

ISSN: 2572-9810 (Print)  
ISSN: 2572-9829 (Online)

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# Journal of Education and Social Development

**Volume 1, Number 2, December 2017**

**Published by Institution of Business Intelligence Innovation**

# Journal of Education and Social Development

Vol. 1, No. 2; December, 2017

DOI [https:// 10.5281/1149688](https://10.5281/1149688)

## Table of Contents

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Leadership in Online Education: Does it Matter?	1	Rhonda Dick, Barbara Baggerly-Hinojosa, Yu Sun, and Carol Wheeler
Minority Alternative Certification Candidate Perceptions of Praxis Preparation Workshops	8	Carolyn Marshall - Jackson

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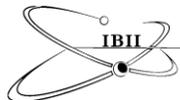
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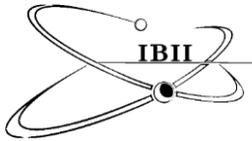
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# Leadership in Online Education: Does it Matter?

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Received on June 8, 2017; revised on October 20, 2017; published on October 20, 2017

## Abstract

This study was completed using a sample of online students at a university in North Texas. The study explored leadership style as a predictor in students' ratings of overall teaching effectiveness, learning, breadth, examinations, and assignments. A Pearson product-moment correlation was conducted to examine the inter-correlations between the leadership styles, the inter-correlations between the four SEEQ factors of Learning, Breadth, Examinations, and Assignments, and the relationship between the four SEEQ factors and the leadership styles. Transformational leadership was highly correlated with transactional leadership and passive avoidant leadership style was negatively correlated with transactional leadership and transformational leadership. The inter-correlation of the SEEQ factors showed that the four factors were highly correlated. Learning and transformational leadership were positively correlated. Breadth and transformational leadership were positively correlated. Examinations and transformational leadership were positively correlated. Assignments and transformational leadership were positively correlated. Breadth and transactional leadership were positively correlated. Examinations and transactional leadership were positively correlated. Assignments and transactional leadership were positively correlated. Passive Avoidant leadership negatively correlated with all four dimensions of the SEEQ. Multiple regression indicated that transformational leadership was a predictor all 4 dimensions – Learning, Breadth, Examinations, and Assignments. Transactional leadership was a predictor for Breadth and Examinations. Student age was a predictor for three dimensions of the *SEEQ* – Learning, Examinations, and Assignments.

*Keywords: Online Education, Leadership Style, Student Evaluation of Educational Quality(SEEQ), Online Teaching Pedagogy, Multi-factor Leadership Questionnaire(MLQ), Education Leadership, Transformational Leadership, Teaching Effectiveness*

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## Introduction

“Online education has generated tremendous excitement both inside and outside higher education” (Volery & Lord, 2000, p. 216) prompting academic leaders to reexamine factors that can contribute to teaching quality and effectiveness in a technological environment. Research has revealed continued growth in online learning programs at for-profit and private institutions in the last decade (Allen & Seaman, 2015) partly due to the need to remain a competitive force in the industry. A Babson Research Survey conducted by Allen and Seaman (2015) revealed that the “proportion of academic leaders who report that online learning is critical to their institution’s long term strategy has grown from 48.8% in 2002 to 70.8% in 2015” (p. 4). This persistent surge in online education has helped institutions expand access and provide additional learning opportunities at a distance, in some instances internationally, allowing them to have early

insight into and capitalize on promising market opportunities (Volery & Lord, 2000).

Consequentially, this surge in diverse audiences and the increased availability of online education does not come without challenges that may influence teaching quality and effectiveness. Reexamining the overall method or practice of teaching in the online format has been explored as one approach to improving teaching effectiveness in online education (Pelz, 2010; Crawford-Ferre & Wiest, 2012; Kop, Fournier, & Mak, 2001). “Pedagogical issues include the identification of learning goals, philosophical changes in teaching and learning, re-conceptualization of the teacher’s role, evaluation of student and instructor, and the stimulation of interactivity”(Schrum,1998, p. 56). One area that’s gaining attention as a means of managing the online classroom, but has minimal empirical research regarding its influence on teaching effectiveness in online education, is professor leadership style.

## Literature Review

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Utilizing the behaviors of transformational, transactional, and passive avoidant leadership styles as described in the *Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire* by Bass (1985), Lowe, Kroeck & Sivasubramaniam (1996) conducted a meta-analysis on leadership and its relationship to organizational measures of effectiveness. Correlational results of combined published and unpublished studies ( $k = 111$ ,  $N = 33,188$ ) indicated that the "association between leadership style and effectiveness were higher for transformational scales (.71, .61, .60) than for transactional scales (.41, .05)" ( $p < .001$ ), with *Charisma* correlating most highly with leader effectiveness for all types of criteria. *Management-by-Exception*, on the other hand, exhibited the lowest correlation with effectiveness. The means for the transformational scales of *Charisma* (2.52), *Individualized Consideration* (2.50), and *Intellectual Stimulation* (2.48) were found to be higher than the means of the transactional scales of *Contingent Reward* (1.83) and *Management-by-Exception* (2.32) indicating that transformational behaviors were more frequently observed than transactional behaviors across all studies. Within the same meta-analysis, Lowe et al. (1996) investigated the relationship between leadership style and effectiveness in public versus private organizations. Correlational analysis indicated that transformational leadership behaviors were more commonly observed in public organizations than in private organizations. Leaders exercise charisma most often in public organizations ( $k = 23$ ,  $N = 3,670$ ,  $r_c = .74$ ,  $p < .01$ ) over private ( $k = 23$ ,  $N = 2,257$ ,  $r_c = .59$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Individualized consideration was more prevalent in public organizations ( $k = 22$ ,  $N = 3,483$ ,  $r_c = .63$ ,  $p < .01$ ) than in private organizations ( $k = 22$ ,  $N = 2,271$ ,  $r_c = .54$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Intellectual Stimulation was utilized more in public organizations ( $k = 23$ ,  $N = 3,483$ ,  $r_c = .65$ ,  $p < .01$ ) over private ( $k = 23$ ,  $N = 2,398$ ,  $r_c = .47$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

Leadership style has been shown to be effective in most industries and although there's limited empirical research in online education, investigators have examined its influence in traditional classrooms and in online environments. Research has indicated that leadership style significantly influences teaching effectiveness. Bolkan and Goodboy (2009) administered the *Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire* (Bass, 1985), the *Class Participation Scale* (Fassinger, 1995b), the *Revised Cognitive Learning Indicators Scale* (Frymier & Houser, 1999), the *Affective Learning Scale* (McCroskey, Richmond, Plax, & Kearney, 1985), the *Student Motivation Scale* (Richmond, 1990), the *Source Credibility Scale* (McCroskey & Teven, 1999), and the *Student Communication Satisfaction Scale* (Goodboy & Martin, 2006) to 165 undergraduate students enrolled in one of eight introductory or upper level communication courses at a mid-sized Eastern university. The results of the Pearson Product-Moment correlation revealed moderate to strong positive relationships between the components of transformational leadership and the various instructional outcomes - cognitive learning, affective learning, state motivation, communication satisfaction, student participation and instructor credibility (accounting for between 12% and 71% of the variance). Pounder (2008) administered the MLQ 5X Short Form and SET to 363 final-year students of the BBA program at a Hong Kong University. Data was analyzed using bivariate correlation analysis. The overall results of the correlation analysis indicated that scores on each of the transformational classroom leadership scales were significantly and positively correlated with scores on each of the classroom leadership outcome scales - Extra Effort, Effectiveness, and Satisfaction. Spearman's rho correlations ranged from 0.29 to 0.47 (0.01

significance level) for the study overall. Eshraghi, Harati, Ebrahimi, & Nasiri (2011) administered Bass and Avolio's *Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire* (MLQ) to 57 managers of physical education offices in Isfahan Province, Iran. The results of correlation coefficient showed that there is a significant relationship between transformational leadership and leadership outcomes at  $p < 0.01$  significance level ( $r = 0.867$ ) indicating that the more transformational a leader is the better the leadership outcomes. Bogler et al. (2013) administered the MLQ to 427 students enrolled in 29 large academic courses led by instructors in web-based instructional environments at Open University. Passive leadership correlated negatively with all measures of satisfaction - general satisfaction, task satisfaction, and social satisfaction. Facets comprising transformational leadership correlated positively with all three measure of satisfaction - general satisfaction, task satisfaction, and social satisfaction. Facets comprising transactional leadership positively correlated with all three measures of satisfaction - general satisfaction, task satisfaction, and social satisfaction. Leithwood & Jantzi (2006) analyzed data from a larger 4-year evaluation of England's National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies to test the effects of a school-specific model of transformational leadership on teachers (motivation, capacities, and work settings), their classroom practices, and gains in student achievement. Their results indicated that transformational leadership had very strong direct effects on teachers' work settings and motivation with weaker but still significant effects on teachers' capacities. Secondly, transformational leadership had a moderate and significant effect on teachers' classroom practices. Leadership, along with teacher motivation, capacity, and work setting explained approximately 25% to 35% of the variation in teachers' classroom practices.

### Leadership and Learning

In regards to Learning and Leadership, overall, leadership plays a significant role in student learning. Brown and Posner (2001) administered the LTI, which measures the frequency of leadership behaviors, and LPI, which measures how they learn, to a managerial sample of 312 participants. They examined leadership in relation to learning tactics - Action, Thinking, Feeling, and Accessing Others. The strongest correlation to leadership was "Thinking". Results of a study by Chang and Lee (2007) indicated that leadership has a significant positive effect on the operation of a learning organization. Collaborative leadership impacted growth in student learning indirectly through building the school's capacity for academic improvement. In a study by Harrison (2011), transformational leadership behaviors had a stronger relationship with student cognitive learning than transactional leadership behaviors in online courses ( $\beta = .50$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Additionally, instructor transformational leadership behaviors will have a stronger relationship with student affective learning than transactional leadership behaviors in online courses.

### Leadership and Breadth

In a study by Leithwood (1993) transformational leadership had significant total effects on all but one initiative (curriculum integration) and significant direct effects on three (teacher in-service, school-community relations, core curricula). Moolenaar 's (2010) research indicated that the more principals displayed transformational leadership behavior in the form of building a shared vision, considering individual teachers' feelings and needs, and intellectually stimulating the teachers, the more their team

was characterized by a willingness to take risks to improve the school by developing and implementing new knowledge and practices ( $\beta = .146, p < .001$ ). In a study by Leithwood and Jantzi (2008), leader's collective efficacy (LCE) was strongly related to developing people and managing the instruction program. Leader's self-efficacy (LSE) had a strong relationship with managing the instructional program followed by developing people.

### **Leadership and Examinations**

In a study by Wooderson-Perzan and Lunenburg (2001), their findings did not support a relationship between the leadership factors of the superintendents and Texas Assessment of Academic Skills scores. Dahar, Faize, Niwaz, Hussain, and Zaman (2010) conducted a study utilizing longitudinal data of academic achievement of the students collected through 'result sheet'. Results of the study indicated that autocratic leadership creates tension in the school and lowers down the academic achievement. Democratic leadership style produces the higher level of academic achievement. Lower level of academic achievement is achieved with laissez faire leadership styles.

### **Leadership and Assignments**

Marks and Printy (2003) conducted a study investigating transformational leadership and instructional leadership at 24 nationally selected restructured schools. The first analysis addresses the relationship between transformational leadership and shared instructional leadership in the sample schools. When transformational and shared instructional leadership coexist in an integrated form of leadership, the influence on school performance, measured by the quality of its pedagogy and the achievement of its students, is substantial

## **Methods**

### **Participants**

Participants in the study were students attending a medium sized university in Denton, Texas. The sample ( $N = 100$ ) included undergraduate, graduate, and post graduate students in wholly online programs and students who were permitted to finish their programs online. Survey Monkey was used to design and distribute the survey. Students were emailed the informed consent, MLQ Short Form, questions that addressed four of the nine dimensions of the SEEQ - Learning, Breadth, Examinations, and Assignments, along with a demographic questionnaire to gather information regarding student age, student gender, student race/ethnicity, student class level, student enrollment status, professor gender, student comfort level with technology and GPA. Surveys were distributed at the end of the Spring 2016 semester and during the mid and end of the Summer 2016 semester.

### **Instruments**

The Student Evaluation of Educational Quality (SEEQ), developed by Herbert W. Marsh of the University of Western Sydney, was used to obtain student feedback on teaching quality and effectiveness "Factor analytic support for the SEEQ scales is particularly strong" (Marsh, 2007, p. 322). "The factor structure of SEEQ has been replicated in many published studies, but the most compelling support is provided by Marsh and Hocevar (1991a)" (Marsh, 2007, p. 322) "Starting with an archive of 50,000 sets of class-average ratings (reflecting responses to 1 million SEEQ surveys), they defined 21 groups of classes that differed in terms of course level (undergraduate/graduate), instructor rank (teaching assistant/regular faculty), and academic discipline"(Marsh, 2007, p. 322). "The 9 a priori SEEQ factors were identified in each of 21 separate factor analyses. The average correlation between factor scores based on each separate analysis and factor scores based on the total sample was over .99"(Marsh, 2007, p. 322). The evaluation factors are learning, enthusiasm, organization, group interaction, individual rapport, breadth, examinations, assignments, and overall teaching effectiveness. For this study, questions related to learning, breadth, examinations, assignments, and overall teaching effectiveness were the only dimensions included in the survey as they seemed to be more applicable to an online environment. The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ Short Form) by Bass & Avolio was used to measure the transformational, transactional, and passive avoidant leadership styles. It is a well-established, extensively researched and validated instrument used in thousands of research programs, doctoral dissertations, and master's theses, along with several constructive outcomes for transformational leadership. It's a 45 item questionnaire with a 0-4 likert scale ranging "not at all" to "frequently, if not always. Items 1-36 assess the Transformational, Transactional, and Passive Avoidant styles of leadership while questions 37-45 assess the Outcomes of Leadership – Effectiveness, Extra Effort and Satisfaction. It has been extensively researched and validated and has been used in thousands of research programs, doctoral dissertations, and master's theses, along with several constructive outcomes for transformational leadership. In order to evaluate aspects of reliability, Cronbach's alpha was used to measure the internal consistency of transformational, transactional, and passive avoidant leadership styles. Reliability for transformational was  $\alpha = .959$ , transactional ( $\alpha = .733$ ), and passive avoidant ( $\alpha = .808$ ).

### **Data analysis**

Descriptive statistics were used to illustrate the frequency of data provided by the participants. Additional statistical analysis included a correlation analysis to examine the relationship between the four SEEQ dimensions – learning, breadth, examinations, and assignments and the professor leadership styles – transformational, transactional, and passive avoidant. Correlational analysis was also used to examine the inter-correlations of the SEEQ dimensions and the inter-correlations of the leadership styles. Multiple regression was used to investigate the predictors of the dependent variable based on the available independent variables. For significant categorical variables, ANOVA and Post-Hoc were performed.

## **Results**

Correlations

Pearson product-moment correlations were conducted to measure inter-correlations between transformational, transactional, and passive avoidant leadership styles, the inter-correlations between the SEEQ factors, and the strength of the linear association between the leadership styles and four dimensions of the SEEQ. The results indicated a positive correlation between transactional and transformational leadership styles ( $r = .653, p < .01$ ). Passive avoidant leadership was negatively correlated with both transformational leadership and transactional leadership styles ( $r = -.510, p < .01$ ) and ( $r = -.140$ ), respectively. The results of the inter-correlations between the SEEQ factors of Learning, Breadth, Examinations, and Assignments indicated that Learning was highly correlated with Breadth ( $r = .788, p < .01$ ), Examinations ( $r = .779, p < .01$ ), and Assignments ( $r = .753, p < .01$ ). Breadth was highly correlated with Examinations ( $r = .882, p < .01$ ) and Assignments ( $r = .726, p < .01$ ). Examinations was highly correlated with Assignments ( $r = .701, p < .01$ ).

The results of the Pearson product-moment correlations between SEEQ factors and the leadership styles indicated a positive correlation between Learning and Transformational leadership ( $r = .573, p < .001$ ). Breadth and Transformational leadership were positively correlated ( $r = .643, p < .001$ ). Examinations and Transformational leadership were positively correlated ( $r = .704, p < .001$ ). Assignments and Transformational leadership were positively correlated ( $r = .511, p < .001$ ). Breadth and Transactional leadership were positively correlated ( $r = .231, p < .05$ ). Examinations and Transactional leadership were positively correlated ( $r = .298, p < .001$ ). Assignments and Transactional leadership were positively correlated ( $r = .274, p < .001$ ). Passive Avoidant leadership was negatively correlated with all four dimensions of the SEEQ. Learning and Passive Avoidant were negatively correlated ( $r = -.327, p < .001$ ). Breadth and Passive Avoidant were negatively correlated ( $r = -.404, p < .001$ ). Examinations and Passive Avoidant were negatively correlated ( $r = -.488, p < .001$ ). Assignments and Passive Avoidant were negatively correlated ( $r = -.313, p < .001$ ).

	TL	TA	PA	Learning	Breadth	Examinations	Assignments
TL							
TA	.653**						
PA	-.510**	-.140					
Learning	.573**		-.327**				
Breadth	.643**	.231*	-.404**	.788**			
Examinations	.704**	.298**	-.488**	.779**	.882**		
Assignments	.511**	.274**	-.313**	.753**	.726**	.701**	

Multiple Regression Analysis

We examined a hypothesis that there is no relationship between professor’s leadership style – transformational, transactional, passive avoidant - and overall teaching effectiveness when controlling for student age, student race/ethnicity, student enrollment status, student class level, professor gender, student comfort level with technology, and student GPA. Thirteen students answered all three responses that measure overall teaching effectiveness as listed below:

1. Compared with other courses, I would say this course is:

2. Compared with other instructors, I would say this instructor is:
3. As an overall rating, I would say this instructor is:

Due to the lack of survey responses for these questions that address overall teaching effectiveness, the relationship between professor leadership style and the criterion variable, overall teaching effectiveness could not be effectively determined.

We examined a hypothesis that there is no relationship between professor’s leadership style – transformational, transactional, passive avoidant - and Learning when controlling for student age, student race/ethnicity, student enrollment status, student class level, professor gender, student comfort level with technology, and student GPA. Table 1 summarizes the results of the multiple regression analysis. Student age, transformational leadership and transactional leadership positively and significantly correlated with the criterion variable. Student age was significant and accounted for 13% of the variance in predicting student satisfaction with learning ( $\Delta R^2 = .13, p = .000$ ). Transformational leadership was significant and accounted for an additional 25% of the additional variance in predicting student satisfaction with Learning ( $\Delta R^2 = .25, \beta = .511, p = .000$ ). The strong beta indicates that the more transformational students perceived their professors to be, the higher they rated them on Learning. Transactional leadership, while holding the other variables constant, was significant and accounted for an additional 5 % of the variance in predicting student satisfaction with Learning ( $\Delta R^2 = .05, \beta = .30, p = .011$ ). The beta indicates that the more transactional students perceived their professors to be, the higher they rated their professors in the SEEQ dimension of Learning.

**Table 1: Model Summary for Student Age, Transformational Leadership and Transactional Leadership**

Model	R	R Square	Beta	R Square Change	Partial	Sig
1	.356(a)	.127		.127		.006
2	.615(b)	.379	.511	.252	.537	.000
3	.657(c)	.432	.297	.053	.293	.011

Predictors: a. Student Age b. Student Age, Transformational Leadership c. Student Age, Transformational Leadership, Transactional Leadership

For the significant categorical variable student age, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was calculated to determine if there were differences in the means of the age groups. There was model significance,  $F(2, 97) = 8.486, p = .000$ , indicating at least one significant difference among the means. Since the F-test does not indicate which pairs are significantly different, a post hoc comparison was conducted to examine the difference between variables.

**Table 2: One-Way Analysis of Variance for Student Age and Learning**

Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
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Between Groups	13.588	2	6.794	8.456	.000
Within Groups	77.652	97	.801		
Total	91.240	99			

Scheffé post-hoc comparisons showed that there was a difference between the 18-24 and 25-34 groups with a significance of  $p = .001$ . The significant difference was higher for the 25-34 group ( $M = 4.76$ ) than the 18-24 group ( $M = 3.95$ ). Null hypothesis 2 was rejected.

**Table 3:** Post-Hoc Scheffe results for Student Age and Learning

(I) Student Age	(J) Student Age	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95 % Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
18-24	25-34	-.811*	.204	.001	-1.32	-.30
	55 and up	-.553	.267	.123	-1.22	.11
25-34	18-24	.811*	.204	.001	.30	1.32
	55 and up	.259	.291	.675	-.47	.98
55 and up	18-24	.553	.267	.123	-.11	1.22
	25-34	-.259	.291	.675	-.98	.47

\* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 Level.

We examined the hypothesis that there is no relationship between professor's leadership style (transformational, transactional, and passive avoidant) and Breadth when controlling for student age, student race/ethnicity, student enrollment status, student class level, professor gender, student comfort level with technology, and student GPA. Table 4 summarizes the results of the multiple regression analysis. Transformational leadership was significant and accounted for 38% of the additional variance alone in predicting student satisfaction with Breadth ( $\Delta R^2 = .38, \beta = .614, p = .000$ ). The strong beta indicates that the more transformational students perceived their professors to be, the higher they rated their professors on Breadth. Transactional leadership was significant and added an additional 8% of the variance in predicting student satisfaction with Breadth ( $\Delta R^2 = .08, \beta = .376, p = .001$ ). The beta indicates that the more transactional students perceived their professors to be, the higher they rated their professors in the SEEQ dimension of Breadth. Null hypothesis 3 was rejected.

**Table 4:** Model Summary for Transformational and Transactional Leadership

Model	R	R Square	Beta	R Square Change	Partial	P-Value
1	.614a	.376	.614	.376		.000
2	.677	.459	.368	.083	.364	.001

Predictors: a. Transformational Leadership b. Transformational Leadership, Transactional Leadership

We examined a hypothesis that there is no relationship between professor's transactional leadership style (transformational, transactional, and passive avoidant) and Examinations when controlling for student age, student race/ethnicity, student enrollment status, student class level, professor gender, student comfort level with technology, and student GPA. Student age was significant and accounted for 9% of the variance in predicting student satisfaction with Examinations ( $\Delta R^2 = .09, p = .026$ ). Transformational leadership was significant and accounted for an additional 37% of the variance in predicting student satisfaction with Examinations ( $\Delta R^2 = .37, \beta = .62, p = .000$ ). The strong beta indicates that the more transformational students perceived their professors to be, the higher they rated them on Examinations. Transactional leadership was significant and accounted for an additional 4% of the variance in predicting student satisfaction with Examinations ( $\Delta R^2 = .04, \beta = .28, p = .023$ ). The beta indicates that the more transactional students perceived their professors to be, the higher they rated their professors in the SEEQ dimension of Examinations.

**Table 5:** Model Summary for Student Age, Transformational and Transactional leadership

Model	R	R Square	Beta	R Square Change	Partial	P-Value
1	.305a	.093		.093		.026
2	.681b	.464	.620	.371	.640	.000
3	.708c	.501	.247	.037	.262	.023

Predictors: a. Student Age b. Student Age, Transformational Leadership c. Student Age, Transformational, Transactional Leadership

For the significant categorical variable student age, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was calculated to determine if there were differences in the means of the age groups. There was significance,  $F(2, 95) = 4.820, p = .010$ , indicating at least one significant difference among the means. Since the F-test does not indicate which pairs are significantly different, a post hoc comparison was conducted to examine the difference between categories.

**Table 6:** One-Way Analysis of Variance For Student Age and Examinations

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	12.526	2	6.263	4.820	.010
Within Groups	123.434	95	1.299		
Total	135.959	97			

Scheffé post-hoc comparisons showed that there was a difference between the 18-24 and 25-34 groups with a significance of .001. The significant difference was higher for the 25-34 group ( $M = 4.56$ ) than the 18-24 group ( $M = 3.74$ ). Null hypothesis 4 was rejected.

**Table 7:** Post-Hoc Scheffe results for Student Age

(I) Student Age	(J) Student Age	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95 % Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
18-24	25-34	-.819*	.266	.011	-1.48	-.16
	55 and up	-.406	.340	.493	-1.25	.44
25-34	18-24	.819*	.266	.011	.16	1.48
	55 and up	.413	.375	.549	-.52	1.35
55 and up	18-24	.406	.340	.493	-.44	1.25
	25-34	-.413	.375	.549	-1.35	.52

\* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 Level.

We examined a hypothesis that there is no relationship between professor's transactional leadership style – transformational, transactional, and passive avoidant - and Assignments when controlling for student age, student race/ethnicity, student enrollment status, student class level, professor gender, student comfort level with technology, and student GPA. Student age was significant and accounted for 10% of the variance in predicting student satisfaction with Assignments ( $\Delta R^2 = .096, p = .023$ ). Transformational leadership was significant and accounted for an additional 19% of the variance in predicting student satisfaction with Examinations ( $\Delta R^2 = .188, \beta = .442, p = .000$ ). The beta indicates that the more transformational students perceived their professors to be, the higher they rated them on Assignments.

**Table 8:** Model Summary for Student Age and Transformational Leadership

Model	R	R Square	Beta	R Square Change	Partial	P-Value
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1	.309a	.096	.096	.023		
2	.533b	.284	.442	.188	.456	.000

Predictors: a. Student Age b. Student Age, Transformational Leadership

For the significant categorical variable student age, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was calculated to determine if there were differences in the means of the age groups. There was significance,  $F(2, 96) = 6.384, p = .002$ , indicating at least one significant difference among the means. Since the  $F$ -test does not indicate which pairs are significantly different, a post hoc comparison was conducted to examine the difference between variables.

**Table 9:** One-way Analysis of Variance for Student Age

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	9.585	2	4.793	6.384	.002
Within Groups	72.071	96	.751		
Total	81.657	98			

Scheffé post-hoc comparisons showed that there was a difference between the 18-24 and 25-34 groups with a significance of .001. The significant difference was higher for the 25-34 group ( $M = 4.71$ ) than the 18-24 group ( $M = 4.0$ ). Null hypothesis 5 was rejected.

**Table 10:** Post-Hoc Scheffe results for Student Age

(I) Student Age	(J) Student Age	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95 % Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
18-24	25-34	-.714*	.200	.003	-1.21	-.22
	55 and up	-.214	.258	.710	.86	.43
25-34	18-24	.714*	.200	.003	.22	1.21
	55 and up	.500	.284	.217	-.21	1.21
55 and up	18-24	.214	.258	.710	-.43	.86
	25-34	-.500	.284	.217	-1.21	.21

\* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 Level.

## Conclusion and Implications

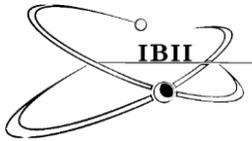
When considering the nuances of online education and the tasks and competencies associated with maintaining an effective online environment, leadership style may make a difference in how students perceive their classroom experiences and how well the professor manages the overall classroom. Results of the multiple regression indicated that transformational leadership was a predictor for all four SEEQ dimensions - Learning, Breadth, Examinations, and Assignments, most like due to the behaviors or attributes that comprise each transformational facet. Transactional leadership was a predictor for Breadth and Examinations. The results of the Pearson correlation coefficient showed that Transformational leadership positively correlated with Transactional leadership ( $r = .653$ ). The shared variance between these two independent variables is most likely due to them measuring the same or similar underlying constructs. "Though transformational and transactional leadership are often presented as being at opposing ends of a spectrum, a combination of select elements from both leadership styles may yield the best results" (Lai, 2011, p. 4). Breadth of concepts, ideas, and other points of view beyond the textbook may improve a student's chances of performing well on examinations. If the student does well on the examination, they should expect a grade that reflects their effort. Student age was a predictor for Learning, Examinations, and Assignments. These results are significant in reinforcing the concept of transformational leadership as an effective leadership style in education. This is noteworthy in terms of shaping the best pedagogy for online instructors. Leithwood & Poplin (1992) state that "instructional leadership no longer appears to capture the heart of what administrators will have to become" (p.8). "Transformational evokes a more appropriate range of practice; it ought to subsume instructional leadership as the dominant image of school administration" (Leithwood, 1992, p. 8). This study coincides with the literature concluding that there's no definitive list of student characteristics associated with ratings of teaching effectiveness. Student age was the only variable that was shown to be a predictor of Learning, Examinations, and Assignments. The sample sizes and distributions may have been a factor in the results. This study also coincides with the literature concluding that leadership style does matter in the online classroom. Transformational leadership was a predictor for the four SEEQ dimensions may indicate that professors who are more transformational in the online classroom, may receive higher ratings in student satisfaction with Learning, Breadth, Examinations, and Assignments. Moreover, considering the continued growth in online education and the fact that many academic leaders consider online education as a critical piece to their long term strategy, one area of focus should be on professor professional development in Leadership. Veteran and aspiring teachers may benefit from leadership education. Understanding their own leadership style and how it can influence outcomes in online classroom may potentially influencing overall ratings of teaching effectiveness. From this study, it can be inferred that teacher leaders would take time to understand their students and their individual needs. They would promote a collaborative learning environment that's student-centric where content is designed to promote meaningful learning experiences for the student. Er go, this leads to an enhanced understanding and development of online teaching pedagogy that results in effective teaching practices.

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# Minority Alternative Certification Candidate Perceptions of Praxis Preparation Workshops

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Received on October 20, 2017; revised on November 12, 2017; published on November 13, 2017

## Abstract

More than 40% of public school students in the U.S. are minorities and that figure is growing (National Center for Education Sciences [NCES], 2017; Niederberger, 2015). However, less than 17% of public school teachers are persons of color (Ingersoll & May, 2011). While African American students make up roughly 17% of public school enrollments, only 8% of the teachers are black with African American male teachers making up less than 2% of the teacher workforce (Hawkins, 2013; Latiker, Washington, Johns, Jackson, & Johnson, 2013; Toldson, 2013.). To address the issues of recruitment, development and retention of minority teachers, Grambling State University, a Historically Black College/University (HBCU), redesigned its certification – only, post baccalaureate alternate route program and created a robust Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) degree program that includes an intensive focus on support (both pre-service and in-service) and professional development. A Transition to Teaching grant from the US Dept. of Education made this effort possible. This article presents an analysis of participant perceptions and satisfaction with a pre-entry support and recruitment strategy – Praxis exam workshops. The workshops were offered during 2012 -2015 to persons pursuing enrollment in the MAT program.

*Keywords: Minority teacher recruitment, Praxis, Alternate Route Certification, Teacher Education, HBCU*

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## 1 Introduction

Research indicates that the single most important school related factor influencing student achievement is an effective teacher (Goldhaber as cited in Graham, 2013; Hightower et al., 2011; McCaffrey, Lockwood, Koretz, & Hamilton 2003; Rice, 2003.) This is true across grade levels, content areas and ethnic groups. However, minority student performance consistently lags when compared to that of white students (Hanushek, 2017; Vanneman, Hamilton, Anderson, & Rahman, 2009).

In 2008, more than 40% of the nation's public-school students were classified as minority, but less than 17% of teachers were persons of color (Ingersoll & May, 2011). Moreover, of that number, less than 2% of the nation's teachers were African American males (Hawkins, 2013; Latiker, Washington, Johns, Jackson, & Johnson, 2013; Toldson, 2013). The diversity-gap between students and teachers is a persistent problem for schools (Boser, 2014; Hanover Research, 2014; Ingersoll & May, 2016; Martin, 2011), and the aforementioned statistics, coupled with the expected steady increase in minority K-12 enrollment (National Center for Education Sciences [NCES], 2017; Niederberger, 2015), underscore the ever – present need for improvement in all areas of the educational spectrum including minority student performance and minority teacher recruitment. This article focuses on the latter – recruitment – and presents an analysis of participant perceptions and satisfaction with a pre-entry sup-

port used as a recruitment strategy – Praxis exam workshops. The workshops were offered from 2012 to 2015 to persons pursuing enrollment in the alternate route to teacher certification – the Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) degree program – at Grambling State University.

## 2 Literature

Despite Every Student Succeeds Act's (ESSA) elimination of the Highly Qualified Teacher (HQT) provision from the previous law – the No Child Left Behind Act (U. S. Department of Education, 2016) – it remains clear that students in all grades benefit from having teachers who have the ability to teach effectively. Improved academic achievement requires that there be high quality teachers who can provide high quality instruction. However, despite efforts to improve student performance, especially the performance of minority students in relation to their white counterparts, an achievement gap still exists (Bohrnstedt, Kitmitto, Ogut, Sherman & Chan, 2015; Niederberger, 2015). Recruiting minority candidates and developing those individuals into effective teachers are two important activities that have the potential to lead to improved minority student performance (Hanover Research, 2014). Though, the shortage of minority teachers in the pipeline signifies a need for deeper exploration of minority teacher recruitment efforts. Further, researchers posit that HBCUs and alternative route programs can play a great role in mediating the minority teacher shortage (Collins, Davis & Hilton, 2013; Gursky,

2002; Hanover Research, 2014; Latiker, Washington, Johns, Jackson, & Johnson, 2013).

### Recruiting Minority Candidates for Alternative Route Programs

According to Constantine et al., (2009), traditional undergraduate teacher education programs continue to be the largest producer of new teachers. However, each year, alternative certification programs produce one third as many new teachers as are produced by traditional programs (Kee, 2012). Moreover, minorities represent a larger proportion of candidates in alternate route programs than they do among traditional bachelor's degree recipients – a clear indicator that alternate route programs are making substantial strides in reducing the minority teacher shortage (Nettles, Scatton, Steinburg & Tyler, 2011). In addition, alternate route programs via recruitment and support of minority teachers may ultimately impact minority student achievement. Further, as part of the strategy for bringing more minority teachers into the classroom, alternate route educator preparation programs should focus on alleviating barriers by a) providing financial incentives and b) providing extra academic and testing support (Alvarada & Cooper, 2006; Hightower et al., 2011; Marder, Brown & Plisch, 2003; Torres, Santos, Peck, & Cortes, 2004).

### Minority Teachers and Minority Student Performance

Recruiting minority teachers and placing them in classrooms with students who look like them, have been shown to significantly impact student academic performance and outcomes. There is a growing body of research that suggests that, minority students who have minority teachers perform better on standardized tests, have higher attendance rates and have higher rates of college enrollment than minority students taught by white colleagues (Achinstein, Ogawa, Sexton & Freitas, 2010; Egalite, Kisida & Martin, 2015; Hanover Research, 2014). In Egalite, Kisida & Martin's (2015) longitudinal study of the educational paths of 2.9 million public school students in Florida, results showed that minority students performed significantly better with minority teachers. This was especially true for elementary-aged Black students whose tests scores improved when their teacher shared their ethnicity.

The present academic achievement gap along with findings from research suggest that teacher recruitment efforts should be focused on high quality minority teacher candidates. But, barriers such as lack of financial resources and the need for academic and testing assistance have hampered minority candidate recruitment efforts.

**Praxis entrance exams.** Many reasons have been cited for the disproportionate number of minority teachers, particularly Black teachers, in public K-12 schools. Standardized testing practices, specifically Praxis test requirements, have been repeatedly named as a major barrier to minority teacher recruitment (Hightower et al., 2011; Madkins, 2011). Similar to the LSAT for law school or the MCAT for medical school, teacher candidates are required to take and pass measures of general knowledge and professional competency in order to enter (and complete) teacher education programs (Madkins, 2011). The most common, the Praxis test series, includes assessments of core academic and subject-specific content knowledge for candidates entering teacher preparation programs. It also includes assessments of skills for beginning teachers with a focus on specialized content knowledge used in K-12 teaching (Educational Testing Service [ETS], 2017). Likewise, as in other professional fields, standardized tests such as the aforementioned, have been problematic for African Americans who tend to score among the lowest of all racial groups (Madkins, 2011; Tyler, 2011). In fact, during the period of 1994 -1997, of all groups taking the test, "Black candidates had the lowest rate of passing the Praxis I" (Madkins, p. 421, 2011). Sadly, Praxis exams preclude many

minority teachers' entrance into professional programs (Graham, 2013; Hightower et al., 2011; Martin, 2011). The Praxis exam score –gap between minority and majority test takers seems to mirror the teacher diversity – gap that exists in the nation's public schools.

As is the case for more than half of all Praxis test takers, many do not spend adequate time preparing for the tests (Dodson, 2008). Cory Murphy, ETS director of client relations (as cited in Dodson, 2008), suggested that becoming familiar with the wording of Praxis test items, studying test material that they do not know, employing time management skills and reducing anxiety can make a major difference in test performance for many minority test takers. Further, Dodson (2008) offers suggestions for supporting minority test takers that include assisting candidates with understanding what is on the test, how they will be tested and how to best use skills and knowledge to demonstrate their abilities. In addition, providing minority candidates with authentic practice material is also helpful.

## 3 Methods

This analysis used data collected over a 4- year period, from 2012 – 2015, from participants in Praxis workshops. The workshops were offered as a recruitment strategy and pre-entry support to assist students with meeting the MAT program's Praxis score entry requirements. The surveys were administered in an effort to gauge student perceptions of appropriateness, satisfaction and Praxis exam preparedness as a result of having attended one of the workshops.

### Institution and Alternate Route Program

Recognizing the need to recruit and develop effective alternate route teachers for partner high need school districts, Grambling State University's (GSU) post baccalaureate licensure program underwent a massive overhaul. In 2011, GSU, a Historically Black College/University (HBCU) in Northern Louisiana, was awarded a multi-year, Transition to Teaching grant from the U. S. Department of Education. With this federal initiative, GSU redesigned its certification-only program to offer a multi-faceted, support intensive, graduate degree program. The Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) degree program, designed according to specifications contained Bulletin 746 – Louisiana Standards for State Certification of School Personnel guidelines for The Master's Degree, focuses on:

- a.) providing degree candidates with comprehensive, research - based education, training, professional development and support to influence quality and retention;
- b.) addressing the critical need for highly qualified elementary, math, science and special education teachers and;
- c.) increasing the number of traditionally underrepresented/minority groups in K-12 and STEM teaching disciplines.

To counter chronic problems in recruiting, training and retaining minority teachers in partner high – need schools and to meet the unique needs of participants, the project combines traditional pedagogical instruction with intensive, comprehensive and sustained professional development and support. Upon successful completion of program requirements, participants earn a Master of Arts in Teaching degree and are eligible for standard, state Level I teacher certification. Though an advantage of the program is that degree and certification requirements can be completed in as few as 14-16 months, teachers are provided with professional development, mentors and support all the way through the first three years of teaching.

**Admission requirements.** To be admitted to the MAT program, applicants have to obtain passing scores on both the Praxis I – Core Academic Skills for Educators and Praxis II – Subject Assessments. (A composite score of at least 22 on the ACT is accepted in lieu of a passing Praxis I score.) It is important to note that students who are currently enrolled at the university have access to an on-campus Praxis laboratory. In the Praxis lab students can work one-on-one with the laboratory coordinator to review materials and can take practice tests for any PRAXIS I exam using PLATO software. The Praxis Lab is also equipped with various books and paper-based practice materials for Praxis I and Praxis II exams (Grambling State University, 2017). However, the Praxis support lab is not available to non - enrolled students. Most MAT applicants are either recent college graduates or mid-career changers and therefore they cannot use this service. Consequently, a large percentage of MAT program applicants did not have access to any testing support and accordingly, had difficulty passing either one or both of the Praxis entrance exams. This was distinctly evident during the first year of offering the redesigned program. Of the more than 50 applicants, only four candidates met Praxis I and II test score requirements and were admitted to the program.

**Strategy**

Beginning in the spring semester of 2012, intensive and comprehensive pre-entry support, in the form of small group, Praxis test preparation workshops, was offered monthly during the fall and spring semesters and twice during each summer session. The workshops, facilitated by The Williams Consulting Group - a group of African American male educators, were offered to address testing issues and to ensure that a larger number of applicants had the tools and skills necessary to successfully meet Praxis score entry requirements. The free, Praxis workshops were open to all MAT applicants. Because many applicants were unfamiliar with the structure and format of the Praxis test, the workshops provided intensive tutoring and practice on Praxis-like test items in the areas of reading, writing and mathematics. Workshop facilitators were hands-on and worked with participants to reduce test-anxiety and increase test-taking skills.

To ensure that potential program participants were aware of this free pre-entry support, the MAT program recruiter made information about the Praxis workshops a focal point of information sessions and recruitment fairs. Information was also included in recruitment messages, print and promotional materials, and on the MAT program webpage. To further ensure that potential participants received information, workshop dates were also publicized via campus media relations and campus and community radio stations. When potential participants made inquiries (via phone or email), Praxis workshop information was provided. Moreover, the recruiter sent emails and text messages reminding applicants of upcoming workshops. Participants could attend the workshops as many times as necessary.

**Data Collection and Analysis**

To gauge student perceptions of appropriateness of workshop information, at the end of each session, a Likert scale questionnaire was administered to all workshop participants. The survey included questions that related specifically to the workshops’ content, design, instructor/facilitator and usefulness. The survey also included one open-ended question that allowed respondents the opportunity to include additional comments or suggestions about the workshops. From 2012 – 2015 paper surveys were administered to 218 Praxis I workshop attendees and 32 Praxis II attendees.

For Likert scaled items, survey respondents could select one of the following responses: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3= somewhat, 4 = agree or 5 = strongly agree. Descriptive analysis of responses was conducted to determine the number and percent of responses for question. For open-ended questions, respondent feedback regarding any aspect of the workshop was subjected to thematic analysis via close reading of the open-ended responses. Close reading is an exploratory method that allows for the detailed analysis of words and interpretation of texts (Kain, 1998). With the close reading method, several themes emerged. Thematic coding was used to categorize participant responses to the open-ended questions. On average, responses to open-ended questions were one to two sentences in length and contained varying ideas ranging from “great info” to statements about the workshops’ content and feelings of preparedness for the Praxis after workshop attendance (i.e., “I feel more prepared for Praxis I”). Each response was carefully probed and broken down into single-concept phrases. Each concept constituted a separate unit of analysis. Single sentence responses that contained multiple concepts were broken down into single-concept phrases as well. For example, one response was “I am a visual learner and I enjoyed the presenter working the problem out on the dry erase board”. This response was broken down into two separate phrases: a) “I am a visual learner”, b) “enjoyed the presenter working the problem out on the dry erase board”. This was done for all open-ended responses.

**4 Findings**

**Praxis I Workshops**

Surveys were collected from 148 of the 218 Praxis I workshop attendees which, represents a response rate of 68%. In addition, 63 of the workshop participants provided responses to the open-ended question. With regard to Likert scaled responses, it was indicated that a majority of respondents strongly agreed that the workshops included relevant content, stimulated learning, included sufficient practice and would assist the student with obtaining a passing score on the exam. Table I summarizes these data.

**Table 1.** Praxis I Workshop - Participant Survey Responses

Survey Item	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Neither Agree nor Disagree %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
1. Content was relevant.	89	7	1	0	3
2. Activities stimulated learning.	90	6	0	1	3
3. Sufficient practice.	90	5	1	0	3
4. Workshop material will be useful in Passing Praxis.	95	1	1	0	3

N=148

With regard to the open –ended question responses, thematic examination (close reading, categorizing and coding) resulted in 143 units of analysis. Upon first read, the units of analysis were sorted according to two major themes. This resulted in one category for Positive Aspects and one for Negative Aspects. With subsequent reads and as themes continued to emerge, units in the positive category were then separated into one of six sub-themed categories: Workshop Presenters, Workshop Content, Workshop Quality, Workshop Structure, Participant Satisfaction and, Workshop benefit - Praxis preparedness. Units in the negative aspects category were separated into five sub-themed categories – Workshop Presenters, Workshop Content, Workshop Structure, Workshop Materials and Workshop Logistics.

Of the 143 units of analysis, 88 were categorized as responses that were positive (Figure 1.). Of that group, most of the responses were related to workshop quality (35%) and workshop presenters (26%). With regard to workshop quality and presenters, respondents expressed that the workshop was very informative and that the instructors were knowledgeable, enthusiastic and helpful. One respondent wrote, “It is evident that presenters are very well informed”. Another respondent wrote that the workshop “provided all I needed to prepare for Praxis”.



Figure 1 Praxis I Positive Responses

Of the 143 units of analysis, 55 (38%) were categorized as responses that were negative or that indicated a need for improvement (Figure 2). Of that group, most of the responses were related to workshop structure and specifically, the length of the workshop (36%). With regard to length, it was indicated that the workshops should be longer with several respondents indicating that “more time” was needed. The next highest are of need

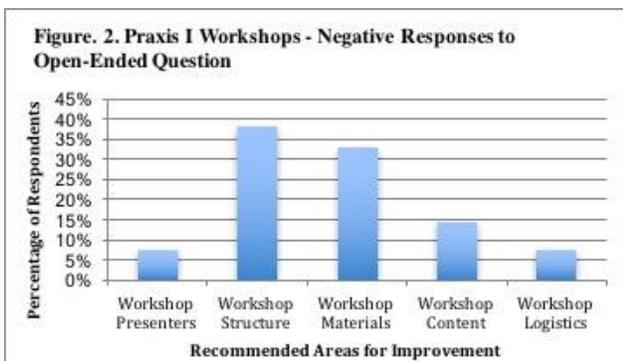


Figure 2 Praxis I Negative Responses

was workshop materials, in that of the 55 negative units of analysis, 33% addressed a need for materials. Respondents indicated that there was a need to improve the number and quality of instructional materials used in the workshop. One respondent wrote that there was a need for “clear copies to read and understand”.

**Praxis II Workshops**

Surveys were collected from all 32 Praxis II workshop participants. In addition, 30 of the respondents provided feedback to the open-ended question. With regard to Likert scaled responses, it was indicated that a majority of respondents strongly agreed that the workshops included relevant content, stimulated learning, included sufficient practice, would be useful, and prepared them to take the Praxis II exam.

**Table 2.** Praxis II Workshop - Participant Survey Responses

Survey Item	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Neither Agree nor Disagree %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
1. Content was relevant.	84	6	6	0	4
2. Activities stimulated learning.	81	13	0	3	3
3. Sufficient practice.	78	13	3	3	3
4. Workshop material will be useful in Passing Praxis.	91	3	0	3	3
5. I feel prepared for Praxis II	71	6	6	0	6

N = 32

With regard to the open –ended question responses, thematic examination (close reading, categorizing and coding) resulted in 80 units of analysis. Upon first read, the units of analysis were sorted according to two major themes. This resulted in one category for Positive Aspects and one for Negative Aspects. Of the 80 total units of analysis, 53% were categorized as responses that were positive. With further analysis of units in the positive aspects categories, three positive sub-categories emerged: Workshop Presenters, Praxis Preparedness/ Confidence and Workshop Quality. Analyses revealed that most of the positive responses were related to workshop quality (38%) and participants’ feelings of preparedness and confidence for the Praxis II (33%). With regard to workshop quality, respondents expressed that the workshop was great, informative and relevant. One respondent wrote, “My parents have spent a lot of money on Praxis preparation for me. This workshop was better than any of those workshops”. With regard to feelings of preparedness, respondents indicated that the workshop helped them to prepare for the Praxis II and that they felt confident that they would obtain a passing score. One respondent wrote, “I feel confident and more prepared than I did for the other Praxis

II exams”. Another respondent wrote, “I really enjoyed the workshop and feel confident in taking the Praxis II SPED examination”. Figure 3 depicts the percentage of responses in each of the three positive sub-categories.

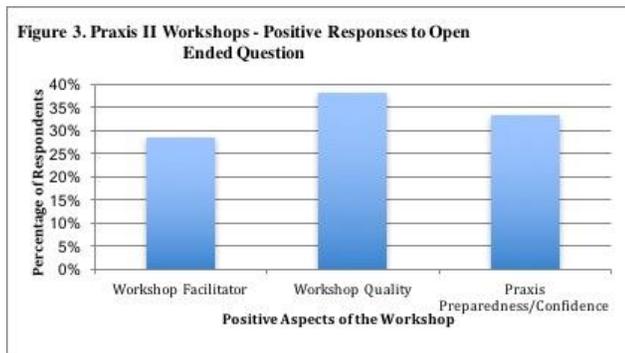


Figure 3 Praxis II Positive Responses

Of the 80 total units of analysis, 38 (48%) were categorized as responses that were negative or indicated areas needing improvement. With further analysis of units in the negative aspects category, four sub-themes emerged: Workshop Structure, Workshop Materials, Workshop Content and Workshop Logistics. Analyses revealed that the vast majority of negative responses were related to workshop structure (61%). Specifically, respondents indicated that the workshops needed to be longer, with one respondent indicating “It would be good to have them conduct a Praxis series over several weeks”. Figure 4 depicts the percentage of responses in each of the four negative sub-categories.

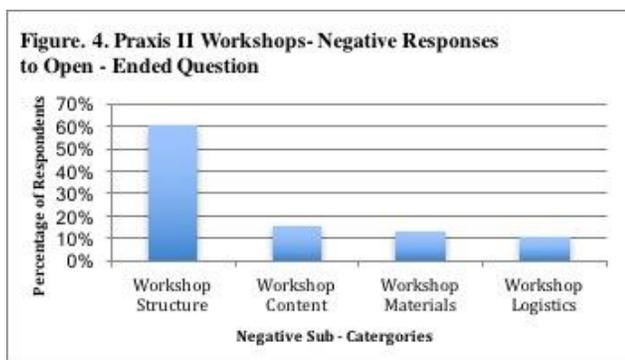


Figure 4 Praxis II Negative Responses

## 5 Discussion

Challenges in recruiting minorities into the teaching profession are ever-present. Many variables are cited as barriers, with passage of entrance exams being a named as a major deterrent for many potential teacher candidates (Latiker, Washington, Johns, Jackson, & Johnson, 2013; Madkins, 2011). As previously stated, like similar standardized tests, minorities tend to score lower than their white counterparts. Further, ETS confirms that the largest score gaps exist for African-Americans,

whose passing rate is at least 35% lower than White test takers (Tyler, 2011). Despite this trend, HBCUs and alternate route programs continue to lead the way in reducing the minority teacher shortage (Gursky, 2002). With regard to providing Praxis support for minority candidates, HBCUs with alternate route teacher education programs would do well to determine the areas with which minority test takers have the most difficulty and plan interventions with those as the focal point. For instance, Tyler (2011) posits that one common misperception is that minorities struggle more with constructed-response (essay) questions than with multiple-choice questions. However, according to ETS, data show that this is not entirely the case. Rather, it has been found that all races and ethnic groups perform better on constructed-response items than they do on multiple-choice items (Tyler, 2011). From this perspective, the greatest area of opportunity for improvement would be with multiple-choice questions. Therefore, interventions, whether in the form of tutorials, workshops or classes, should give ample time to assisting students with these type questions.

As financial woes are prevalent in state public institutions of higher education, particularly in HBCUs, recruitment is paramount for all programs – both undergraduate and graduate. Because of budget cuts, providing free Praxis workshops as a recruitment strategy may not be feasible. However, teacher education faculty can play an integral role in supplementing any existing Praxis preparation support that may available. In order to become familiar with exam questions and content, faculty members are encouraged to take the exams to become more knowledgeable and in turn, to design effective Praxis support (Latiker, Washington, Johns, Jackson, & Johnson, 2013;). Teacher education faculty can likely facilitate workshops prospective students at a lower cost than bringing in a Praxis Exam consulting group.

## Conclusion

In an effort to positively impact the number of minority teaching candidates for the newly redesigned MAT program at GSU, Praxis workshops were conducted and offered to prospective students, as a primary recruitment strategy. This article presented an analysis of participant perceptions and satisfaction with those workshops. The free workshops were offered during the period of 2012 -2015 and participant responses to survey questions indicated an overall feeling of satisfaction with the presenters and the quality and content of the workshops. In addition, workshop participants indicated that they felt the workshops provided information that prepared them to do well on the Praxis exams. The most cited areas for improvement were with the length of the workshops and the instructional materials used.

It is important to note that since offering the Praxis workshops as a recruitment strategy, enrollment in the MAT has continued to increase –from only 4 students enrolled in the first year to 18 and 21 students enrolled in the second and third year, respectively. In addition, students have indicated that Praxis preparation workshops were helpful and one of the program’s pre-entry supports that influenced enrolling in GSU’s MAT program (Sivakumaran, 2014). The workshops are now an integral component of the program’s recruitment and support efforts. Additional summer workshops for those applicants with summer test dates have also been included. Survey responses will continue to be used to refine and prepare future Praxis workshops.

## Acknowledgements

Special thanks to the staff of the Alternative Teacher Certification Project at Grambling State University.

## Funding

This work has been supported by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement, Transition to Teaching Program

*Conflict of Interest:* none declared.

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Journal of Education and Social Development  
(Quarterly, Started in 2017)  
Vol. 1, No. 2, December, 2017  
Price: \$80

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Published and printed by Institution of Business Intelligence Innovation  
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