

**Alternate Pathways to Highly Accomplished Teaching: A Case
Study**

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Introduction

This is the beginning of a story of one alternate-route, teacher-certification program and 15 alternate-route teacher candidates as they journey toward becoming highly accomplished teachers. Since teacher expertise remains the most significant variable of impact on student growth, teacher education programs must monitor candidate expertise from outset to completion. The burden of preparing highly accomplished teachers who can prepare highly accomplished students is on the back of every college of education in the country. With an aging teacher force that will turn completely over in the next 10 years, newly prepared teachers must come out of their teacher education programs ready to affect student growth immediately. The teacher candidates chronicled herein were involved in a 12-semester-hour alternate route to teacher certification. This college credit program pseudo-named Teach Institute (TI) – which is considered a portal into a full teacher education program by its offering institution, Mississippi State University (MSU) – serves as the context for this study. The case study searches for answers to the following question in the stories of the participating candidates:

Will TI teacher candidates begin to internalize accomplished teaching practices?

What is Accomplished Teaching?

According to INTASC, accomplished teaching comes from the teacher who deeply understands (1) content and tools to make the content meaningful; (2) the developmental patterns in learners with multiple needs; (3) unique and various teaching methods for unique and various learners; (4) many methods to promote critical thinking, problem solving, and performance in all learners; (5) a teacher's role in building a positive learn place; (6) how to communicate in a way that brings about active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction among learners; (7) ways to plan and considering variables of content, curriculum goals, instruction, students, and the community; (8) formal and informal assessment; (9) the need for and the process of active, continuous reflection as a professional growth tool; and (10) the importance of supportive professional relationships. These ten indicators are certainly signs of accomplished teaching. The Formative Teacher Candidate Assessment (FTCA) instrument was written with direct reference to INTASC standards. In fact, INTASC standards form the foundation of the teacher education program at MSU.

In their validation study, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) clarified thirteen dimensions of accomplished teaching from over twenty years' worth of study on effective teaching. Mississippi has invested heavily in the National Board certification process by adding \$6,000 in additional pay for each of ten years to teachers who pass the NBPTS process, and the state ranks fourth in the nation in the number of National Board Certified teachers. This collective body of accomplished teachers have identified thirteen effective teaching qualities (The Professional Standard, 2000):

- (1) *Use of knowledge* – having an extensive knowledge of subject matter and helping students to link their prior knowledge to the current subject matter being taught
- (2) *Deep representations* – reconciling students' content knowledge with their abilities and backgrounds to more effectively plan instruction
- (3) *Problem solving* – identifying problems related to curriculum and instruction and formulating a range of solutions that connect students, content, and context
- (4) *Improvisation* – adapting and improvising instruction during the actual flow of lessons to better meet students' needs
- (5) *Classroom climate* – having the ability to interpret student behavior to anticipate and prevent students from disrupting or disengaging from a lesson
- (6) *Multidimensional perception* – demonstrating a deeper understanding of students' verbal and nonverbal responses and using this information to prioritize instruction
- (7) *Sensitivity to context* – recognizing the uniqueness of particular students or classroom situations and using these factors to help guide instructional choices

- (8) *Monitor learning* – consistently monitoring student learning and offering feedback that corrects misunderstandings and enhances comprehension
- (9) *Test hypothesis* – generating hypotheses and continually reassessing instructional options
- (10) *Passion* – exhibiting an intense enthusiasm for teaching that is closely linked to a sense of responsibility
- (11) *Respect* – caring deeply for students in a sustained way that recognizes learning barriers while communicating a belief in students' abilities to overcome those barriers
- (12) *Challenge* – articulating high expectations and formulating lessons and activities that are more demanding and engaging for everyone
- (13) *Deep understanding* – promoting academic achievement in ways that emphasize both personal accomplishment and intellectual engagement

According to Weiss and Pasley (2004), high-quality classrooms require student engagement with content, a culture that is conducive to learning, equal access for all students, effective questioning, and assistance for students in making sense of the content. They go on to explain that quality teachers should emphasize important, developmentally appropriate learning goals; activities that promote engagement with content; a challenging and engaging environment; and sense-making, timely, important questioning.

Accomplished teaching then, according to MSU, can be gauged using the FTCA to measure whether teacher candidates have embedded the INTASC standards in their practice. NBPTS, and Weiss and Pasley (2004) along with a plethora of research provide many other indicators of accomplished teaching. In this study, the FTCA is used to gather quantitative data and measure the accomplished teaching practices of TI candidates. The wealth of research about accomplished teaching practice is used as the lens to gather qualitative data and measure the accomplished teaching practices of these TI candidates.

The Status of Alternate Route

Beginning teachers face many obstacles in their first year in the classroom regardless of their certification, whether traditional or alternate. With the rising teacher shortage, alternative route certification programs (AR) are becoming more popular. This popularity, however, brings along critics. Hammond and Wise (1992) believe that all teacher education programs need an overhaul. Traditional courses are often embedded with classes that do not relate to “meaningful examinations of teaching knowledge.” However, according to these authors, AR is not the answer to this problem. They claim that AR programs are less effective due to the absence of pedagogical training. Necessary pedagogical training might include methods and psychology classes, along with the field-based component of student teaching.

The first year of teaching can be labeled as a “reality shock” (Bey, 1992) for any teacher but especially for AR teachers who lack the student teaching or some other field-based experience that a traditionally trained teacher would undergo. This can lead to poor performances in the classroom. When Legler (2002) surveyed 136 teachers and their principals on performance, evidence suggested that, in terms of academics, alternately and traditionally prepared teachers were on an even playing field. However, when it came to performance after a three-year period, traditionally trained teachers received better performance rating. Other researchers make claims to the contrary and contend that AR teachers’ perform better. When Barnes, Salmon, and Wale (1990) performed a Texas Study, they came to the conclusion that AR teachers were “highly motivated and enthusiastic,” and more AR candidates scored higher on the National Teacher Exam than did the traditional candidates (Newman & Thomas 1999; Feistritzer 1999; Nakai & Turley 2003; Walsh 2001). This study also concluded that AR teachers had a unique teaching style, and the doubts and fears of principals subsided at the end of the school year regarding the alternate program (Barnes, Salmon and Wale 1990).

When Goldhaber and Brewer (2000) performed research comparing standardized test scores of 12th grade students taught by traditionally prepared teachers with students taught by AR teachers, they concluded that an education degree had no impact on the students’ science scores. It was not the content route that affected the scores but the lack of content knowledge of the teacher. Based on these findings, subject-matter knowledge is a strong determinant in

teacher effectiveness. Therefore, it might be concluded that an AR science teacher with over 40+ hours in detailed science courses might have the same impact on the scores as a teacher who has undergone a traditional teacher program.

While the aforementioned qualities are attributed to success within the program, a qualitative study by Jorissen (2002) concludes that mentorship also plays a key role in the success of beginning teachers (Feistritzer 1999; Nakai & Turley 2003). In a survey of 1,007 beginning teachers, 46% felt that mentors would have been most helpful. Due to inexperience, alternate teachers believed they needed that extra "on-the-job supervision" (Bey, 1992). In a two-year case study involving seven first-year AR teachers (Jorissen 2002), the teachers attributed their success to a mentoring program that provided guidance on teaching methodology and the importance of reflection as well as emotional support.

However, a review of literature on beginning teachers suggests that both traditional and alternate teaching programs could benefit from a good mentoring program (Andrews & Quinn 2005; Grossman & Thompson 2004; Inman & Marlow 2002; Salyer 2003). Statistics show that in 2001-2002, teacher turnover rates were high across the United States. It is estimated that 25-30% of first-year teachers leave just after two years on the job, and almost 40% leave teaching within the first five years of their career (Gold 1996; Jorissen 2002; Anderson 2003). What might be the source of this turnover rate? In a recent study by Andrews and Quinn (2005), questionnaires were distributed to all first-year teachers, approximately 188, in a school district with just over 60,000 students. Results from this survey documented that the lack of a mentorship program and/or support from administrators was a contributor to over 30% of first-year teachers leaving the education field.

Beginning teachers of both certification programs encompass some of the same problems in classroom management, self-efficacy, and assessment (Grossman & Thompson 2004). Therefore, it is vital that these inexperienced teachers have a support system where they can "share ideas, make plans, and attempt to solve problems" (Inman & Marlow 2002). In a survey of 38 teachers who responded to an itemized questionnaire, all participants stated that they received no special training during their first year of teaching, and 22 of those same participants reported that they did not have a mentor teacher (Salyer 2003). Principals can play a key role in building the confidence in both teacher-preparation programs. They, according to Salyer (2003), can "recognize the differences in age, work experience, and formal preparation...and provide more individualized induction and mentoring programs."

With the little evidence comparing traditional and alternative certification methods, one question still remains: *Does certification really matter?* In a 2001 report by the Abell Foundation, Walsh found significant problems with a Maryland AR program. In her research, she criticized the teacher-certification program stating that it was "neither an efficient nor effective means by which to ensure a competent teaching force." The qualities that make up a qualified teacher come "outside" the area of the traditional program. Verbal ability seems to be the quality that is most apparent for teacher effectiveness. Walsh concluded in her findings that the high scores from AR teachers on the NTE scores indicate a high verbal ability among this cohort compared to the traditional counterparts. In her opinion, Maryland should have only two requirements for granting licensure in the educational field: a bachelor's degree from an accredited university and a passing score on an appropriate teacher exam such as the Praxis series.

Of all the opinions and statistics stated throughout the literature review, one thing seems to remain constant. With the rise of teacher shortages, it appears that alternative teacher programs are here to stay. Because some AR programs are skeletal in content offerings, mentorship is the one thing that all teachers feel is vital to their success in the classroom. Entering a classroom no longer only encompasses teaching. It involves classroom management, effectively handling discipline problems, understanding state and district policies, and doing all the other extras that teachers undertake in their daily classroom schedule. With a good mentor program and principal support, the efficiency of both traditional and alternatively prepared teachers can be successful (Salyer 2003).

The intent of this research is to tell the story of TI candidates who have entered the world of teaching. Using established measures of accomplished teaching (INTASC, NBPTS, 2000; Weiss and Pasley, 2004), this study examined multiple data sources to determine if these TI teacher candidates are beginning to internalize accomplished teaching practices. "Highly

qualified” does not mean twenty-one semester hours of content-focused coursework. A plethora of research informs the teaching profession and our practice toward become increasingly effective. This study tells the stories of becoming and not becoming highly qualified teachers. Educators must document the work of how teacher candidates become highly qualified and must work for this documentation to inform policy that drives our profession in this age of high-stakes accountability and changing demography.

Research Methods

Design and Data Analysis

This study followed a case-study design. Gall, Borg, and Gall (1996) define case-study research as (a) the study of a phenomenon by focusing on specific instances; (b) an in-depth study of each case; (c) the study of a phenomenon in its natural context; and (d) the study of the participants’ perspective of the case-study participants. The study’s inquiry process employed descriptive, exploratory, and explanatory case-study procedures in addition to the data-gathering techniques of observation, interviewing, and document analysis. Additionally, this research involved elements of phenomenology, which is defined as the study of the world as it appears to individuals when they place themselves in the state of consciousness that strives to be rid of personal biases and beliefs. The procedures of phenomenology require a researcher to (a) identify a topic of personal and social significance; (b) select appropriate participants; (c) interview each participant; and (d) analyze the interview data (Moustakas, 1994). The topic of social significance studied in this research is alternate-route teachers and their progress toward accomplished teaching. In order to validate findings from data sources, investigator and theory triangulation as defined by Denzin (1994) was used. Validating the case-study method involved a combination of pattern-matching and explanation-building as defined by Yin (1989). Simple pattern-matching aided in determining gross or fine trends in the gathered data. This pattern-matching manifested in such analytic devices as matrices, categorization, frequency tabulation, and chronological ordering of information. Explanation-building, the specific type of pattern matching used here, is preferred for case studies that seek to provide critical insight into public-policy processes such as teacher education. Overall, the data-analysis methods for this study helped build and describe the cases of these 15 alternate-route teacher candidates to find out if TI teacher candidates who entered the classroom will begin to internalize accomplished teaching practices.

Participants

Teacher Candidates

TI included 6 African-American females, 5 Caucasian females, 1 African-American male, and 3 Caucasian males. Ten of the fifteen candidates had been teaching for at least one year on various certificates issued by the state department of education (most commonly referred to as emergency certificates). All were required to meet the full admission standards for the TI program with the exception of Praxis II scores. Although the state department of education requires all candidates to pass Praxis II – Specialty Area in order to participate in TI, due to timeline constraints and the frequency of Praxis II test administration dates, candidates were admitted, provisionally, to the first 9 hours of TI with the understanding that they must pass Praxis II – Specialty Area prior to the internship phase of the program or they would not be able to continue in TI.

Participants of TI had to meet a list of requirements. Each was required to hold a Bachelor’s degree from a regionally/nationally accredited institution of higher learning and a preferred minimum QPA of 2.75/4.00 in a minimum 15 hours of coursework in the content area of certification or have equivalent professional experience. A minimum QPA of 2.75/4.00 on the last half of baccalaureate work was preferred. Since the admission process was competitive, all TI applicants were required to provide current GRE scores although no specific passing standard was established. Each candidate had to provide acceptable letters of recommendation from supervisors/employers, professors, or both. Meeting minimum score requirements on the Praxis II – Specialty Area Test was required as was meeting the minimum score requirements on the Praxis I Pre-Professional Skills Test (PPST) of Reading (170), Writing (172), and Mathematics (169). Four candidates were allowed to proceed in the TMI program before meeting the Praxis II

score requirement due to the early start day of the TI program conflicting with the return scores. All were informed that passing Praxis II scores were required to complete TI. To ensure candidates had experience in working with children, TI candidates had to either hold a teaching job in grade 7-12 classrooms or provide documentation of a minimum 40 hours' work (volunteer or salary supported) with children. The final requirement was satisfactory completion of an interview. All the requirement data was compiled on a rating sheet along with an index for the interview, all of which was totaled to obtain a composite score for each candidate. All candidates accepted to the program were required to keep or obtain a teaching job during the 2004-2005 school year in order to complete their clinical practice/internship.

This case study, recounts the progress of all fifteen TI teacher candidates, 9 who were TI completers, 4 who continue to pursue a teaching career, and 2 who have not continued to pursue a teaching career. The following table provides a profile of all the teacher candidate participants who began TI. Those highlighted are TI completers.

Student Name	Content Area	Ethnicity	Sex	Teaching Status
Angie	Business Education	African American	Female	Not teaching
Barbara	Biology	African American	Female	Teaching
Bob	Health/Physical Education	Caucasian	Male	Teaching
Bryan	Social Studies	Caucasian	Male	Not teaching
Diana	Spanish	Caucasian	Female	Teaching
Gina	Physical Education	African American	Female	Teaching
Hannah	Social Studies	African American	Female	Teaching
Holly	Social Studies	African American	Female	Teaching
Hope	English/Special Ed.	Caucasian	Female	Teaching
Heidi	Biology	Caucasian	Female	Not teaching
Jackie	Social Studies	African American	Female	Not teaching
Natalie	Business Education/Math	Caucasian	Female	Not teaching
Patsy	Communication	Caucasian	Female	Teaching
Stan	Math	African American	Male	Teaching
Tyler	Chemistry	Caucasian	Male	Teaching

Table 1: Selected demographic of TI candidate participants with completers highlighted.

Of the nine TI completers, seven were approaching teaching as a second career; these included a former medical technician, a business owner, a national corporate salesperson, a teachers' assistant, a dental assistant, an agricultural researcher, and an engineer. The other two TI completers were recent, traditional college graduates who went directly into teacher certification. Of the six candidates who began TI but who did not complete the program, five were recent, traditional college graduates who went directly into teacher certification, and one was approaching teaching as a second career.

Research Team

Kay Brocato and Esther Howard served as the co-authors and co-principal investigators of the TI program. Brocato served as the coordinator of the TI program and taught EDS 8243 Planning and Managing Learning and RDG 8356 Teaching Reading in the Middle and High School – two of the three parts of the TI's summer portion. Eric Groce taught EPY 6313 Measurement and Evaluation, which was the third part of the summer TI program. Debra Prince served as data collection and statistical analyst for quantitative data gathered for this study. Dana Franz filled the role of evaluator by observing TI candidates' lessons and completing a Formative Teacher Candidate Assessment (FTCA) instrument for each after each of two lessons. All members of the research team have used the FTCA on multiple occasions to observe and provide feedback to teacher candidates. Members of the team met frequently during the first year of TI. Field notes on the interactions and commentary of all members of the team were analyzed to provide additional points of validation and triangulation during the document-analysis phase of the study. All research team members provided member checks of data presented herein.

The team is considered as both participants and researchers in this study. Stake (1995) provides an explanation of roles for the case-study researcher. He claims the role of interpreter is part of all the roles because the interpreter attempts to build meaning. This meaning building is

common in humanities-based research, which seeks not to accept or reject hypotheses. The researchers' purpose, then, is to reveal some of the myriad realities that exist in these teacher candidates' journeys toward accomplished teaching. As explained by Seidman (1998), a researcher's role is the most valuable since a qualitative researcher involves him or herself in "talking with and learning about people" (p. xxi).

Instruments

Formative Teacher Candidate Assessment

The research team measured accomplished teaching with the Formative Teacher Candidate Assessment (FTCA). Appendix A provides a copy of the FTCA instrument. A form of the FTCA used in this study has been used as the assessment for teacher candidates' capstone field experience since 1999 when it was developed by a task force of field directors appointed by the Mississippi Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (MACTE). The task force was asked to prepare an assessment instrument for statewide use with NCATE/INTASC alignment. The instrument was adopted in 1999 and pilot projects were conducted in each teacher education program in the state during the 1999-2000 school year, after which MACTE adopted it for statewide use. The 37-item version of the instrument is aligned with the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium standards for quality teaching and provides an observer opportunity to supply Likert-scale responses regarding various teacher practices, which are incorporated into six domains: 1) planning and preparation, 2) communication and interaction, 3) teaching for learning, 4) managing the learning environment, and 5) assessment of student learning. Items under each of these categories has been aligned by standard to at least one of each of the ten INTASC standards. The FTCA uses an effectiveness scale of 4=very effective, 3=effective, 2=somewhat effective, or 1=not effective to measure the teacher candidate's level of performance. This instrument allows observers to provide qualitative comments to teacher candidates with each instrument component.

Interviews, Focus Groups, and Assignments

Interviews were conducted during the first nine hours of coursework using a semi-structured interview protocol. We asked how prepared candidates felt toward the various aspects of teaching such as instructional strategies, classroom management, assessment, and overall program satisfaction. After completing the initial nine hours of coursework and one semester of teaching, we conducted a follow-up focus group with the candidates. Assignments from the three courses that were part of the pre-teaching block and those that were part of the teaching internship were used as data sources. These assignments included a classroom management plan; a unit and lesson planning project; a research presentation documented by hand-outs, electronic presentation, and field notes; a case study of a reading student; and a reflection journal.

Narrative data were coded by themes which emerged. Multiple data sources provided triangulation points and patterns emerged by theme. The themes, revealed in the "Conclusions and Discussion" section, show how TI teacher candidates began to internalize accomplished teaching practices.

Procedures

The Teach Institute Program

Beginning in the summer of 2004, Mississippi State University (MSU) offered a Teach Institute (TI) to eligible teacher candidates. The program was designed for individuals with a bachelor's degree in a content/discipline area or a degree with significant (minimum of 15 hours) coursework in a discipline area who wished to prepare for a career as a professional educator. The primary goal of this program was to certify quality teachers in designated shortage content areas to teach children in Mississippi classrooms. The program was specifically designed to assist teachers of mathematics, foreign language, and science but served teachers seeking licensure in a secondary teaching field of art, music, business, English/language arts, home economics, social studies, or physical education. The cost of TI was approximately \$2583.00 per teacher candidate for in-state residents. The university and the state department provided scholarships to cover all tuition costs for all candidates during this first year of TI.

TI consisted of an eight-week, nine-semester-hour, graduate-level program of study followed by a clinical practice/internship experience. Coursework included instruction in effective teaching strategies, classroom management, state curriculum requirements, planning and instruction, instructional methods/pedagogy, and use of test results to improve instruction. Courses required were EDS 8993 Advanced Planning and Managing of Learning, EPY 6313 Measurement and Evaluation, RDG 8653 Teaching Reading in the Secondary Schools, and EDS 8883/93 Dimensions of Learning (internship/clinical practice). The Dimensions of Learning clinical practice course was administered by one school-site mentor and one university supervisor for each TI teacher candidate. During the internship, each candidate completed a self assessment using the FTCA after each of two different lessons. Candidates were asked to choose two different lessons, which they had prepared during a two-week period. After teaching these lessons, they rated their own performances. In addition, an evaluator observed the candidates on at least one occasion. The evaluator used the FTCA to rate the candidates' lessons during the same month the candidates rated themselves. The ratings on the FTCA were summarized for inclusion in this study.

MSU continues to use the TI opportunity to recruit Master's of Arts in Teaching – Secondary Education (MAT-S) candidates since the institution views MAT-S work as a complete teacher education program. TI represents a beginning portion of a full teacher education program. TI candidates are allowed to apply the 12 credit hours earned in the TI toward the graduate hours required for a MAT-S, which means this study's expected outcomes are to prepare highly accomplished teachers for the state who ultimately earn the MAT-S degree.

Results

This section presents a summary of the data that responds to our research question. First, a group summary of TI results on the FTCA is presented. All candidates underwent two FTCA self-observations and one FTCA evaluator observation, except for Stan and Tyler. External evaluator FTCA observation is planned for a later date with Stan. Tyler's FTCA results are based on two external observations, and his FTCA self-observations are planned for a later date. Second, a case-by-case accounting of narrative results for each teacher candidate is provided to recount their ideas which demonstrate accomplished teaching. Data in this section comes directly from interview, class assignment, post-summer TI questionnaire, transcript of the pre-internship focus group meeting, and field note documents. Third, an explanation of the candidates who have not yet completed TI is offered since these candidates are at various stages in their journey toward accomplished practice. Finally, data concerning the context issues of school and district-wide information is offered to assist in telling these candidates' story of accomplished teaching. This district data has been rounded and is not presented with district or school name identifiers in order to maintain the anonymity of candidates, schools, and districts. This data falls under results as the data was gathered due to the context themes which seemed to be an impediment to some of the TI candidates journey toward accomplished teaching.

TI Group on FTCA

A summary of descriptive results discloses that the candidates as a group are accomplished as measured by FTCA instrument. The instrument is closely aligned with INTASC standards such that items under planning and preparation have been cross referenced with INTASC standards 1,2,3,5, and 7. Under communication and interaction, items have been cross referenced with INTASC standards 2,3,5, and 6. Under teaching for learning, items have been cross referenced with INTASC standards 1, 2,3, 4, 6, 7, and 8. Under the managing the learning environment section in the FCTA, items have been cross referenced with INTASC standards 5, 6, and 7. Under assessment of student learning, items have been cross referenced with INTASC standard 8. Appendix B provides a copy of the INTASC standards. Since the instrument is closely aligned with INTASC standards and current research, the mean group scores for this small sample indicate that in all categories the candidates measure as accomplished. Summarized responses to the FTCA revealed that this first class of TI candidates is confident—as a group-- that they are internalizing accomplished teaching practices as measured by the

instrument. Their mean score for items which address teaching issues of planning and preparation was 3.36; for communication and interaction 3.39; for teaching for learning 3.31; for managing the learning environment 3.38; for assessing learning 3.34. Items under each of these categories have been aligned by standard to each of the ten INTASC standards.

Beginning to Internalize Accomplished Teaching Practices Barbara

Looking at accomplished teaching practices after three observations (two self observations and one evaluator observation) using the FTCA, Barbara rates as at least “somewhat effective” on all components of the instrument. For the six items under “planning and preparation,” her average rating was 2.75, which is in the “somewhat effective” range and just below the “effective” range. On the six items under “communication and interaction,” her average rating was 2.83, which is in the “somewhat effective” range and just below the “effective” range. On the 15 items under “teaching for learning,” her average rating was 3, the lowest limit of the “effective” range. On the 8 items under “managing the learning environment,” her average rating was 3.43, which is in the mid-effective range. On the 3 items under “assessment of student learning,” Barbara’s average rating was 2.67, which is in the “somewhat effective” range.

A challenge area for Barbara is the task of monitoring students’ learning. She has 130 students and the paperwork is “enormous – it’s overwhelming at times.” She copes with this load by providing verbal feedback when the students are engaged with an assignment, by responding to questions, and by observing while students are working. Barbara is aware that her students want to know about their performance because they ask about certain assignments and want to know how they did on them.

Though Barbara claims to have difficulty with classroom management, she interprets it in preventative ways. She says that she invests time trying to prevent disruption and distractions from the lesson. She describes herself as a “good manager most days,” but she says

some days I feel like calling it quits. I get tired of asking the children to quiet down, be respectful or have a seat. This is very annoying for me especially when I am trying to teach and we’re running behind on the proposed schedule. . . I feel helpless at times because there is so much to cover in so very little time. For example, biology state testing is in April and we’re still working on second nine weeks’ benchmarks.

Barbara describes her principal as “great at dealing with unaccepted behavior,” but due to accountability pressures she feels she must move faster than usual in order to cover the material, which makes students feel “overwhelmed, give up and misbehave.” She understands her role is to motivate, and she does so by giving her students “pep talks” and stressing the importance of not giving up.

Barbara seems to feel she is internalizing accomplished teaching practices on some level. She claims to feel that she is accomplished in the daily task of informing her students well on the subject matter, but she professes that she must research and study “extensively” in order to understand her content. She says, “I am willing to spend time learning because I love biology and I enjoy reading about life and its many processes.” She feels that this passion for content “enables her to want to help link the current subject matter to [her students’] prior knowledge.” She tells of preparing for class until 1:00 a.m. “many” evenings. In a telling comment about her desire to know her content, Barbara says:

What really made me realize that I had to know the subject area in detail was when my students started to research and critique every word that I spoke. They started to remember everything and even told others so, I knew that I needed to know what I was talking about.

Barbara goes on to explain that she constantly tries to consider her students’ abilities and backgrounds when she is planning instruction. She feels this part of her work is difficult because there are so many standards and criteria the students must meet, and there is so much

“accountability on the teacher.” She explains that she incorporates scenarios that relate to her students and their environments, and she claims she tries “to learn the local lingo” in order to relate to her students’ culture. Barbara says she realizes that when she makes her student feel comfortable with the lesson, they are more relaxed and willing to listen. She says, “If I can make them laugh by trying to be cool, they will try to learn my terminology/lingo and use it.”

Barbara sees that resources are a problem for her. She wants to actively engage students in more hands-on ways with assignments. However, she sees this as difficult with 130 biology students when the funds are not available for needed materials. She frequently spends personal money for lab supplies. She says she teaches what she thinks would be best for maximum achievement for the students, instead of using the district’s suggested curriculum guide.

Barbara explains that she is a sort of

master for improvising because it always seems as if nothing goes as planned. For example, I might start off expecting the class to complete work individually, but they become so confused that I may allow them to work in groups or I may plan a lab on a Thursday but the students don’t quite understand the week’s objectives so I may review instead of having lab. When I see that the students are not responding well to lecture I may decide to turn the lesson into a class discussion or some other work which involves student participation.

Barbara seems to engage in more reflective thinking than is typical for a beginning teacher. She says she assesses and reassesses instructional options because she wants to be sure to use appropriate methods. Data supports her claim that she frequently works to “figure out better, more applicable ways to the same learning goal.” Barbara refers to research to assist her in teaching, saying “According to Marie Carbo and Rita Dunn, students have different reading and learning styles so I can be more successful if I try to teach toward the students’ individual learning styles.” She describes how she tries to group students “mentally” according to their strengths and weaknesses to assist them in learning. Her descriptions of self and other data support her intense passion for science. She seems to truly enjoy her content and seems excited when she sees and hears her students applying their knowledge of biology. She says:

I call it “speaking biology”. This brings excitement to me, but my students want the fun and excitement without the reading and work. . . My enthusiasm is because I really want my students to be responsible and to learn. For example, chapter 7-Cellular Respiration is difficult and my students become discouraged with the terminology because the words are hard to spell and pronounce so they wanted to play a game to make it fun.

She describes how she includes game playing, but that before playing she wanted to be sure students engaged in reading and listening to become familiar with content.

Other astute commentary from Barbara about her attempts to become more accomplished include the following:

- I try to understand their communities and surroundings in order to relate to their thinking and reasoning.
- I try to be realistic about my students’ learning abilities. I do recognize that many of them do not read on their grade levels and this is one of the main disabilities for my students because they become easily frustrated with the terminology and content of the material. However, this is one of the mishaps that can be changed if one puts planning and effort into the process. . . I don’t hinder them by using a disability as an excuse.

- I am able to challenge 99% of my students with no problem—it takes research and effort but it’s achievable.
- I have started giving more research-based assignments so that [students] will learn how to seek information because they might see they can’t learn it all in 45 minutes.
- I recall one of my students sending these body gestures that [showed] she didn’t want to be in class. So, I asked her what was wrong and she answered that the class is boring and she wanted to learn more biology. While I thought that her comment was rude I knew that it was probably correct because this student caught on faster than everyone else and wanted to move on while I had to work with the other students who did not quite understand.

Comments from data on Barbara’s journey to accomplished teaching are plentiful. Multiple instances recounting her journey date back to documents from the first class of TI. She professes to want her students to become intellectuals and “to think like a scientist.” She truly seems to want to challenge students to think and wonder because, she says, “Thinking promotes action.”

Bob

Measuring accomplished teaching practices after three observations using the FTCA, Bob rates in the “effective” range on all components of the instrument. For the six items under “planning and preparation,” his average rating was 3.40 or “effective.” On the six items under “communication and interaction,” his average rating was 3.56; on the fifteen items under “teaching for learning,” 3.22; on the eight items under “managing the learning environment,” 3.21; and on the three items under “assessment of student learning,” 3.21.

Bob professes to have some areas of growth in mind for his teaching. He does not feel particularly accomplished in “reading the students and telling whether they understand the material.” He also feels he uses the same teaching strategies over and over again. He knows that a variety of instructional strategies will add to his teaching but sometimes feels that if his students are learning with his typical, traditional methods, then there is no reason to change. He says, “I know we must test to see what new things will work and what things will not work in the classroom.” He also wonders how to challenge his students appropriately. He has concerns about whether his lessons are too demanding for special-education students, and he worries that they may feel isolated from the class and begin to disengage. He says, “It is important for me to really challenge my students, but in the same sense not get over their heads which is a fine line that I have trouble with.”

Bob feels his greatest strength is his passion for teaching and learning. He says

. . .passion for my job is one of the most important things in my daily walk. I have to really want to get in that classroom and roll up my shirt sleeves and get busy helping my students learn the material that is being taught. I feel that any job that is worth doing is worth doing right. Students are smart and they can read teachers well. The more passion I have about teaching my students, the more passion they will have about learning.

In terms of content knowledge, Bob feels he has a solid grasp on the health content he teaches. He professes that it is “easy” to relate health to everyday life since health is something that “starts with the first breath” taken. He explains to students that all health decisions affect the body in a positive way or a negative way, and he feels it is his job to present data that will “steer students in the direction of a healthy lifestyle.” Bob claims he makes it a point to remember that he is there to help the students learn, not to see how fast he can get through the framework.

In terms of managing the learning environment, Bob understands that students want discipline and structure. He sees it as his job to keep his students involved in class and focused on learning tasks. He credits any success in this area with knowing the backgrounds and abilities of his students. He relates, “I know that I have many athletes in my third period class, so I try and

relate as much subject matter as I can to sports to keep them on-task." These kinds of ideas about management seem to make Bob feel in control of his teaching and learning environment.

Bryan

In accomplished teaching practices after three observations using the FTCA, Bryan rates in the "effective" range on all components of the instrument. For the "planning and preparation" items, his average was 3.20. For "communication and interaction," his average rating was 3.44. On "teaching for learning" (3.29), on "managing the learning environment" (3.00), and on assessment of student learning (3.44), Bob's ratings all fell firmly in the "effective" range.

Bryan feels that one of his most difficult issues in teaching is dealing with the pressures of accountability. He feels accomplished in having "very high" expectations for all of his students. However, he frequently describes feelings of frustration over being "judged by how well my students do." He feels that he consistently tries many strategies but continues to find that certain students are apathetic – "they just don't care." As a result he feels he is "judged as not doing his job." He feels this judging is not necessarily a formal assessment of his teaching ("not on paper") but is more of an unspoken, underlying assessment of his accomplished teaching practice. Bryan finds it difficult to determine which students understand his lesson and which do not, which causes him to teach material "very simply" so nearly every student can understand "if they put forth any effort."

Byran has several areas about which he feels accomplished in his teaching. He says:

Because of my vast experience outside the classroom, I have knowledge that I can draw on to supplement the lessons from our textbook. There are always interesting things to add to the lessons that give students insight and help them to understand the lessons better. Many times these outside items are from today's news.

He goes on to describe times when what he planned was not working, so he changed or added attention-getting stories or facts to his lessons to keep from "being boring." He professes to use questions to teach principles. He understands that questions help him know who understands and who does not, which, in turn, helps enhance learning. Bryan's questions "get students to thinking. I ask them to think and reason, not just give a correct answer." From all accounts and data sources, Bryan seems to have enthusiasm for teaching. He professes that he gets excited during lessons, and students respond attentively to his excitement. He says, "I notice that all eyes are on me. They are taking in every word." Bryan seems to think that this personal excitement he expresses seems to reach those who may be displaying a disinterested affect. Bryan tells of noticing trends on exams that provide evidence that students retain the content about which he is most passionate. Bryan's data set supports that he sees himself as a caring teacher, which he says is demonstrated in his students' comments and in their classroom exam results.

Diana

Looking at accomplished teaching practices after three observations using the FTCA, Diana rates in the "effective" range on all components of the instrument. For the "planning and preparation items," her average was 3.34. For "communication and interaction," her average rating was 2.95. On "teaching for learning" (3.12), on "managing the learning environment" (3.35), and on "assessment of student learning" (3.00), Diana's ratings all fell firmly in the "effective" range.

Diana's dialogue provides evidence of her beginning accomplished practices involving passion for teaching and challenging content (INTASC; NBPTS,2000; Weiss & Pasley, 2004). She claims to challenge her students on a daily basis. She speaks to them in Spanish as they walk through the door, but understands from her study of second-language learners that she must be careful not to overwhelm them. She explains that she requires her students to reuse previous vocabulary as part of their daily learning. She expects them to understand what she is saying and professes she tries to create "healthy tension" between challenge and comfort. She says:

It is like a game that we play each day, as I see them in the halls at school, or out in public I try to encourage them in recalling what they have been exposed to and using what they know in conversation.

She understands that people often become timid when using a second language and that practice is required to overcome that “shyness” or lack of confidence. As she says, “I love to see those eyes light up when they get it.” She describes her students as “surprised that they can actually comprehend most of what is being said [in Spanish].”

In challenging students, she explains that increasing their vocabulary in a foreign language “is not enough.” She knows that people associate experiences with words and that in literacy building, rich experiences and much talk about those experiences is important. She “strive[s] to stir my students’ senses and push[es] to expose students to rich language interaction, visual and aural representations, and social collaboration.” To support these claims, Diana describes an incident when her class was studying Mexican traditions:

I took two of the classes that I teach to a Mexican restaurant. The restaurant had the menu in Spanish, the waiters were Mexican, the atmosphere was that of Mexico, and they had Spanish music. We enjoyed our one-day trip. This was a rich cultural experience for my students. Some of them had never ventured beyond a hamburger restaurant before. Many have never been outside of Mississippi.

The data from Diana’s work clearly shows evidence of emerging accomplished teaching.

Hope

Measuring accomplished teaching practices after three observations (two self observations and one evaluator observation) using the FTCA, Hope rates close to the “very effective” range on all components of the instrument. For the “planning and preparation” items, her average was 3.85. For “communication and interaction,” her average rating was 3.83. On “teaching for learning” (3.75), on “managing the learning environment” (3.64), and on “assessment of student learning” (3.56), Hope’s mean ratings were all approaching the “very effective” range.

Hope feels that building a positive classroom climate is a challenge area for her accomplished teaching practice. She says, “Classroom climate is one area that I have had trouble with from day one.” She describes management as a “constant battle” and “a work in progress,” and she claims she would rate herself as “unaccomplished” in this area. Hope seems to be in a constant state of reflection about “keeping discipline” in her classroom. She feels that she is more patient with her younger students who disrupt or talk out of turn because “some of that is to be expected.” She explains that “with my older students...they should know how to behave, and my tolerance is low.” She goes on to describe how she has tried different token economy systems and feels that the failure of these systems was her “fault” since she did not invest enough time in the fifty-minute class period to make the token system work. She professes that she will continue to try various methods, but so far, she has found no method to successfully assist her in managing her class.

Hope sees her content knowledge as a strength in her teaching. She professes to help students link their prior knowledge to the content discussed regularly. She is proud of the fact that she has an undergraduate degree in English and mentions this as a sort of perk to being an alternate route teacher. She says, “I feel that this degree was a major advantage to me because I had in-depth studies in various genres, and this has better prepared me in my content area.” She adds that getting to know her students helps her link the students’ prior knowledge and experiences to the content being taught. This sensitivity to students’ context is evident in Hope’s beginning-of-the-year “informal interest inventory.” After gathering this student interest information, she attempts to use content that is meaningful to her students (“such as sports and extracurricular activities”).

. . .even with just simple grammar sentences, I try to implement things that

interest them in my sentences. From personal experience, if I read something or learn more about something that interests me, my attention span is held longer, and I retain more knowledge. That is what I hope my students come out of this with. Teaching is all about relating prior experiences and students' interests and carrying them over to the content being taught.

Hope also explains how she uses her content knowledge and knowledge of students to improvise and make the classroom more enjoyable.

I might start out with an instruction procedure, and by "reading" my students, I might choose to try another path of instruction due to their lack of response or frequency of incorrect responses. As a teacher, I always have to be on my toes, so to speak, always gauging the students' reaction and changing and modifying accordingly.

She describes how she is "always" trying new things like games, visual presentations, or student-led presentations. She describes her reflective process about these improvisations by saying, "I reflect to see which ones should be continued and which ones should be tweaked or changed." This constant revision of her practice is one of the things Hope says she finds enjoyable about teaching. She says, "Teaching keeps me alert, reflective, and willing to adapt to change."

Hope also feels she is an accomplished teacher in terms of passion for her work and respect for her students. She says, "I love English, and I love seeing the light bulbs go off." She admits that being enthusiastic "proves to be harder some days than others." But as Hope reflects on her own learning experiences, she recounts that "if the teacher is excited about the day and what is being taught, then the student is more likely to take notice and participate." She describes how before each class, she makes pointed attempts to move everything else going on around her to the side and focus on each particular class and lesson. Her passion is displayed in her comment, "There is no greater pleasure than to see a student meet a challenge and be successful." In this data that demonstrates passion is also evidence of respect for learners. Hope explains that having patience, tolerance, and compassion for students with various learning barriers is her job. She also understands that part of respect is "giving students a boost and constantly challenging them to do more." Hope understands that learning for some "might take weeks, months, or years before they are able to overcome barriers," but she knows that respect involves "never giving up on students." She says she would consider her teaching career a success if her students know that she cares for them and know she wants to help them overcome obstacles.

Heidi

In accomplished teaching practices after three observations using the FTCA, Heidi rates in the effective range on all components of the instrument. For the planning and preparation items, her average was 3.53. For communication and interaction, her average rating was 3.73. On teaching for learning (3.56), on managing the learning environment (3.71), and on assessment of student learning (3.56), Heidi's mean ratings were well-situated in the effective range.

From Heidi's self and evaluator FTCA data, we can see that she assesses herself as effectively demonstrating accomplished teaching practices. Her narrative data set provides a common theme of confidence in her content knowledge. This confidence seems to come from her previous career when she used her content knowledge frequently. This content knowledge confidence sets Heidi and Tyler apart from the rest of the TI candidates, since only these two candidates had previous careers which plunged them into the content they now teach. This is a point for future study. Herein though, this confidence seems to drive her confidence on nearly every other area of accomplished teaching defined in our study. She has been a medical professional for approximately twenty years and has applied most of the vast collection of facts, terms, and scientific procedures that she is now teaching. She says . . .

I feel very accomplished in the subject area of science. When my students want to know such things as whether blood is really blue or red, how long it takes for oxygen to get from the lungs to the toes, or why they have blue eyes and their parents both have brown eyes; I usually am prepared to answer.

She claims that providing such answers motivates students to learn. She also feels that attending to students in other ways contributes to her ability to be accomplished in classroom management. She describes how she is able to build a rapport with her students, which allows her to “tell by their facial expressions and physical gestures when the subject matter is not being conveyed clearly.” She feels she can adjust to students when they “lose eye contact with [her],” “begin to fidget,” or “sigh out loud.” She adjusts by “asking for feedback,” “dissolving misconceptions,” and “redirecting [student] learning.” She also recounts empowering her students by giving one student the opportunity “to interject a more familiar way of presenting the topic” so that others can understand more readily.

For classroom management ease, Heidi spent the first week or two of school practicing classroom procedures “as is suggested by Harry Wong.” She describes using non-verbal cues in a procedure adopted for pencil sharpening. “The student raises a hand and points to the pencil sharpener. With an approving nod from me, my students quietly walk to the pencil sharpener and sharpen their pencils.” Heidi explains how this rule prevents disruptions and allows for a non-confrontational method of management. She says that using procedures has allowed “even [her] students who were presenting a behavioral challenge on a regular basis to conform to the structure, procedures and routines of [her] classroom.” Heidi has more insight on classroom management concerning interaction with students. She says . . .

I have discovered that most of my students want to interact with me and with other students verbally as well as non-verbally. I am continuously striving to be an even more accomplished listener. Some of my students prefer not to articulate their ideas during class, but after class, privately with me. Other students let me know by eye contact that they would rather not have to verbally express themselves in class.

She says that “as The Center for Research on Education suggests,” she seeks to interact with students in ways that respect communication styles which differ from the teacher’s such as wait time, eye contact, turn taking or spotlighting. She claims these practices are highly recommended. She goes on to explain her work with individualization describing 2 different slower learners. She explains how they require extra time for verbal and non-verbal instruction (“such as note-taking”). “Both students are very inquisitive and will verbally inquire during class discussions, but require time to think, respond, and write.” Accomplished teacher dialogue is abundant in Heidi’s data set. The following comments provide sample from the breadth and depth of her understanding:

- “Just a pat on the back, a few words of encouragement and an academic nudge can go a long way when done consistently.”
- “I have a tremendous enthusiasm for teaching, motivating, and sparking new interests in my students, because I love what I teach. Eby, Herrell, and Hicks (2002) say that ‘Teachers often display a greater degree of excitement and interest for material they themselves enjoyed learning, and they pass that excitement about learning on to the students’ (p.174).”
- “I highly respect everyone and my students in particular. I respect their values, intellectual capacities and all other diversities that they have.”
- “I feel responsible for holding high expectations for all of my students academically, socially, and personally. Gay calls this a ‘warm demander.’”

- “Showing respect, warmth, and a little extra attention to my students who have been labeled by others as those who “don’t care” significantly raises their interest in academics and even seems to enhance their personal image.”

In terms of reflective thinking and dialogue, Heidi seems to return to research frequently as she considers her teaching practice. In one particular data source where TI candidates were asked to self assess their teaching, Heidi cited The Center for Research on Education; Jacob Kounin; W. Gordon and Poze; Gay; Eby, Herrell, and Hicks; The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards and others. She seems very comfortable in the fact that teaching takes constant revision frankly saying, “I think that any first year teacher or even an experienced teacher would be ‘out of their mind’ if they assumed that their first choice of conveying curriculum and instruction was totally correct.” She goes on to describe how from her first lesson she has “reassessed and revised” instructional plans and methods. She says, “My lesson plans have notes jotted out to the sides and “sticky” note ideas plastered everywhere.” She goes on to profess that she frequently looks back through teaching research and reference material for proven professional methods of instruction and problem-solving ideas. She claims the professional colleagues within her own school are the greatest source of guidance and support for her.

Patsy

Looking at accomplished teaching practices after three observations using the FTCA, Pam rates just above the effective rating on all components of the instrument. For the planning and preparation items, her average was 3.07. For communication and interaction, her average rating was 3.17. On teaching for learning (3.40), on managing the learning environment (3.46), and on assessment of student learning (3.11), Pam’s mean ratings were well-situated in the effective range.

Patsy’s data set presents her feelings of growing anxiety and feelings of pressure. Early documents demonstrate her feelings of confidence in her work with students. At that point in her teaching, she was working with fewer groups per day and smaller numbers of students per group in a part time teaching capacity. After TI she obtained a full time social studies teaching position. The content she is required to grasp seems to overwhelm her. She says, “I’m learning the material with the students this year. I am reading enough material per night to make a fifty minute lesson for four subjects the next day.” She seems to feel “guilty” for focusing more on teaching content than on teaching students. But she relates “being afraid” of not knowing enough knowledge about the subject. She never wants to be unprepared to answer students’ questions or to “guide them to a higher level on Bloom’s Taxonomy.” She says,

I filmed myself this week to watch myself and try to make necessary changes to incorporate classroom activities, appropriate for each class. I wish I had more time to concentrate on each subject I teach and look for materials. I run out of time because I’m studying the material so intensely in order to be prepared for questions.

Patsy also claims that motivating her students is difficult. She describes how she attends workshops and searches for visuals to enhance each lesson. She uses a district required lesson format which she neither affirms nor criticizes. This district endorsed lesson presentation tool has “a lesson line of three components: Set, T20 and Closure.” Patsy describes how during each of the components she must call on students by name to answer questions posed by the teacher. By design, the students should not know who is to be called on next as the goal of this system is to keep the students’ attentive. She professes that this method was not successful the first several times she tried it and describes when the student became attentive . . .

Until the moment we found the letter Mary Queen of Scots wrote to her brother in law the night before her execution, my sixth period World History class was restless and uninterested.

As a result of her understanding of what seemed to motivate her students in this particular instance, Patsy seems to want to find more exciting resources like the letter which piqued interest. She says,

I hand out enrichment activities (puzzles, maps, cartoons or articles), play music from each era, and use movies to bring the subject (topic) alive to [my students]. I've also ask them to contribute any vintage music they may have or can find. I'm doing my best to find what materials I have time to research, after preparing for the lessons.

Patsy is also concerned about her students' level of success in her course. She wants to use better daily assessments to diagnose learning deficiencies. She describes using the "bell ringer" exercises to help her identify which students may need some after school tutoring. She wishes students would come to tutoring sessions she has set up for them before and after school. She says, "This is another anxiety area of mine that I have deep concerns about." She tells of approaching several students about staying after school to be tutored and how they indicate to her that they know the material. "But test scores say differently," she says. "I am hoping bell ringers will provide me feedback which will help me to help student to improve their weak areas."

She also wants to be a better classroom manager. Patsy described how she attended a two-day classroom management workshop and immediately upon her return from the sessions sharing her ideas and her goals for the classroom with her classes. She says,

different classes received it differently. I think the seniors will be very helpful, the juniors will test all boundaries and the sophomores will become angry and disrupted. I think if I present a need for an atmosphere as a team working together to achieve a common goal instead of this is what I'm requiring from you it will be easier for them to swallow change.

Patsy also recounts several successes and strengths in her teaching. She considers her excitement for teaching a benefit saying, "My enthusiasm comes with seeing [students] achieve an understanding." She thinks she shows students an intense seriousness about "my desire for them to know and fully comprehend the material." She relates this focus on student understanding when she relates a story about her special education students:

I have IEP's on several of my students. This past week I had my second tutorial student to ask to take his test with the others, instead of going to his tutoring teacher. He stated he wanted to attempt to take it on his own and I reassured him if he didn't perform well I would allow him to retake with his teacher. He preformed exceptional and when I told him his grade, his eyes widen as did his smile!!!

Still Patsy professes that when she sets what students consider to be "too high" expectations, they become resentful, and she feels she looses their interest quickly. She recounts how they become disruptive and angry toward "any form of a challenge." She says her students do not like being asked or required "to put forth any effort toward their personal learning process."

In Patsy's dialogue is evidence of her feelings about accomplished teaching. She says, "This has been a year of obtaining my education through the University of Hard Knocks." She claims to have been so focused on meeting the requirements of state accountability and testing that she feels defeated. She speaks of "intense pressure to succeed in preparing the students for state subject area test," so much so that the pressure has left Patsy feeling "inadequate and depleted." She says,

Thus I do not feel I promote any form of accomplishment or intelligence. I feel like I'm a work in progress. I work at trying to achieve these great

ideas but I have four different subjects in this my first year to teach all of them.

Stan

Measuring accomplished teaching practices after two self-observations using the FTCA, Stan rates effective on all components of the instrument. For the planning and preparation items, his average was 3.20. For communication and interaction, her average rating was 3.56. On teaching for learning (3.23), on managing the learning environment (4.00), and on assessment of student learning (3.50), Stan's mean ratings were well-situated in the effective range.

Stan feels that teaching using deep, problem solving techniques with students causes a "problem" for him. He feels that too often students get the "misconception that standardized testing results will determine their entire future." He notices that instruction students receive is focused on test preparation. He professes "to combat this problem" by implementing lessons that stress students intellectual abilities. Stan says he gives students a framework with the boundaries to master, but in his lessons "students have the flexibility to explore, discover, ask questions and seek answers" which are all methods he feels help students to increase retention. He says,

"With this kind of exploratory learning, students are allowed to learn with multiple perspectives in a real world context under the safety of the classroom walls which makes it meaningful to them.

He describes how his students learn about other cultures during language arts assignments using the Internet to listen to R&B, country, or 40's music and determining literary themes as an example of deep learning activities beyond test ready teaching. Contrary to what this account relates, Stan feels unaccomplished in creating such lessons. He also says he feels unaccomplished in reassessing instructional options. He does explain that he conducts formative assessments "to see where students are and what they are comprehending" but expresses that time constraints and "other issues" keep him from continuously reassessing instructional options. Stan also wishes he were a better reader of students' non-verbal cues. He explained that when students "look puzzled or frown" he rarely re-arranged instruction because he was "too determined to get through the lesson" he had planned. He says "This-- I think-- is a mistake." He professes that he would have learned more by taking time to assess non-verbal signs. He tells that he attempts to operate using constructivist theories so he knows he must be "more cognizant of students non-verbal signals because students with less background knowledge or skills may not be learning more as a result of having more freedom over their learning experiences.

In the area of classroom climate, Stan is one of 2 TI candidates who expresses feelings of success. He tells how many of his students are categorized as academically at-risk students. However, he calls them "under achieving and unmotivated to try their best in school." He relates that many do not have fathers or other caring adults in their lives, "so they seek attention and acceptance in school" which might cause classroom management challenges. He describes how he seeks to engage students in class activities by using redirection and/or close student-teacher proximity techniques. He says "If I see a student not paying attention I may call his or her name or walk toward that student and stand near him or her. This usually gets [the student's] attention." He also says he might empower a student who seems to need extra attention by "pulling him/her aside, and whispering that he expects this particular student to be sure the group project gets done correctly. Stan describes that in this type of incident he might say, "See to it that the group doesn't get off track" to an off-task student. He describes how he regularly seeks out what students think and challenges them to answer questions during lessons in order to make them more active in listening and learning. Stan sees these preventative techniques as the reasons for his feelings of success about his classroom climate.

Initial TI Candidates: Not-Yet Completed

TI began with 15 candidates, of those candidate 6 were unable to complete the program. The 6 who were unable to complete TI, fell out of the program for various reasons. Angie was

unable to find a suitable teaching position in her field. She has moved on in her teacher education program by pursuing the Master's of Arts in Teaching degree. Gina, Hannah, and Holly held emergency certificates and teaching positions prior to enrolling in TI. They were unable to finish TI since they were unable to supply passing scores on the Praxis II Specialty Area test which was state requirement of all TI candidates. These 3 candidates have remained in constant contact with the TI coordinator and the state department of education in hopes that some plan can be made to allow them to keep their teaching positions and continue teacher education. They will complete TI at which time they are able to supply passing scores on the Praxis II exam. Two of the initial TI candidates dropped out of the TI program. Natalie decided "teaching was not for her" after taking the first three courses. Jackie completed the first three courses of TI but did not supply passing Praxis II scores and did not return for the internship portion of TI for unknown reasons. Documenting these teachers' journey toward accomplished teaching is important since they remain in Mississippi classrooms. In the "Conclusions and Discussion" section of this manuscript, we make comments on how teacher education is on-going for these candidates and on how continuing to study these candidates helps us understand unique and individual routes to accomplished teaching.

Impact of Context on TI Candidates' Accomplishment

Context results are presented in Table 2 because much of the data from individual teacher candidates suggested that the particular contexts in which teachers were seeking to become accomplished may have actually hindered such growth. The data by school is listed in random order so the information can not be match to any particular candidate. This data has been rounded and is not presented with district or school name identifiers in order to maintain the anonymity of candidates, schools, and districts. The following data is presented as results of this research since the acquisition of this data set emerged as an important result of the study.

District	District Enroll	School Enroll	AAD*	% African-American	% Caucasian	% Eligible for Free Lunch	# Carnegie Units	# Drop outs	% Teachers Adv. Degree	% Emergency	% Gifted	Per Pupil Expenditures
1	1860	540	3	40%	60%	60%	83.5	35	40%	2.0%	10%	\$6,700
2	3650	820	3	100%	0%	100%	86	35	40%	16%	0.00%	\$6,100
3	6240	630	4	30%	70%	50%	115	91	30%	4%	10%	\$5,800
4	7280	1160	5	40%	60%	40%	137.5	78	50%	4%	17%	\$7,400
5	2620	760	4	10%	90%	30%	84.5	20	40%	5%	5%	\$5,700
6	187	330	4	30%	70%	50%	69.5	11	50%	3%	10%	\$6,200
7	2260	640	3	99%	1%	90%	70	38	50%	7%	1%	\$6,500
8	840	350	2	95%	5%	90%	62	14	30%	3%	3%	\$6,500
# or % in state or state avg.	491,623	N/A	N/A	50.86%	47.27%	56.56%	86.07	5869	39.82%	5.60%	6.78%	\$6,402

* AAD is the school's Annual Accountability Designation. It is made up of the School Performance Classification (5= Superior Performing, 4=Exemplary, 3=Successful, 2=Under Performing, 1=Low Performing).

Table 2: TI Candidates' district and school level data as contexts of the accomplished teaching practices

The 9 TI teachers have positions at 8 different Mississippi High Schools. Two of the schools are located in or bordering the Mississippi Delta, and over 90% of the students qualify for free or reduced price lunches. Several of our TI candidates were hired into atypical teaching positions which require expertise beyond that of a new teacher. For example, one TI teacher has a part time appointment in two different schools in her rural district. She teaches 3 classes at one high school in her district. From this school, her classes are provided via distance education to another rural high school. Then she travels to the other district high school to teach one class. Another TI candidate has no classroom of his/her own. This teacher must migrate from one classroom to another classroom during other teachers' student-free periods. Another TI candidate has 5 different course preparations per day. All but one of our candidates has a student load of over 100 students per day. Some TI candidate teachers have a load of 130 students per day while several other more experienced teachers in the candidates' schools have negotiated a schedule with 90 or fewer students per day.

Conclusions and Discussion

A wealth of evidence supports that the TI candidates are all beginning to internalize accomplished teaching practices. Cross referencing all data sources with the indicators of accomplished teaching documents this. First, we provide discussion of the results of the FTCA instrument in assessing teacher accomplishment. Second, we draw themes of accomplished teaching from TI candidate narratives which are tied to the literature. Third, we include summarizing statements about the initial TI candidate pool which has implications for becoming an accomplished teacher. Finally, we address context issues which affected TI candidates accomplished teaching practices. These sections draw conclusions and provides discussion about our research question of whether these TI candidates are beginning to internalize accomplished teaching practices.

FTCA: Assessment of Teacher Accomplishment

The FTCA seemed to reveal that, at least in selected lessons, TI candidates are internalizing accomplished teaching practices. In planning and preparation, communication and interaction, teaching for learning, managing the environment, and assessing learning, an external evaluator rated the TI candidates and the candidates rated themselves between effective and very effective. Over all, the FTCA data indicated that candidates and evaluators rated TI candidates highest on FTCA item 12 which states “Teacher candidates displayed knowledge of the subject being taught” and item 13 which states “projected enthusiasm for teaching and learning” during the observed lessons. Both if these items align with the first INTASC standard which states:

The teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline (s) he or she teaches and can create learning experiences that make these aspects of subject matter meaningful for students.

While the rating falls in the effective range, Candidates and evaluators rated the lessons lowest on FTCA item number 23 which addresses a teacher’s use of higher-order questions to engage students in original, creative, and evaluative thinking. This item aligns with INTASC standard 4 which concerns methods to promote critical thinking, problem solving, and performance in all learners and standard 6 which concerns how to communicate in a way that brings about active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction among learners. While the narrative data supports that active inquiry, critical thinking and problem solving are, at least, part of the reflective teacher dialogue of the TI candidates, during lessons, the this type of thinking was rated lowest of all FTCA indicators.

Of particular note due to contradicting narrative data, FTCA items concerning classroom management were not the lowest rated overall. TI candidates’ dialogue most frequently mentions classroom management themes as problem areas in their teaching. Of the comments tabulated which indicate the TI candidates don’t feel accomplished 43% were about issues of classroom management. However, during observations, classroom management was not designated a problem area since the FTCA rating for management indicators was over the “effective” index. TI candidates seem to have some level of accomplishment even on an area they deem as a problem for them.

The Literature and TI Accomplished Teacher Dialogue

The dialogue offered in the results section of this manuscript is a representative sample of the dialogue reviewed for this research. The selections tell the beginning stories of these teachers as they journey toward accomplished teaching. The depth of their dialogue provides the best evidence of their accomplished teaching practices. Accomplished teachers talk about their practice in the same ways these TI candidates talk of their practice (NBPTS, 2000). Within this dialogue all but one candidate show an knowledge of subject matter and each articulate their willingness to help students to link their prior knowledge to the current subject matter being taught. They speak of using rap music to teach language, using trips to the Mexican restaurant to teach language and culture, and taping students interests of “crime show like CSI” to study chemistry and biology. Finding dialogue to categorize under themes of “content knowledge” and

“deep representation” (NBPTS, 2000; Weiss & Pasley, 2004) was simple. In fact, of the comments tabulated as accomplished teaching practices, 13% fell into themes of content knowledge and deep representation of that content knowledge to students. Another 8% fell into the theme of “improvisation” which means adapting and improvising instruction during the actual flow of lessons to better meet students’ needs.

In a similar theme, “sensitivity to context,” TI candidates are clearly beginning to recognize the uniqueness of particular students. Frequency tabulation revealed that 11% of the positive comments made by TI candidates fell under this theme of sensitivity to student context. Heidi says, “I try to include factual statements for the ‘note-takers,’ visual enhancements and auditory instructions for the ‘listen-in-class’ learners and kinesthetic activities for the ‘application learners.’” This is clearly an example of using classroom situations and individual student factors to help guide instructional choices. Stan says that he allows students to read about “rappers and basketball players and working on cars” and has found that student interest and work ethic “went sky high as behavior problems went down.” This kind of respect for students and their perspective represents another theme of accomplished teaching practice.

According to NBPTS (2000), a theme of respect would be evident in dialogue that show “caring deeply for students in a sustained way that recognizes learning barriers while communicating a belief in students’ abilities to overcome those barriers.” Under this theme, the largest number of positive comments were found in the TI candidates dialogue. Some 21% of the accomplished TI candidates comments concerned respecting students. Statements like “I care deeply for my students and they know it” and “If I could be successful with one thing it would be to let students know I care and respect them and want to help them overcome obstacles” are present in the dialogue of all TI candidates and demonstrate the accomplished teaching theme of respect. When speaking of respect, Bob says, “I have to teach my class so that each and every student in my class is a part of the process.” When Heidi speaks of being a “warm demander” she refers to the “respect” she has for students coupled with her desire for them to grow. TI candidates seem accomplished at respecting as a teaching practice.

The theme of classroom climate presents a sort of dichotomy in the data set. When reviewing interview field notes, focus group data, and other documents, comments of classroom management as a problematic issue were frequent-- 43% of comments that indicate the candidates don’t feel accomplished. But when asked to rate themselves on classroom management, all but one gave the word “accomplished” to describe themselves and 2 TI candidates claimed to be “highly accomplished” at classroom management. The data set reveals examples of each candidate “interpreting student behavior to anticipate and prevent students from disrupting or disengaging from a lesson.” Evidence of accomplished teaching when managing a classroom is present for every candidate. Comments can be pulled from the dialogue of each candidate. However, Bryan puts it most clearly. He says,

Usually, within the first few minutes of class, a student who is having a problem will begin to show that they want attention. I try to ‘cut it off at the pass’ and stop the negative behavior before it gets to be a major problem.

TI candidates also exhibit the accomplished teaching practice of displaying passion for their work. All of them profess that they “like, love, get excited about, enjoy” their work. Hannah says she gets energy from the variety in her daily work-- “never a dull moment” she says with pleasure. When asked about this passion, TI candidates link this passion with their sense of responsibility, as is suggested in the literature on accomplished teaching practice. They say, “It is important that I help my slower learners without making them feel uncomfortable,” “I counsel [my students] about their grades and the importance of doing their best,” and “I exhibit intense seriousness about my desire for [my students] to fully comprehend the material . . . my enthusiasm comes with seeing them achieve an understanding.” In one incident Diana describes passion and responsibility in her way of teaching a foreign language. She explains that “she does do not believe that a person could teach anyone if they did not show respect for their students.” In her next statements follows passionate, responsible dialogue about student learning.

I feel that it is not enough to increase students' vocabulary in a foreign language. I know that people associate experiences with words. I strive to stir my students' senses. I push to expose my students to rich language interaction, visual and aural representations, and social collaboration. After studying about Mexican traditions I took students to a Mexican restaurant. The restaurant had the menu in Spanish, the waiters were Mexican, the atmosphere was that of Mexico, and they had Spanish music. This was a rich cultural experience for my students, some of whom had never ventured beyond a hamburger restaurant before, many have never been outside of Mississippi.

Examples of this sort of passion coupled with responsible content delivery is present in the dialogue of all TI participants. Of particular note, though, is the fact that one candidate offered two antithetical comments which fell into the theme of passion. She speaks of feelings of "inadequacy" and "depletion" which have negative effect on "her passion to teach." While other evidence of passion was found in her data set, she expressed a common issue for teachers in regards to the accomplished teaching practice of displaying passion.

When using the 13 dimensions defined as accomplished teaching practices by NBPTS as a lens for looking at TI candidates' practice, all candidates' data sets provide evidence of the accomplished teaching practices of use of knowledge, improvisation, classroom climate, sensitivity to context, passion, and respect. Evidence of accomplished teaching practices of deep representations, problem solving, multidimensional perception, monitor learning, test hypothesis, challenge, and deep understanding were less frequent, accounting for approximately 29% of the comments tabulated as accomplished teaching practices. Also, these themes or dimensions of accomplishment were not represented in the dialogue of each candidate. Therefore, in responding to the question will TI candidates begin to internalize accomplished teaching practices, evidence shows that all have begun to internalize accomplished teaching practices in 6 specific areas, Heidi's story offers evidence of all 13 dimensions. Each of the candidates is beginning to internalize accomplished teaching practices at varying rates, depths, and frequencies.

Comments about the Initial TI Candidate Pool and Teacher Accomplishment

TI began with 15 candidates, of those candidates 6 were unable to complete the program. The 6 who were unable to complete TI fell out of the program for various reasons. One candidate—Angie-- was unable to find a suitable teaching position in her field. She has moved on in her teacher education program by pursuing the Master's of Arts in Teaching degree which will likely make her a more prepared, accomplished teacher when she does enter the classroom. This is a good option for all involved. For this candidate, she has more training in the field of education—her second career. For future students, she will fill a teaching position in a Mississippi classroom having a wealth of experience from her world of previous work; a strong grasp of the content she studied in her original undergraduate degree which she applied thoroughly in her previous world of work; and a full teacher education program during which she engaged in a full study of pedagogy. We have learned from Angie, that accomplished teachers follow a variety of pathways into the classroom. Her route toward the classroom was unique and has afforded her more opportunity to be more and more accomplished through her study of the profession.

Continuing with this rationale brings up TI candidates Gina, Hannah, and Holly. These candidates held emergency certificates and teaching positions (perhaps for as many as three years) prior to joining TI. This means that the year they were to earn a clear teaching certificate through TI would have been their fourth year of teaching in their respective communities. However, they were unable to finish TI since they were unable to supply passing scores on the Praxis II Specialty Area test which was state required of all TI candidates. These 3 candidates have remained in constant contact with the TI coordinator and the state department of education in hopes that some plan can be made to allow them to keep their teaching positions. The most important discussion here, though, is about the fate of these teachers and their students. Each now has a relationship with their students and school communities. These communities are the kinds in which no other viable teacher candidate can be found to work in the schools with

children. The schools where these teachers work have approximately 100% free and reduced price lunch counts. There are no malls, no theatres, no real estate which would attract a teacher candidate who is not invested in this community. The schools (and perhaps churches) are the community, the sole connection to one another for people there. Gina, Hannah, and Holly grew up in these schools where they now teach. Holly was the salutatorian of her graduating class. They want to be in these particular schools making a difference for the children there. Hopefully, the continuing teacher education route for these candidates will have the flexibility to *diverge* into a pathway which leads to highly accomplished teaching as the end. The communities, schools, and children need these teachers. Perhaps alternative assessments to Praxis II are necessary.

Natalie and Jackie are no longer on the road to accomplished teaching. TI seemed to provide enough insight in to the expectations for accomplished teachers that Natalie realized the profession “was not for her.” She indicated that she had not anticipated the work to be difficult or “this hard.” Though she had passed all the requirements, she agreed that she did not have the desire to become an accomplished teacher. To date, Jackie has not met the requirements to continue in TI. Neither has she expressed a desire to continue in the program. To become an accomplished teacher, a candidate must meet high qualifying standards, possess the proper disposition, have strong content knowledge, and strong skills and training in pedagogy. TI seems to have or is continuing to address these issues of accomplished teaching for all of the initial 15 candidates.

Context Issues and TI Candidates Accomplished Teaching

Without a doubt, the fact that all TI completers are overloaded with teachers’ work effects their accomplished teaching practices. Each meets with between 100-130 students per day. Each is learning how to plan, testing various management strategies, beginning formal and informal classroom assessment plans. True this is all the work of teachers from the day their work begins until the day they leave the classroom; but certain context issue of the profession make becoming accomplished at this work nearly impossible. Of the 98 comments in which candidates expressed issues that might be inhibiting them from becoming more accomplished, 34% were issues of context. The following issues of context which may inhibit accomplished teaching were offered at least once by TI candidates:

- Overwhelming number of students to teach
- No budget for supplies. Spending personal money for teaching resources
- Little or no time to plan due to being “assigned” other duties during planning time
- Require meetings which seem meaningless usurp time
- Having no classroom; Being a “floating” teacher
- High poverty in the community
- As many as 5 different preparations per day
- Mounting pressure from state assessment and accountability
- Traveling between district schools to teach
- Teaching via MIVN/distance learning classrooms with dysfunctional equipment
- Lack of viable teacher leader and mentors in the schools

These issues coupled with the particular demographics of the districts and schools where TI candidates teach, must have an effect on their ability to internalize accomplished teaching practices. Three of the schools are extremely high poverty schools and if number of reduced priced lunches were factored into this data nearly all would have a poverty index of over 70%. Four of the eight districts where TI candidates teach spend less than the state average per pupil per day. Since poverty is the most highly correlated with academic performance as measured by standardized tests, these TI candidates can expect to have students who typically under-perform in academics. TI candidates will need an advanced understanding of how to differentiate instruction and how to provide alternate indicators of student growth since they work in these schools. These schools provide a challenging arena in which to demonstrate accomplished practice.

A similarly disparaging demographic on academic caliber of these schools lies in the number of Carnegie units offered. Six of the 8 TI candidate schools offer below the state average in number of credits/courses students can earn/take. Selection of courses beyond the traditional

allow students and teachers fewer progressive options for course content. Four of the eight schools have a smaller percentage than the state average enrolled in gifted programs. One school has list a 0% pf gifted children.

Concerning mentoring, two of the schools fall below state average in percentage of teachers with advanced degrees and 3 of the schools have the approximate same percent as state average. In one school 16% of the teachers are working with an emergency certificate. These TI candidates need mentoring to become more and more accomplished. They should be in schools with the most teachers with advanced degrees. Lack of mentorship and support from accomplished colleagues will hinder them becoming more accomplished more quickly. Demographic data from these schools provides insight in to the story of how these TI candidates will begin to internalize accomplished teacher practices.

Despite the disparaging demographic data from these schools, we have data which supports that these TI candidates are beginning to internalize accomplished teaching practices. Using the INTASC standards embedded in FTCA and wealth of research which supports these standards, we can conclude that TI candidates can demonstrate accomplished teaching practices in observed lessons. Using the lens provided by the 13 dimensions of accomplished teaching from the NBPTS and supporting literature, we can conclude that all the TI candidates have begun to internalize at least six of the dimensions. There are 44 instances of dialogue which demonstrate accomplishment on the remaining 7 dimensions or themes. This means that candidates are beginning to work toward accomplishment in these areas. At least one candidate has evidence of accomplished teaching which attends to each of the 13 dimensions or themes of accomplished teaching. The three TI candidates who are continuing to pursue an alternate route certification but are not TI completers should be held as examples of how teachers can move toward teacher accomplishment at different rates and of how each may to become an accomplished teacher with appropriate disposition and desire to be such a teacher. The two remaining candidates speak to the fact that accomplished becoming a teacher takes commitment and pedagogical training and is not a career goal just anyone can attain. Becoming an accomplished teacher is a calling.

Continuing Study of Preparing and Supporting Teachers

Continuing to support these and all beginning teachers means we must respond with assisting them in better understanding issues of classroom management, in seeking out important mentors, and in negotiating appropriate teaching assignments. In continuing this research, these areas of study will be focal points as we respond to these needs. Also, we intend to find consistent measures of student outcome data from TI candidates' classrooms to be included as this research continues.

Data supports that TI has been helpful as a first step in preparing TI candidates to become accomplished teachers. However, the program has likely been more help in informing our practice of teacher preparation. We have learned to be supportive of multiple means to teacher preparation and certification and that we must find ways to provide more support to TI candidates.

Accomplished teachers follow a variety of pathways into the classroom. All teacher education routes should have the flexibility to *diverge* into a pathway which leads to highly accomplished teaching as an end, instead of a route which is highly politicized and part of hoop-jumping exercises designed to protect the turf of traditional undergraduate teacher education programs and faculty. If MSU would have engaged in this sort of "turf war," the state would be shorter 13 committed and "beginning-accomplished" teachers. In the stories of Angie, Barbara, Bob, Bryan, Diana, Gina, Hannah, Holly, Hope, Heidi, Jackie, Natalie, Patsy, Stan, and Tyler teacher educators can find a wealth of information about how teachers begin to talk about their accomplished practice. Each of these teachers provides a portal into that ways beginning teachers begin to internalize the theories each holds about teaching. As we continue to talk with them about their practice, we will learn how to better talk about our practice

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Appendix I

Formative Teacher Candidate Assessment Instrument

Appendix II

**Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support
Consortium Standards**