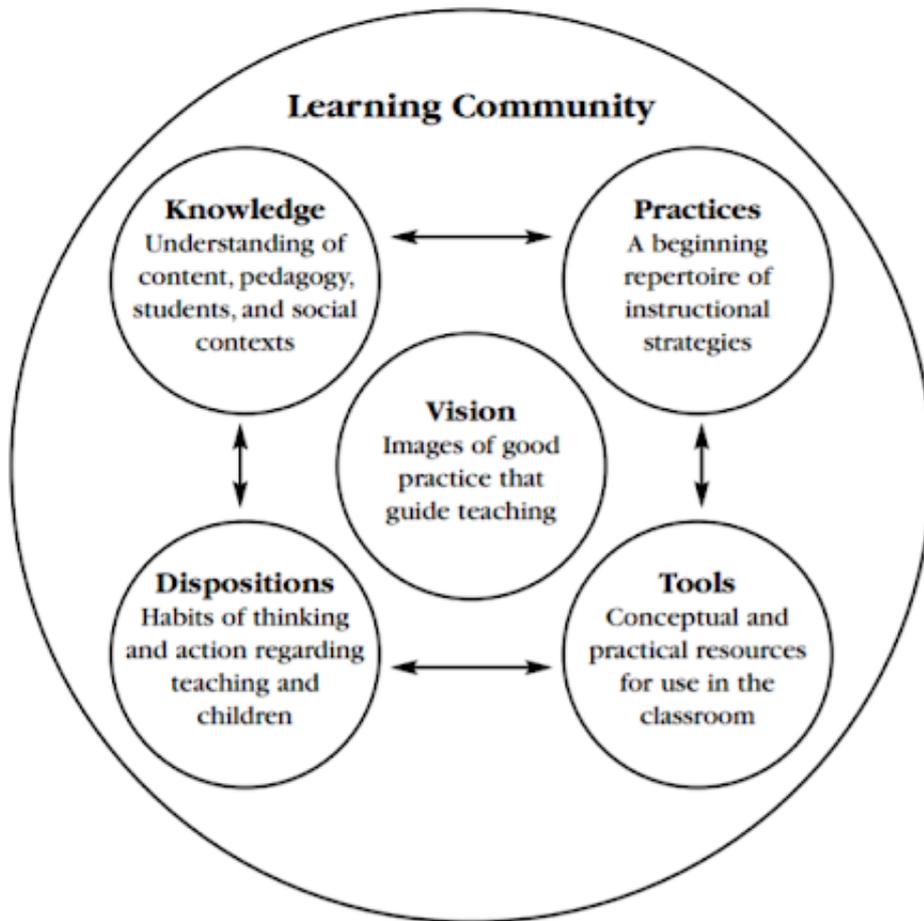


Figure 1: A Framework for Learning to Teach

Appendix 4: Table 2 The Learning to Teach Framework Components and Description

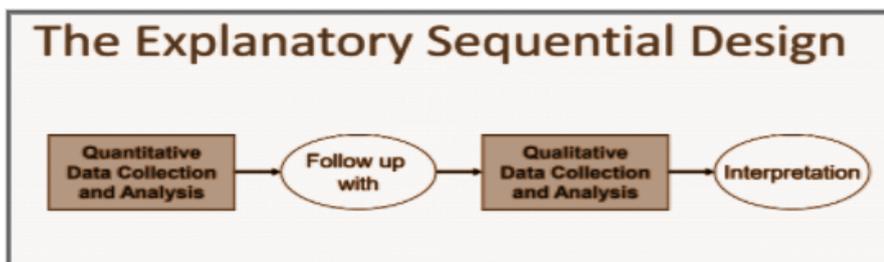
Table 2: The Learning to Teach Framework Components and Description

Reproduced from the Learning to Teach Framework by Linda Darling-Hammond and Baratz-Snowden, 2007 from the National Academy of Education Committee on Teacher Education, A Good Teacher In Every Classroom, 2007).

Framework Component	Framework Component Description
Learning Community	Symbolizes teacher learning, like student learning is contextual
Vision	Images of good practice that guide teaching
Knowledge	Understanding of content, pedagogy, students, and social contexts
Tools	Conceptual and practical resources for use in the classroom
Practices	A beginning repertoire of instructional strategies
Dispositions	Habits of thinking and action regarding teaching and children

Appendix 5: Visual 1 The Explanatory Sequential Design as Connected to Phase 1 and 2 Research Design

Visual 1: The Exploratory Sequential Design as Connected to Phase 1 and 2 of Research Design



Credit: J. Driscoll, 2007 Nova SouthEastern University Abraham Fischler School of Education, 2007.

Appendix 4: Internal Document Meredith College Data Summaries 2018 and 2019

2018-2019 Department Data Summary:

Completer Survey:

This survey is sent to all program completers who graduated 1 and 4 years ago. Each item is rated on a 1-4 scale, with 1 being low. Relative strengths are those items with means above 3.6; relative focus areas are those with means below 3.0.

Strengths	Focus Areas
6 Content knowledge in your licensure area	5.5 Content knowledge in social studies
9.2 Preparation for using lessons integrating technology	5.6 Content knowledge in the arts
10.1 Preparation for creating a supportive classroom community	5.7 Content knowledge in health and PE
10.2 Preparation for creating a positive relationship with students	8.1 Preparation for teaching student who have special needs
11.1 Skill in speaking	8.3 Preparation for teaching student who are academically gifted
15.1 Preparation for working with colleagues	9.1 Preparation for using centers
	12.3 Preparation for engaging community support
	13.1 Preparation for using portfolios as assessment
	13.2 Preparation for using interviews as assessment

NCTCER Midterm:

This instrument is used to evaluate all student teachers at the midterm and final evaluations. The midterm score is used for program evaluation because all students must be proficient or above at the end of the semester in order to receive a license. Each item is rated on a 1-4 scale, with 1 being low. Relative strengths are those items with means above 3.0; relative focus areas are those with means below 2.0.

Strengths	Focus Areas
241 Have a respect for the people they are working with	1a1 Evaluates the progress of students using a variety of assessment data
242 Have a respect for diversity	1b Teachers demonstrate leadership
	2b1 Appropriately uses materials that counteract stereotypes
	2b3 Understand the influence of diversity
	2d Teachers adapt their teaching for students with special needs
	2e Teachers work collaboratively with families
	3a2 Integrates effective literacy instruction
	3c Teachers recognize the interconnectedness of content areas
	3d Teachers make instruction relevant to students
	4a2 Assesses and uses resources to meet the needs of students
	4b Teachers plan instruction appropriate for their students
	4c Teachers use a variety of instructional methods
	4e Teachers help students develop critical thinking skills
	4f Teachers helps students work in teams
	4h Teachers use a variety of methods to assess
	5a Teachers analyze student learning

Exit Survey:

This survey is sent to all students as they complete the program. Each item is rated on a 1-4 scale, with 1 being low. Relative strengths are those items with means above 3.5; relative focus areas are those with means below 3.0.

Strengths	Focus Areas
2.2 Support from content area supervisor	3.1 Working with a population of diverse students and their families
2.3 Support from your cooperating teacher	3.2 Teaching children with special needs
3.8 Creating and facilitating a respectful classroom environment	3.3 Teaching students who are learning English
3.13 Planning instruction	3.5 Teaching students who are academically gifted
3.15 Drawing on content knowledge to make instruction relevant to students	3.11 Establishing positive relationships with parents
	3.17 Reflecting meaningfully on teaching

2019-2020 Education Program Data Summary:

Completer Survey:

This survey is sent to all program completers who graduated 1 and 4 years ago. Each item is rated on a 1-4 scale, with 1 being low. Relative strengths are those items with means above 3.6; relative focus areas are those with means below 3.0.

Strengths	Focus Areas
6 Content knowledge in your licensure area	5.5 Content knowledge in social studies
7 Preparation for student development	5.6 Content knowledge in the arts
10.1 Creating a supportive classroom community	5.7 Content knowledge in health and PE
10.2 Creating positive relationships with students	9.1 Preparation for using centers as assessment
11.1 Speaking	15.5 Working with community stakeholders
11.2 Listening	
12.1 Planning lessons to help students understand subject matter	
15.1 Working with colleagues	
15.3 Working with administrators	
15.4 Working with mentors	

NCTCER Midterm:

This instrument is used to evaluate all student teachers at the midterm and final evaluations. The midterm score is used for program evaluation because all students must be proficient or above at the end of the semester in order to receive a license. Each item is rated on a 1-4 scale, with 1 being low. Relative strengths are those items with means above 3.0; relative focus areas are those with means below 2.0.

Strengths	Focus Areas
3a1 Develops and applies lessons based on the NCSCOS	2b1 Appropriately uses lessons or materials that counteract stereotypes
241 Have a respect for people with whom they are working	2b3 Understands the influences of diversity
	2d Teachers adapt their teaching for students with special needs
	2e Teachers work collaboratively with families
	3c Teachers recognize the interconnectedness of different content areas
	3d Teachers make instruction relevant to students
	4a2 Assesses and uses resources needed
	4h Teachers use a variety of methods to assess

Standards 1-6 Data:

This data is collected and provided by the Department of Public Instruction. The report summarizes the number of graduates in their first three years of teaching who score at each level on Standards 1 through 5 of the Teacher Evaluation Rubric. The report also summarizes how many teachers met, exceeded or did not meet the expected growth targets on End of Course or End of Grade Tests in Standard 6. The table below summarizes the percentage of students who were at or above proficient for Standards 1-5 and met or exceeded growth for Standard 6. We no longer receive data at the program level.

Standard	Percentage
Teachers demonstrate leadership	97
Teachers establish respectful learning environments	97
Teachers know the content they teach	97
Teachers facilitate learning	97
Teachers reflect on their practice	97
Teachers facilitate student academic growth	85

Exit Survey:

This survey is sent to all students as they complete the program. Each item is rated on a 1-4 scale, with 1 being low. Relative strengths are those items with means above 3.5; relative focus areas are those with means below 3.0.

Strengths	Focus Areas
2.1 Support from department supervisor	3.2 Teaching children with special needs
2.3 Support from cooperating teacher	
3.4 Teaching students from diverse backgrounds	
3.6 Practice culturally relevant pedagogy	
3.7 Establishing and maintaining rules and procedures	
3.8 Creating and facilitating a respectful environment	
3.9 Incorporate technology	
3.11 Establishing positive relationships with parents	
3.12 Establishing positive relationships with students	
3.13 Planning instruction	
3.15 Drawing on content knowledge	
3.17 Reflect meaningfully on teaching	
3.18 Leading in your school by collaborating	
3.20 Leading in your school by structuring your classroom	

Appendix 5: Visual Comparison of Meredith College Conceptual Framework to the Darling-Hammond and Baratz-Snowden Learning to Teach Framework

Similarities	Differences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Refer to culturally responsiveness or dispositions needed to be effective in the classroom with children, -Discuss content knowledge and pedagogy, - Reference the practices for effective instruction to support student learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The Teaching, Learning, and Leading framework has leadership as a primary focus for candidates. -The concept of vision of good teaching is specified clearly in the Learning to Teach framework; whereas, vision of effective teaching is implied in the Teaching, Learning, and Leading Framework.

Appendix 6: Table 3 Summary of Characteristics of Sampled Respondents

Summary of Characteristics of Sampled Respondents	
Total Number of Received Survey Responses	20
Total Number of Program Completers Recruited	89
Total Number of Completers with B-K Licensure	6
Total Number of Program Completers with K-6 Licensure	36
Total Number of Program Completers with Speciality Licensure	24 (4 Music, 5 Art, 3 Spanish, 3 HPE, 2 Theatre, 2 FCS, 5 Dance)

Appendix 7: Table 4 Emergent Categories and Themes

Emergent Categories and Themes from Survey Data Set.

Emergent Categories and Themes from Survey Data Set	
Category	Theme
Student conduct/behavior	Preparedness
Confidence in Content	
Evaluation (teacher)	
Student Teaching Experience	Practice
Assessment and feedback	
Setting learning goals	
Analyzing student data	
Planning for instruction (CC, content)	
Meeting student needs (ELL, Spec. Ed)	Differentiation
Technology use/integration	Implementation
Meredith conceptual framework	A vision of High-Quality Teaching