

USING A SENIOR SEMINAR DURING INTERNSHIP II AS A MEANS TO  
INCREASE SELF-EFFICACY, PERCEPTIONS OF PREPAREDNESS, AND  
INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCES FOR ELEMENTARY EDUCATION TEACHERS

by

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this quasi-experimental, mixed methods study was to examine how a Senior Seminar pilot conducted during elementary preservice teachers' Internship II semester could potentially increase their teacher self-efficacy and perceptions of preparedness to teach. The study was conducted at a large public university located in the southeast United States and included 29 participants.

The collection of data included the 24 item Teacher Sense of Self-Efficacy Survey (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001) used to measure pre- and post- teacher self-efficacy for classroom instruction, classroom management, and student engagement. To measure pre- and post- perceptions of preparedness, the 8 item Perceptions of Preparedness for the Teaching Profession survey was used. Additionally, qualitative data was collected by use of open response questions on the post survey and also on exit slips at the end of each session to gain insight into the participants' perceptions of the Senior Seminar pilot.

The study findings indicate that the added support and instruction provided by the Senior Seminar may provide elementary preservice teachers with a means to increase perceptions of preparedness for the teaching profession and positively influence their Internship II experience. This study suggests practical ways in which teacher preparation programs can be enhanced to provide preservice teachers with an opportunity to be better prepared for the teaching profession.

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### Background

The teaching profession has become a “revolving door” that many teachers decide to leave soon after they enter (Torres, 2012). Teacher retention rates have been decreasing over the past few decades (Brown, Lee, & Collins, 2014, Jamil, Downer, & Pianta, 2012, O’Neil & Stephenson, 2013, Zhang & Zeller, 2016). According to Harfitt (2015) and Le Cornu (2013), 30-40% of teachers leave the profession within the first five years of teaching; 9% decide to leave after their first year. Teachers that choose to exit the classroom report a variety of reasons that have influenced their decision to leave; these include a lack of support from school administrators, poor student behavior, challenging teaching assignments, and inadequate preparedness from the preservice teacher preparation program that was attended (O’Neil & Stephenson, 2013; Zhang & Zeller, 2016).

The cost of teacher turnover in the United States has been reported to be close to \$5 billion per year (Cavanagh, 2005). In addition to the high cost of the decreasing teacher retention rates, there are other negative impacts of inadequate teacher retention that have been identified. High teacher turnover rates cause instability and negative teaching quality among schools (Zhang & Zeller, 2016). The negative effects due to teachers leaving the classroom are felt even stronger in the schools where stability and consistency have already been lacking (Donaldson & Johnson, 2011).

The high attrition rates of teachers in the profession have caused a struggle for many school systems. As schools are constantly striving to raise student achievement and performance, they are also faced with trying to retain quality teachers in the profession (Torres, 2012). High teacher quality, effective teaching skills, and knowledge have all been directly linked to increasing student achievement in schools (Goldhaber & Walch, 2014). To diminish the struggles that schools have faced, there is a strong need to focus on why teachers decide to leave the classroom and possible ways to combat this issue.

Over nine percent of teachers leave the profession before the end of their first year of teaching (Riggs, 2013). One of the reasons teachers report leaving the profession is due to a lack of preparedness provided from their preservice teacher preparation programs (O'Neil & Stephenson, 2013). Teacher preparation programs are faced with ensuring that preservice teachers are fully equipped to enter the profession.

Unfortunately, a gap is often present between the teacher preparation that is provided and what is required of teachers to be effective in the classroom (Chelsey & Jordan, 2012; Jamil, et al., 2012; Smeaton & Waters, 2013). To close this gap, there is a need for an examination of how teacher education programs can enhance the preservice teachers' preparedness and experiences that they receive (Jamil, et al., 2012; Parkinson, 2008). There is also a need to focus on the quality of the internship that preservice teachers experience and the support that they are provided. The quality of preservice preparation during the internship experience will influence the perceptions that preservice teachers

form regarding their effectiveness in the classroom and the impact that they have on their students' learning (O'Neil & Stephenson, 2013).

### Problem Statement

Teacher attrition rates are correlated with the quality of the teacher preparation program that was attended (Zhang & Zeller, 2016). To address the low teacher retention rates, designers of teacher preparation programs need to examine their influence on the preservice teachers that they prepare for the teaching profession to ensure that they are offering the appropriate training for the classroom (Clark, Byrnes, & Sudweeks, 2015). Research has shown that the low teacher retention rates are affected by the amount of education that was received during preservice training and the quality of the education preparation program that was attended (Zhang, & Zeller, 2016). Researchers argue that teacher preparation ought to be combined with effective pedagogical training along with an opportune supervised field experience which will result in producing teachers that have a strong sense of preparedness and are fully committed to staying in the profession (Jorissen, 2002).

Stagnant teacher preparation programs that are not evolving as needed are adding to the cause of low teacher retention rates. This is due to teacher preparation programs not aligning their current curriculum to the changing education system, which results in preservice teachers being unprepared for their teaching career (Smeaton & Waters, 2013). Having an understanding of preservice teachers' beliefs about their preparedness will

assist teacher preparation programs in determining what areas need to be addressed and how to enhance the training that is provided (Henning & Shin, 2010).

To address the level of preparedness that preservice teachers report having for specific skills needed for the classroom, including areas like classroom management strategies and effective teaching skills, teacher preparation programs should provide support and plan additional coursework with a focus on these specific areas (O'Neill & Stephenson, 2012).

In addition to one's perceptions of preparedness having an impact in the classroom, a person's self-efficacy beliefs will also influence his or her behaviors, thoughts, and emotional reactions in situations (Pajares, 1996). Preservice teachers with a higher sense of self-efficacy will exhibit more effort, persistence, and resilience in the classroom (Pajares, 1996). Since self-efficacy is one of the few characteristics that can predict instructional strategies and student outcomes, attention is needed in this area (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001).

This Dissertation in Practice will explore how additional supports provided during the Internship II experience may potentially improve preservice teachers' self-efficacy and overall preparedness to teach.

### Organizational Context

The organization used for this dissertation is a large public university located in the southeast United States. South Ridge University (SRU, a pseudonym) is one of the largest universities in the United States with over 60,000 students enrolled each year.

SRU is comprised of 13 different colleges which offer over 200 undergraduate and graduate degree programs.

SRU's College of Education has an annual enrollment of approximately 5,400 students. SRU's Elementary Education Department prepares over 400 students for the classroom each semester. SRU's preservice teachers spend their last semester in the teacher preparation program completing their second of two internships (Internship II). During Internship II, preservice teachers are placed at a local school where they work full-time assuming the roles of the classroom teacher. While in the school, the preservice teacher is assigned a supervising teacher that monitors his or her performance while working in the classroom. The supervising teacher provides feedback, training, and evaluates the preservice teacher's performance. Internship II preservice teachers are also assigned a faculty member from SRU to be their clinical coordinator during the internship experience. The clinical coordinator is responsible for completing several teaching observations throughout the semester, assigning midterm and final assessment scores, and serving as the main point of contact for the preservice teacher should they have any questions or concerns while in the internship experience.

Currently, preservice teachers do not take any courses at the university during their Internship II semester. Their focus is fully on teaching and taking over responsibilities in their assigned classrooms. Typically, their only contact with the university during Internship II is through their assigned clinical coordinators. The lack of continued support through internship can cause disconnect between the university and the preservice teachers (Henning & Shin, 2010; Polly, Frazier, Hopper, Chapman, Wells,

2012; Smeaton & Waters, 2013). The disconnect present can cause preservice teachers to feel unsupported and unguided during their internship experiences (Smeaton & Walters, 2013).

### Conceptual Framework

Teachers choose to exit the profession for a variety of reasons; one of which is believing that they were not fully prepared with the skills necessary to be successful in the position (Torres, 2012). The perceptions that a teacher holds regarding their preparedness and ability are directly related to the persistence that they will exhibit when trying to complete the required teaching tasks (Tschannen-Moran, & Woolfolk Hoy, 2007). Novice teachers with a higher sense of self-efficacy are more inclined to persist and stay in the profession when they are faced with a difficult and challenging situation when compared to peers with lower self-efficacy (Knobloch, & Whittington 2002, Le Cornu, 2013).

The construct of self-efficacy originates from Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1977). Self-efficacy is defined as a belief or judgment of one's capabilities to be successful in a specific area (Bandura, 1977; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). One's beliefs regarding their self-efficacy will help determine how much effort they choose to expend on the specific task being completed, how long they will persevere when faced with an obstacle, and how resilient they are (Pajares, 1996).

Usher and Pajares (2008) discussed four different sources for efficacy: mastery experiences, physiological and emotional states, vicarious experiences, and social



persuasion. Mastery experiences are the experiences that an individual has where he/she is able to use their capabilities to be successful. Vicarious experiences occur when a person observes others that are similar to themselves being successful in a situation. Social/verbal persuasion refers to positive feedback provided by others. Physiological and emotional states such as stress, anxiety, and mood also influence one's self-efficacy beliefs.

Of the four sources for teaching efficacy, mastery experiences are the strongest sources for efficacy of teachers (Hoy & Spero, 2005). The outcome of a teacher's experiences in the classroom will influence their self-efficacy for future experiences. If one believes that they were successful in the experience, their efficacy beliefs will be increased in the future. However, if one concludes they were unsuccessful, their efficacy assumptions will be lowered in subsequent attempts.

Teachers that report having a high sense of teaching efficacy tend to view a difficult situation as a challenge that they can accomplish as opposed to a roadblock that they cannot overcome (Brown, et al., 2015). One of the most influential times for the development of self-efficacy is during the mastery experiences that preservice teachers have during their student teaching experiences (Hoy & Spero, 2005). It is important for self-efficacy to be a target for growth among preservice teachers prior to them entering the profession (Jamil, et al., 2012). If preservice teachers' have higher self-efficacy, they are more likely to remain in the field after they graduate (Jamil, et al., 2012).

A teacher's sense of preparedness has been shown to have a relationship with his or her sense of self-efficacy. If a teacher believes that he or she is prepared to be an

effective teacher there is an increase in his or her teaching efficacy (Anderson & Stillman, 2011). Preservice teachers' beliefs regarding their sense of preparedness have been a predictor of their ability to perform their required teaching tasks (Housego, 1990). Since teacher self-efficacy is context specific, it is necessary to examine preservice teachers' perceptions of performance in each given area; examples include efficacy in classroom management, instructional practices and student engagement (Loreman, Sharma, & Forlin, 2013).

With the previous research discussed suggesting that self-efficacy and teacher preparedness impact teacher retention, there is a strong need to focus on the quality of teacher preparation that universities are providing. Student teaching internships are designed to provide preservice teachers with knowledge and experience practicing methods and different strategies of teaching (Clark, et al., 2015). When this experience is lacking in quality, preservice teachers are left with a sense of being unprepared which results in a lower sense of self-efficacy (Brown et al., 2014). There is a relationship between teacher self-efficacy, specifically regarding learners' engagement, classroom management, and for instructional strategies and the individual teaching practices that are exhibited by teachers in the classroom (Zakeri, Rahmany, & Labone, 2016).

Jamil, et al. (2012) conducted a study to examine the association between preservice teachers' beliefs and teacher self-efficacy. The study found that first year teachers that reported having a high self-efficacy in teaching experienced lower levels of stress in the classroom and more positive attitudes toward the teaching profession. The

study also concluded that teachers with a higher sense of teacher self-efficacy were more likely to remain in the profession.

In an evaluation of an internship model that was implemented at the University of Tennessee, the addition of a weekly preservice teacher meeting during internship was identified as effective in increasing the level of support and preparedness that were provided to the preservice teacher (Davis-Wiley, 1993). The weekly topics included components in lesson planning, assessment methods, classroom management, instructional models, and student intervention.

Polly, et al (2012) examined the influence that an added support seminar had on preservice teachers' perceptions of preparedness. The seminar included four two-hour long sessions that contained discussions, analysis of classroom vignettes, classroom management plans, and a platform to share ideas. Participants in the treatment and control group completed a pre/post survey regarding the perceptions of their preparedness for teaching. The participants in the treatment group reported their preparedness to be significantly higher than the control group on seven of the ten items surveyed.

The relationship between self-efficacy, perceptions of preparedness, and teacher retention will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2.

### Purpose of Study

The purpose of the study was to introduce knowledge to preservice teachers that research suggests will increase both efficacy and preparedness. The additional instruction was conducted during a pilot of a new course entitled Senior Seminar.

Preservice teachers during the fall, 2016 semester volunteered to participate in the Senior Seminar. The goal of the seminar is to increase prospective teachers' teaching efficacy and sense of preparedness for the profession. The Elementary Education Department at SRU, a unit within the College of Education, strives to prepare students for the teaching profession through the courses and field experiences that are offered. Students in the program complete 120 credit hours including 12 hours that are dedicated for Internship II. The organizational vision and goal is for all preservice teachers to feel fully prepared and be able to demonstrate the indicators of the Florida Educator's Accomplished Practices; FEAPs (Florida Department of Education, 2011) at the proficient level.

SRU does not currently have an established way to continue to prepare and guide preservice teachers while they are actively engaged in Internship II during their last semester in the program. Without consistent support, the preservice teachers may not find alternative ways to overcome problems they face when completing their internship. Preservice teachers are entering their internship experience with a lack of preparedness regarding the Florida Educator's Accomplished Practices; FEAPs (Florida Department of Education, 2011). FEAPs indicators are used to evaluate the preservice teachers' abilities and their effectiveness of instruction, planning, classroom management, assessment, professional development, and professionalism. Currently, there tends to be a discrepancy in the preparedness of the preservice teacher and what is expected of them regarding the FEAPs indicators (Trenta, Unpublished). More specifically, data collected from Internship II preservice teachers during the spring 2015 semester showed that only 70% of students that responded to the Preparedness Survey reported that they believed

they were prepared in all indicators of the Florida Educator's Accomplished Practices (Trenta, Unpublished).

A common theme found in the open-ended responses from the Preparedness Survey was that the preservice teachers felt there were inconsistencies in the courses that they took; specifically, when it was regarding lesson planning and instructional strategies. When there is an absence of structure, preservice teachers are not provided with the necessary support to be successful in the teaching profession (Ingwolson & Thompson, 2007).

Examining the identified problem of the preservice teacher preparation program in the Elementary Education Department at South Ridge University would inform the larger issue of preservice teachers lacking a sense of preparedness. This lack of preparedness may result in a low sense of self-efficacy and a low retention rate of beginning teachers in the profession. The identified solutions may result in an understanding of how teacher preparation programs need to evolve to better align with the current demands of elementary classrooms.

Data collected during this study will help to determine if the Senior Seminar participants had higher self-efficacy beliefs and perceptions of preparedness for teaching when compared to Internship II preservice teachers that did not participate in the seminar. The Senior Seminar course is an approach to provide preservice teachers an overview of skills and competencies in teaching and learning as identified by the Florida Educator Accomplished Practices; FEAPs (Florida Department of Education, 2011) including Instructional Design and Lesson Planning, the Learning Environment, Instruction

Delivery and Facilitation, Assessment, Continuous Professional Improvement, and Professional Responsibility and Ethical Conduct.

### Research Questions

To examine preservice teachers' perceptions of preparedness, self-efficacy beliefs, and perceptions of the Senior Seminar experience, a quasi-experimental, mixed methods design was used. The four main research questions for the study were:

1. Does participation in the Senior Seminar change elementary preservice teachers' self-efficacy beliefs for classroom instruction, classroom management, and student engagement when compared to a matched comparison group? For each outcome, the following are addressed: 1) Is there a mean difference in preservice teachers' self-efficacy beliefs (for classroom instruction, classroom management, and student engagement) pre- and post-intervention? More specifically, this is the main effect for time. 2) Is there a mean difference in preservice teachers' mean self-efficacy beliefs (for classroom instruction, classroom management, and student engagement) between groups (i.e., comparison and intervention)? More specifically, this is the main effect for group. 3) Is there a mean difference in preservice teachers' self-efficacy beliefs (for classroom instruction, classroom management, and student engagement) by group (i.e., comparison and intervention)? More specifically, this is the time by group interaction effect.
2. Does participation in the Senior Seminar change elementary preservice teachers' perceptions of preparedness when compared to a matched comparison group?

More specifically, the following are addressed: 1) Is there a mean difference in preservice teachers' perceptions of preparedness scores pre- and post-intervention? This is the main effect for time. 2) Is there a mean difference in preservice teachers' perceptions of preparedness between groups (i.e., comparison and intervention)? More specifically, this is the main effect for group. 3) Is there a mean difference in preservice teachers' mean perceptions of preparedness scores by group (i.e., comparison and intervention)? This is the time by group interaction effect.

3. What instructional strategies were most salient to the seminar participants after each seminar session?
4. What were the participants' perceptions of the most valuable aspects of the Senior Seminar?

During the fall 2016 semester at South Ridge University, a Senior Seminar was provided to a group of elementary preservice teachers who were currently enrolled in their Internship II. The aim of the Senior Seminar was to increase the preservice teacher's self-efficacy of teaching and their perceptions of preparedness for the teaching profession. The hypothesis for this study was that those that participated in the Senior Seminar would have an increase in their self-efficacy and their perceptions of preparedness when compared to matched controls not enrolled in the Senior Seminar.

### Definition of Terms

For the purpose of the study the following terms and definitions were used:

*Clinical Coordinator:* The University's faculty member that is assigned to supervise the preservice teacher while completing their internship. The clinical coordinator serves as a liaison between the preservice teacher, supervising teacher, and the university. The clinical coordinator provides feedback, completes observations and determines midterm and final evaluation scores.

*Florida Educator's Accomplished Practices (FEAPS):* Used to evaluate the preservice teachers' abilities and their effectiveness of instruction, planning, classroom management, assessment, professional development, and professionalism.

*Internship II:* A preservice teacher's internship that is completed during their last semester in the preparation program. The preservice teacher is assigned to a classroom where they will work full time under the supervision of a supervising teacher and a clinical coordinator who is assigned by the university. During the internship experience, the preservice teacher assumes the roles and responsibilities of a full-time teacher (Florida Department of Education, 2011).

*Preservice Teacher:* An undergraduate student who is enrolled in a teacher preparation program.

*Self-Efficacy:* Self-efficacy originated from Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1977). Self-efficacy is defined as a belief or judgment of one's capabilities to be successful in a specific area. For the purpose of this study, the self-efficacy beliefs examined are focused on the ability to complete certain teaching responsibilities and tasks.

*Senior Seminar:* A seminar that is being piloted to provide support and professional development to preservice teachers while completing their Internship II. The topics of



focus are Instructional Design and Lesson Planning, the Learning Environment, Instruction Delivery and Facilitation, Assessment, Continuous Professional Improvement, and Professional Responsibility and Ethical Conduct.

*Supervising Teacher:* The in-service teacher that supervises the preservice teacher as they complete their internship in their classroom. The supervising teacher provides feedback, training, and completes evaluations of the preservice teacher.

*Teacher preparation program:* A teacher education program that is focused on training and preparing students to teach in the classroom.

*Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Beliefs:* The perceptions that a teacher holds regarding their preparedness and ability is related to the persistence that they will exhibit when trying to complete the required teaching tasks (Tschannen-Moran, & Woolfolk Hoy, 2007). The focus for this study is on classroom instruction, classroom management, and student engagement.

## CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

### Introduction

The study examined how a Senior Seminar pilot course designed to provide instruction and support during elementary preservice teachers' Internship II semester would influence preservice teachers' self-efficacy and perceptions of preparedness to teach in the hopes of increasing the likelihood of their retention in the teaching profession. The review of the current literature helps to provide research that examines and connects each of these areas.

Chapter two will begin with a review of the literature that is focused on teacher retention and attrition in the teaching profession. In addition, literature that discusses reasons for the high teacher attrition are included. Next, the literature review will include research examining current teacher preparation programs and internship models that are being utilized across colleges in the United States. Issues identified among teacher preparation programs and modifications necessary for the programs will then be discussed.

The next section of the literature review will include research regarding perceptions of preparedness for the teaching profession and what impacts these perceptions have on teachers and their classrooms. Following that, research on teacher self-efficacy will be detailed. The last section of the review of literature will discuss research on teacher preparation reform that is necessary and the benefits of providing

additional guidance, support, and instruction during preservice teachers' internship experiences.

### Teacher Retention/Attrition

With the cost of teacher turnover in the United States reaching close to 5 billion dollars per year, there has been an increase in attention towards this topic (Cavanagh, 2005). Teacher attrition has been an ongoing concern over the past few decades (Brown, et al., 2014; Glennie, Mason & Edmunds, 2016; Jamil, et al., 2012; O'Neil & Stephenson; 2013, Zhang & Zeller, 2016). There has been a strong research presence in teacher attrition and the impact that low teacher retention has on the school system and in the classroom. Research has also been conducted to examine what factors have influenced a teacher's decision to leave the teaching profession.

Teacher retention in the profession has been significantly decreasing over the past few decades. It has been reported that between 30 to 40 percent of teachers choose to leave the profession within the first three to five years of teaching (Brown, et al., 2014; Glennie, et al., 2016; Jamil, et al., 2012; O'Neil & Stephenson; 2013, Zhang & Zeller, 2016). Even more staggering is that almost ten percent of teachers will leave the profession before they even finish their first year of teaching (Riggs, 2013). With the given data, the need to examine this issue and determine ways to impact this prevalent issue in education is apparent.

The increasingly common cycle of teachers entering the profession only to quickly exit has been labeled the *revolving door effect* (Ingersoll, 2004; Torres, 2012).

This cycle causes staffing problems in schools along with a variety of other negative consequences. Unfortunately, as the revolving door effect occurs, there are multiple negative impacts to the teachers, students, parents, school staff and the overall community; this cycle can be detrimental to the entire education system (Ronfeldt, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2013).

#### Attrition/Retention Impacts

The issue of teachers leaving the profession has become a national concern (Harfitt, 2015). Teacher attrition has created a teacher shortage in many areas which have left school districts needing to continually search for new teachers to fill the vacant positions (Arnup & Bowles, 2016; Ingersoll, 2014). The need to continually search for qualified teachers creates a substantial financial burden on the school system. A study conducted by Barnes, Crowe, and Schaefer (2007) that examined the cost of the teacher turnover that was present among five school districts in Chicago found that the Chicago Public School District alone spent over \$86 million on recruiting, hiring, and training replacement teachers in just one school year.

In addition to the immense costs associated with low teacher retention, there is a cost to the students' academic wellbeing when there is high teacher turnover amongst schools (Zhang & Zeller, 2016). Teacher attrition can lead to poorer student outcomes in the classroom (Ronfeldt, et al., 2013). When schools lose experienced and effective teachers they are typically faced with having to replace them with novice teachers. When this occurs, students end up being caught in the *revolving door effect* and are left with

being taught by inexperienced, first-year teachers (Ingersoll, 2004 & Torres, 2012). Inexperienced teachers that are not effective have behavioral disruptions in their classrooms almost three times as often as experienced, effective teachers (Freeman, Simonsen, Briere, & MacSuga-Gage, 2014). These disruptions negatively impact the time that is spent on instruction and interrupts the students' engagement in the classroom (Arnup & Bowles, 2016; Ediger, 2013).

Additionally, the instability that occurs as the result of high teacher turnover has some cultural costs to schools which negatively impacts student achievement (Donaldson, 2012). Schools that have a high percentage of teachers leaving the classroom are less likely to have collaboration that occurs among the teachers (Guin, 2004). When collaboration is not present among teachers there is a lack of teamwork focused on determining ways in which the teachers can improve school performance. The lack of collaboration ultimately negatively impacts the students, teachers, parents, administration, and the overall culture that is present within the school (Arnup & Bowles, 2016; Guin, 2004).

When retention issues are present, those involved with the school report lacking a sense of community (Torres, 2012). To build a sense of community there needs to be consistency found with the teachers that are within the school. Schools that constantly have to hire new teachers are faced with the issue of not enabling the students and parents an opportunity to build a sense of a school community and a sense of trust between those involved (Arnup & Bowles, 2016). In a study conducted by Watkins (2016), the Psychological Sense of School Membership scale was used to examine what factors

students reported having an impact on their sense of belonging to a school community. One of the top findings that the students reported having a positive impact on them was having a consistent teacher to rely on. This positive impact is not present in classrooms when teachers are continuously leaving the profession and students are not provided with any type of teacher consistency. Retaining quality teachers has been a constant challenge among schools and attention is needed on how to determine ways to maintain quality teachers in the profession (Torres, 2012).

### Reasons for Leaving

Beginning teachers often enter the profession full of excitement and anticipation of finally having their own classroom. Unfortunately, far too often, this excitement period quickly ends and turns into shock as these first-year teachers get into the classroom and begin to realize the true demands of the profession. Many beginning teachers have found that there is a conflict between the ideal classroom vision that they had developed during their teacher preparation and the true reality of the teaching profession (Hartfit, 2015).

The previous research discussed suggests that teacher turnover has multiple negative implications for students, parents, school staff, and the overall community, which indicates there is a need to examine the reasons that so many teachers are deciding to leave the profession soon after they enter. The National Center for Education Statistics uses the Teacher Follow-up Survey to annually collect data regarding teacher mobility across the United States (Goldring, Taie, & Riddles, 2014). Data collected by the

Teacher Follow-up Survey shows that teachers reported leaving the teaching profession for multiple reasons such as personal life factors, classroom issues, salary and job benefits, school issues, student performance factors, and other factors that they chose not to share.

Other researchers have examined the reasons for teachers leaving the profession and have also found that teachers decide to leave for a variety of reasons (O'Neil & Stephenson, 2013; Zhang & Zeller, 2016). Using a longitudinal design that studied teacher retention, Zhang and Zeller (2016) found that retention and attrition were correlated with the method of teacher preparation along with the availability of teaching resources, personal background, and competency knowledge. Reasons reported by teachers for leaving the profession include believing that there was a lack of support provided to them from their school administration, poor student behavior in the classroom, challenging teaching assignments, and inadequate preparedness from their preservice teacher preparation program (O'Neil & Stephenson, 2013; Zhang & Zeller, 2016). Since one of the reasons for teacher attrition is a lack of preparedness from preservice teacher preparation programs, it is crucial to examine current teacher preparation that is being offered and what issues have been identified among them (O'Neil & Stephenson, 2013).

## Teacher Preparation

### University-Based Teacher Preparation

There are several routes that can be taken to become a teacher in the United States. The available routes include the traditional university-based preparation programs as well as alternative teacher education. In the United States, approximately 700,000 students are enrolled in teacher preparation programs each year with almost 90 percent of those students being certified through a traditional university-based teacher preparation program (U.S. Department of Education, 2013). Alternative teacher certification is a non-traditional route for individuals whom already hold a non-education degree. The data collected by the U.S. Department of Education (2013) indicates that 69 percent of teacher preparation programs are classified as being a traditional university-based program and 31 percent are considered alternative-route teacher preparation programs. Research for this dissertation was focused solely on the university-based teacher preparation programs.

There are numerous types of models that can be found within the different university-based teacher preparation programs across the United States. Regardless of what model is being used, teacher preparation programs are held accountable for providing preservice teachers with content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and pedagogical content knowledge (Henning & Eui-kyung, 2010). To earn a baccalaureate degree from an university-based teacher preparation program in Florida, preservice teachers must complete a minimum of 120 credit hours with a grade point average of at least a 2.5 on a 4.0 scale (Statutes & Constitutions, 2016). In addition to completing



coursework during the required completed credit hours, preservice teachers are also required to complete a student teaching experience (Statues & Constitutions, 2016).

Student teaching is considered the capstone of most teacher preparation programs. The student teaching experience requires a connection between the university and the field placement school; the university provides the theory and skills through coursework, and the field placement school provides the preservice teacher the opportunity to implement the acquired knowledge in their classrooms (Perry & Power, 2004). Preservice teachers are assigned to a classroom in which they shadow the cooperating teacher for a short time before taking over more of a full-time teaching role. The internship experience offers preservice teachers an opportunity to implement the skills and strategies they learned from their coursework by practicing instructional techniques, developing lessons, establishing relationships with students, parents and the school staff, and getting a sense of how a classroom is run (Brown, et al., 2015).

The Editorial Projects in Education Research Center administers an annual policy survey to collect information from all 50 states regarding state-level programs and their policies relating to their standards for teacher certification (EPE Research Center, 2012). The data collected by EPE Research Center (2012) shows that 41 of the 50 states have set requirements regarding initial teacher licensure from a traditional university-based route in regards to student-teaching and internships. The student-teaching experience must last at least 10 weeks and require a full-time commitment at a school site (Coggshall, Bivona, Reschly & National Comprehensive Center for Teacher, 2012).

With an increase in emphasis on teacher accountability and effectiveness in the classroom, there is a need to take a closer look at the quality and effectiveness of teacher preparation programs that preservice teachers are being provided including the student teaching experience (Meyer & Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness, 2016). The critical examination needed should include all aspects of teacher preparation programs to determine areas that need modification and ways in which the programs can be enhanced to meet the growing demands of the education system.

#### Issues Identified

Teacher preparation programs have the responsibility of providing preservice teachers with the necessary skills and competencies required to be an effective teacher. The objectives of teacher preparation programs are to equip the preservice teachers with these skills and competencies through their coursework as well as their internship experience. Although the goals of teacher preparation programs are to satisfy these objectives, they often fall short of meeting them (American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education, 2013; Campbell & Dunleavy, 2016; Greenberg, Walsh, McKee, & National Council on Teacher Quality, 2015; Grisham, et al., 2014)

University-based teacher preparation programs are gaining national attention for needing to increase the level of connectedness that they provide between the preservice teachers' coursework and the preservice teachers' experiences in the field during their internship (Campbell & Dunleavy, 2016). The American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education (2013) reports that, although teacher preparation programs have been

working towards making some changes and improvements, there is still a need for additional changes, including improving the internship experiences that the preservice teachers are being provided. Some of the improvements are necessary due to a lack of guidance given to preservice teachers during their internship which creates a “capacity gap” in the content foundation they need before beginning their teaching (Greenberg, et al.2015).

In a joint effort, 12 researchers from 10 different university-based teacher preparation programs across the United States conducted research in regards to student-teaching internship experiences (Grisham, et al., 2014). The researchers collected data by use of questionnaires and interviews that were focused on understanding the connection between teacher preparation, the preservice teacher’s instructional practices, and student achievement. The data in their study indicated that preservice teachers believe they have strong knowledge of curriculum and instruction along with the different assessment practices; however, they were often unsure about how to implement this specific knowledge in their actual teaching.

Unfortunately, a gap is often present between the teacher preparation that is provided and what is required of teachers to be effective in the classroom and this is due to the preservice teacher preparation programs remaining stagnant (Chelsey & Jordan, 2012; Henning & Eui-kyung, 2010; Jamil, et al.2012; Smeaton & Waters, 2013). Administrators of teacher preparation programs are not fully aligning their current curriculum to the changing education system which results in the preservice teachers being unprepared for the profession (Smeaton & Waters, 2013). For example, teachers

who graduated from 17 different universities across the United States reported that they believed they were lacking in the necessary skills and knowledge relating to content pedagogy, lesson design and preparation, classroom management, and other aspects of teaching (Chesley & Jordan, 2012).

Smeaton and Waters (2013) took a closer look at the preparedness of first year teachers based on the teacher preparation that was provided to them. The goal of their study was to determine specific areas where the preservice teachers' preparation was deficient. Using data collected through interviews and observations, they proposed that university curricula and field experiences need realignment to better address the realities of the current school system and to appropriately meet the needs of preservice teachers. It was also determined that many field-based experiences were not guided strongly enough to be fully effective. Although university faculty visit the schools where the preservice teachers are completing their field experiences to check on and complete observations a couple of times during the semester, the support and guidance provided by the university needs to be enhanced to provide stronger direction and support (Henning & Eui-kyung, 2010).

### Perceptions of Preparedness

Teachers choose to exit the profession for a variety of reasons; one of which is believing they were not appropriately prepared with the skills necessary to be successful in the position (Torres, 2012). The perceptions that a teacher holds regarding their preparedness and ability is related to the persistence that they will exhibit when trying to

complete the required teaching tasks (Tschannen-Moran, & Woolfolk Hoy, 2007).

Perceptions of preparedness are developed while the preservice teacher is completing their teacher preparation program. The most influential time for building perceptions of preparedness are during the preservice teachers' student teaching experiences (Brown, et al., 2015; Lee, Tice, Collins, Brown, Smith, & Fox, 2012;).

Preservice teachers' perceptions of their preparedness to teach tends to be a good predictor of their ability to perform teaching tasks (Brown, et al., 2015). Unfortunately, data collected by Chesley and Jordan (2012), which examined perceptions of preparedness from teachers who graduated from 17 different universities across the United States, indicated that many teachers reported that they believed they lacked the required knowledge and skills relating to lesson preparation, content pedagogy, classroom management and other areas regarding teaching. Teacher preparation programs need to be more consistent in providing clear benchmarks during the student teaching experience and assist preservice teachers throughout their student teaching to strengthen their perceptions of preparedness (Lee et al., 2012).

Data collected from the Schools and Staffing Survey from the National Center for Education Statistics indicates that teachers are not graduating with confidence in their preparedness to teach (Coggshall, et al., 2012). The Schools and Staffing Survey examined perceptions of preparedness for selecting and adapting curriculum materials, classroom management, and student assessment. Only twenty percent of first year teachers reported having a sense that they were very prepared in these areas and forty

percent believed that they were only somewhat or not prepared at all with the knowledge and skills that were asked about (Coggshall, et al., 2012).

Preservice teachers' beliefs regarding their sense of preparedness have been found to be a predictor of their ability to perform the required teaching tasks (Brown, et al., 2015; Housego, 1990; Siwatu, 2011). Perceptions of preparedness also have an impact on the likelihood that a teacher will remain in the teaching profession and have a successful teaching career (Brown, et al., 2015). Having an understanding of preservice teachers' beliefs about their preparedness will assist teacher preparation programs in determining what areas need to be addressed (Henning & Shin, 2010).

### Perceptions of Self-Efficacy

A teacher's sense of preparedness has been shown to have a relationship with self-efficacy. Teachers with a strong sense of being well-prepared to teach are more likely to have robust beliefs in their teaching efficacy (Anderson & Stillman, 2011). Self-efficacy originated from Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1977) and is defined as a belief or judgment of one's capabilities to be successful in the completion of a specific task (Bandura, 1977; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Self-efficacy beliefs help determine how much effort someone will expend on a specific task, how long they will persevere when faced with an obstacle, and how resilient they are in trying to complete the task (Bandura, 2012; Pajares, 1996).

Self-efficacy beliefs predict the behaviors that will be displayed by an individual (Bandura & Locke, 2003). Self-efficacy beliefs will also influence one's thought patterns

and emotional reactions that are present (Bandura, 2012; Pajares, 1996). A person's motivation to overcome challenges and difficulties that he or she may face when trying to accomplish a goal is impacted by the self-efficacy beliefs that they have (Bandura, 2012). Efficacy beliefs will also influence the outcome expectations that are formed (Bandura, 2012).

Since the self-efficacy beliefs that a person possesses are context specific, when evaluating teacher self-efficacy, it is necessary to focus on beliefs that are held for specific teaching tasks (Bandura, 2012). When examining preservice teachers' perceptions of performance, key areas such as efficacy in classroom management, efficacy in instructional practices and efficacy in student engagement should be the focus (Lee, et al., 2012; Loreman, et al., 2013).

There are four different sources for efficacy: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and physiological and emotional states (Bandura, 1993; Usher & Pajares, 2008). Mastery experiences are the experiences that an individual has where he or she is able to use their capabilities to be successful. Vicarious experiences occur when a person observes others that are similar to themselves being successful in a situation. Social/verbal persuasion refers to positive feedback provided by others. Physiological and emotional states such as stress, anxiety, and mood also influence one's self-efficacy beliefs.

When examining what characteristics predict instructional practices and student outcomes, a teachers' self-efficacy is one of the few reliable predictors (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). A teacher's sense of efficacy is closely related to the

behavior that the teacher will display in the classroom, it predicts teacher burnout, impacts how critical they are of their students, and influences their ability to handle student misbehavior (Napoles & MacLeod, 2016; Oakes, Lane, Jenkins, & Booker, 2013; Tsouloupas, Carson & Matthews, 2014).

Teachers that report having a high sense of teaching efficacy tend to view a difficult situation as a challenge that they can accomplish as opposed to a roadblock that they can not overcome (Brown, et al., 2015). Teachers with higher self-efficacy also display more enthusiasm for teaching and are more committed to staying in the profession (Brunetti, 2001).

One of the most influential times for the development of self-efficacy is during the mastery experiences that preservice teachers have during their student teaching experiences (Hoy & Spero, 2005). These mastery experiences result from the teaching accomplishments that teachers have with their students (Hoy & Spero, 2005). The perceptions that a teacher has regarding whether his or her teaching performance was successful or not will impact the efficacy beliefs that are formed (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Student teaching should be an area of focus since it is an important component in building high self-efficacy among preservice teachers prior to them entering the profession (Jamil, et al., 2012).

Preservice teachers who have higher levels of self-efficacy are more likely to remain in the teaching profession after they graduate (Oakes, et al., 2013; Torres, 2012). Teachers that report higher self-efficacy are less likely to experience teacher burnout which causes teachers to want to leave the profession (Brunetti, 2001; Oakes, et al.,



2013). Teacher burnout occurs when teachers feel exhaustion and believe that they are ineffective in their teaching, unimpactful in their students' learning, and have low job satisfaction (Brunetti, 2001; Oakes, et al., 2013). A correlation can be found between teacher burnout and the self-efficacy beliefs that a teacher has regarding their ability to impact students' learning (Oakes, et al., 2013).

Brown et al. (2014) found that preservice teachers can strongly benefit from their student teaching experiences in regards to building their sense of teaching efficacy when the experience is positive. Their study findings confirmed the importance of teacher preparation programs providing guided support during the student teaching experience which helps increase self-efficacy and builds teacher resilience.

### Resilience

Novice teachers with a higher sense of self-efficacy are more inclined to persist and stay in the profession when they are faced with a challenging situation as compared to their peers that report having a lower self-efficacy (Knobloch, & Whittington 2002, Le Cornu, 2013). Since teachers with a higher sense of teaching efficacy are more likely to show resilience and persistence in their teaching, they tend to work harder to help all students reach their potential. This persistence has a positive impact on students' achievement in the classroom (Brown, et al., 2015). It is important to note that the perceptions that a teacher holds regarding his or her ability to teach does not necessarily reflect the teacher's actual ability to do something but rather impacts the confidence and

the persistence that he or she will exhibit while completing the teaching task (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001).

Jamil et al. (2012) found that first year teachers who reported having a high self-efficacy in teaching experienced lower levels of stress in the classroom. The teachers with higher self-efficacy also maintained more positive attitudes toward the teaching profession and had higher job satisfaction. Further, teachers with a higher sense of teacher self-efficacy were more likely to remain in the profession.

Resilience is a strong predictor of the intention a teacher has in regards to leaving the profession: lower levels of resilience were related to a higher intention to exit the teaching profession (Arnup & Bowles, 2016). Administrators of teacher preparation programs have an obligation to assist their preservice teachers in developing strong teaching efficacy beliefs which will help them to have resilience when faced with a challenging situation. There are many challenges first year teachers are faced with and they will be more likely to overcome the challenges and be resilient if they have higher perceptions of preparedness and high teacher efficacy (Le Cornu, 2013). Ultimately, teacher preparation programs could potentially help combat the attrition issues found in education by better preparing preservice teachers, increasing their teaching efficacy, thus setting them up to be successful in the teaching profession.

### Teacher Preparation Reform

The following section of the literature review will examine teacher preparation programs and the impacts they have on teacher retention. Discussion regarding

educational reform and internship support will follow along with examples of internship support programs that have been implemented.

### Teacher Preparation Program Impact on Retention

Research suggests that the quality of teacher preparation programs impacts teacher attrition (Brady, Heiser, McCormick, & Forgan, 2016; Freeman, et al., 2014; Jorissen, 2002; Zhang & Zeller, 2016). The level of preparation provided to the preservice teachers will influence their overall satisfaction of teaching which is connected to whether they decide to stay or leave the profession (Jorissen, 2002). When looking at what components of teacher preparation have the greatest influence on retention of teachers, programs that infused pedagogical training with the student teaching experience are more likely to produce teachers that are dedicated to staying in the classroom (Jorissen, 2002). Another area of teacher preparation programs that has an impact on retention in the profession is the classroom management training that was provided to the preservice teacher while completing coursework and their student teaching (Freeman et al., 2014). Since teacher attrition rates are correlated with the quality of the teacher's preparation program that was attended, there is a need to determine ways in which the programs can better prepare preservice teachers (Zhang & Zeller, 2016).

### Internship Support Benefits

Educational reform movements regarding school accessibility, curriculum, teaching practices, and professional certification have been occurring since the mid-

1800's (Whitford & Villaume, 2014). Researchers have suggested that teacher preparation programs need to be reformed to ensure that they do a better job at preparing preservice teachers for the profession (Whitford & Villaume, 2014). Teacher quality is impacted by a variety of factors and teacher preparation programs have a responsibility to examine how they can change to help make a stronger impact on the preservice teachers they are preparing (Perry & Power, 2004; Lee, et al., 2012). University-based teacher preparation programs must respond to a variety of mandates that require them to meet measures of accountability and make necessary changes to better prepare their preservice teachers before they enter the profession (Brady, et al., 2016).

Coggsall, et al. (2012) conducted a study to collect data regarding what aspects of teacher preparation programs need evaluation and how the program evaluation should be conducted. They suggested that teacher preparation programs be evaluated on the teacher candidate selection process, course content and course requirements, student teaching experiences that are offered, and the support that is offered to the preservice teacher.

One of the most important elements of a teacher preparation program is the preservice teacher's student teaching experience (Kaya, Lundeen & Wolfgang, 2010; Lee, et al., 2012; Whitford, & Villaume, 2014). The student teaching experience helps build the preservice teacher's perceptions of preparedness which tends to be a good predictor of their ability to perform specific teaching tasks (Brown, et al. 2015).

Unfortunately, many university-based teacher preparation programs struggle to meet the National Council on Teacher Quality standards on student teaching (Greenberg, et al.,

2015). The indication of a strong teacher preparation program is the coherence between university coursework that was provided and the student teaching experience (Faircloth, He, & Higgins, 2011). There is a need to increase the level of connectedness between the preservice teachers' internship experience and the coursework they are provided.

Teacher preparation programs need to not only provide the preservice teachers with the pedagogical knowledge required for teaching but also expose them to authentic teaching experiences where they are able to implement these skills (Zakeri, Rahmany, & Labone, 2016).

Student teaching was designed to provide preservice teachers with experiences in implementing methods, strategies, and theories of teaching. When student teaching is lacking the necessary experiences, there is a detriment to the preservice teacher's preparedness to enter the classroom (Clark, et al., 2014). The student teaching experience needs to be guided and strongly supported by the university since the type and degree of support that was present for preservice teachers during their internship will have an impact on the preservice teacher's self-efficacy and their perceptions of preparedness to teach (Fives, Hamman, & Olivarez, 2007). Although many university-based teacher preparation programs assign faculty to visit the schools where the preservice teachers are completing their student teaching experiences, the support and guidance provided by the university needs to be enhanced and go beyond simply completing observations (Henning & Eui-kyung, 2010). Preservice teachers should be provided internship experiences that are guided and supported by the university faculty (Smeaton & Waters, 2013)

High teacher quality, effective teaching skills and knowledge have all been directly linked to increasing student achievement in schools (Goldhaber & Walch, 2014). To close the gap between what preservice teachers are provided during their teacher preparation programs and what is required of them in the classroom, there is a need for an examination of how teacher education programs can enhance the preservice teachers' preparedness and experiences that they receive (Jamil, et al., 2012; Parkinson, 2008). There is also a need to focus on the quality of the internship that preservice teachers receive and the support that they are provided. Teacher preparation programs need to ensure that their preservice teachers are provided with student teaching experiences that guide them in linking theory to practice which directly relates to student achievement (Smith, Stapleton, Cuthrell, Brinkley, & Covington, 2016).

The previous research discussed suggested that self-efficacy and teacher preparedness impacts teacher retention, universities have a need to focus on the quality of the teacher preparation that is provided. Student teaching internships are designed to provide preservice teachers with knowledge and experiences practicing methods and different strategies of teaching (Clark, et al., 2015). When the experience is lacking in quality, preservice teachers are left believing they are unprepared which results in a lower sense of self-efficacy. A strong link has been demonstrated between teacher self-efficacy and the individual teaching practices that are exhibited by teachers in the classroom (Zakeri, Rahmany, & Labone, 2016).

Much of the research on teacher preparation reform is centered on making the preservice teachers' internship a stronger and more effective experience (Campbell &

Dunleavy, 2016; Chu, Chan, & Tiwari, 2012; Polly, et al., 2012). The student teaching experience is the most impactful and necessary component of teacher preparation programs and needs to be transformed to reflect the influential learning experience it is (Leung, Wong & Wong, 2013; National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, 2010).

Previous research discussed indicates that teacher preparation programs be examined to determine how to enhance the preservice teacher's internship experience and provide additional support and guidance during the student teaching experiences. For example, many teacher preparation programs give assignments that are designed to take place in the internship classroom but this frequently becomes problematic. When university faculty do not mediate the assignment preservice teachers will be less successful in meeting the requirements (Campbell & Dunleavy, 2016). The identified issues call for an examination of how teacher preparation programs can intentionally connect what is learned in the university coursework and how the knowledge is implemented in the classroom.

Auhl and Daniel (2014) conducted a study where preservice teachers participated in an additional 12-week program that provided them with opportunities to discuss practices of teaching, instructional strategies, and pedagogies. Each week, program facilitators developed each of the components of different topics that were the focus for that week's session meeting. The discussions provided the participants with additional review of content along with practice and rehearsal for each of the topics that were addressed. Participants also had an opportunity to discuss any questions or concerns they

had. Data was collected by use of questionnaires and focus groups that were designed to collect the preservice teachers' perceptions of the value of the program. Participants reported that they found significant value in the program. They also reported that their involvement in the program contributed to their understanding of teaching, learning, and children's development. The participants also reported having an increase in confidence which impacted the overall educational experience for the students in the classrooms where they were completing their student teaching.

Polly, et al. (2012) also examined the influences that could be identified with an added semester-long seminar that was paired with the preservice teacher's student teaching experience. Eighteen preservice teachers participated in the seminar that consisted of four two-hour seminar sessions that were spaced out over the semester. Each session was designed around a teaching topic and included lessons, activities, and time for the preservice teachers to discuss any concerns or questions that they had regarding their student teaching. A matched comparison group was identified to analyze the data that was collected using surveys and observation instruments. Participants in the treatment group reported much higher perceptions of preparedness and higher self-efficacy than compared to their matched peers.

Research has shown that teacher attrition rates are correlated with the quality of the teacher preparation program they attended (Zhang & Zeller, 2016). Teacher preparation programs ought to examine their influence on the preservice teachers that they prepare for the profession to ensure that they are offering the appropriate training that provide their preservice teachers with strong perceptions of preparedness and high



teaching efficacy (Clark, et al., 2015). Combining teacher preparation programs with pedagogical training along with a supervised field experience may result in producing teachers that have a sense of preparedness and are committed to staying in the profession (Jorissen, 2002).

By offering supported and guided student teaching experiences, teacher preparation programs can provide their preservice teachers with efficacy-enhancing opportunities which can potentially help decrease future teacher burnout (Fives, et al., 2007). Oftentimes the focus during student teaching is working to decrease stressors in the teaching environment. Instead, the focus should be on providing guided mastery and vicarious experiences that will provide the preservice teacher opportunities to enhance their sense of efficacy and their perceptions of preparedness for the teaching profession (Fives, et al., 2007).

Given the concerns regarding the lack of effectiveness in preparing preservice teachers and the inadequate support and guidance that is provided during student teaching experiences, teacher preparation programs have an obligation to determine the ways they can enhance the preparation that they are providing. Research has demonstrated that the components of a teacher preparation program have the potential to affect the education system by producing teachers that are prepared for the profession (Henning & Eui-kyung, 2010). The commitment that administrators of university-based teacher preparation programs make to enhancing the preparation that they provide preservice teachers will positively impact teacher performance, teacher retention rates, parents, school leaders, the overall community, and student achievement in the classroom; all of which is the ultimate

goal of our education system (Meyer & Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness, 2016; Whitford & Villaume, 2014).

### Design of an Internship Support Program

With research suggesting that university teacher preparation programs have a need to enhance the training they provide to better prepare preservice teachers for the profession, many programs have implemented additional support and resources for their students (De Leon, Pena, & Whitacre, 2010; Kent & Simpson, 2009; Polly et al, 2012; Smith et al., 2016). Kent and Simpson (2009) examined the impact of an internship support program titled the Preservice Teacher Institute. The participants of the Preservice Teacher Institute program consisted of preservice teachers who were currently completing their internship. Participants of the program volunteered to attend the sessions on their own time. The program required the preservice teachers to meet every other week for a two-hour session. Each session included time to reflect on the participants' student teaching experiences and also consisted of discussions that were led by the instructor of the program. The discussions were focused on theories of learning and methodology, teaching strategies, and classroom management. At completion of the program, participants reported gaining knowledge and strategies for teaching. Participants also reported building a sense of community with the other preservice teachers that were participating in the Preservice Teacher Institute. This sense of community helped preservice teachers feel connected to others during their internship experience.

Polly et al. (2012) also examined impacts that an additional support seminar provided during student teaching would have on preservice teachers. The goal of the seminar was to increase the preservice teachers' perceptions of preparedness for the teaching profession. The format for the seminar consisted of four two-hour seminar meetings that were facilitated by two faculty members. The meetings provided the participants with additional instruction on learning theories, planning, and instruction. There was also time allotted each session for the preservice teachers to discuss how their student teaching experience was going and if they had any concerns. Results indicated that the participants in the treatment group had a larger increase in their perceptions of preparedness to teach when compared to the preservice teachers that were in the control group.

### Summary

Through the research discussed in the literature review, it is evident that teacher preparation programs need to find ways to better prepare preservice teachers for the classroom. By providing additional university support and guided instruction during student teaching, preservice teachers will have more opportunities to make connections between what actually occurs in schools and the classwork that they completed during their university courses (Faircloth, et al. 2011). Helping preservice teachers build stronger perception of preparedness and higher levels of teacher efficacy may impact their decisions that they will have to make in the future regarding whether to stay or leave the teaching profession. By increasing preservice teacher's perceptions of preparedness

and self-efficacy there is potential to impact teacher quality, teacher effectiveness, and also impact teacher retention which will overall have a positive impact on student achievement (Torres, 2012).

## CHAPTER 3: METHODS, PROCEDURES, AND RATIONAL FOR DESIGN

### Introduction

The goal of this quasi-experimental, mixed methods study was to pilot a Senior Seminar with Internship II preservice teachers at South Ridge University (SRU). The purpose of the study was to explore how providing additional instruction and support during the Internship II experience, through a Senior Seminar course, could potentially improve preservice teachers' self-efficacy and overall preparedness to teach. Chapter three begins with a description of the organizational context and the selection of participants. Next, the components of the Senior Seminar pilot will be detailed and the rationale for the content will be given. Finally, the instrumentation, procedures used, and planned data analysis will be discussed.

### Purpose

The purpose of the study was to introduce elements to preservice teachers that research suggests will increase both efficacy and preparedness. Additional instruction was implemented during a pilot of a new course titled Senior Seminar with South Ridge University's elementary preservice teachers during their Internship II experience. It was anticipated that preservice teachers who participated in the Senior Seminar would have an increase in self-efficacy for teaching and their overall perceptions of their preparedness for the teaching profession.

## Organizational Context

The organization used for this study was South Ridge University (SRU, a pseudonym) which is a large university located in the southeast United States. Over 60,000 students enroll at SRU each year. SRU offers over 200 undergraduate and graduate degrees. SRU's College of Education was the main focus for this study. The College of Education has an annual enrollment of approximately 5,400 students. Each year, SRU's Elementary Education Department has over 800 students prepare for the teaching profession by completing their internship experience at a local elementary school.

### Senior Seminar Pilot

The Senior Seminar intervention was designed to provide support for elementary preservice teachers who are completing their Internship II experience. The goal of the Senior Seminar was to provide an overview of skills and competencies in teaching and learning as identified by the Florida Educator Accomplished Practices (Florida Department of Education, 2011). The competencies included during the Seminar were focused on instructional design and lesson planning, the learning environment, instruction delivery and facilitation, assessment, continuous professional development, and professional responsibility and ethical conduct. The competencies included for the seminars correspond directly with the skills and competencies required during Internship II. The topics that were chosen for each of the Senior Seminar session meetings were determined by a small subgroup of SRU's elementary education faculty members. The

faculty members who participated volunteered to be included in the Senior Seminar Committee.

The competencies chosen for the Senior Seminar were used to design six different modules that would be discussed at each session. Modules that were included were Module 1: Classroom Management, Module 2: Instructional Design/Lesson Planning, Module 3: Parent Communication and Involvement, Module 4: ESE (Gifted, Twice Exceptional, and Inclusion), Module 5: Culturally Responsive Teaching, and Module 6: Technology in Education. Each module contained suggestions of resources that the facilitator could use for each Senior Seminar session that included videos, articles, and websites (see Appendix G).

The Senior Seminar consisted of eight face-to-face class sessions. Each session meeting was two hours in length. Sessions were held bi-weekly during the participants' 16-week Internship II semester. Session meetings were held during the evening as to not interfere with the participants' required attendance time for Internship II. Each Senior Seminar meeting had one of the topics from the Florida Educator Accomplished Practices as the focus for that session.

The two-hour session began with allowing the participants time to discuss any questions that they had or issues that they had faced during their internship. This typically would take approximately 20 to 30 minutes. The facilitator of the seminar would address the questions and issues that the participants had. Participants would also discuss situations with which they were needing guidance. For example, at one of the sessions a participant had implemented a new procedure in the classroom that was

unsuccessful and wanted to discuss alternative options to what was attempted. This resulted in the facilitator leading a class discussion on what the other preservice teachers would suggest as alternative procedures that could be used.

Once the participants had an opportunity to ask their questions, the facilitator would introduce the theme for the session. The facilitator reviewed the theme for the session's module through the use of lecture, video and computer presentations, class discussions, and group activities.

After the module's theme was reviewed, students had an opportunity to ask any remaining questions before the session ended. The final activity was for the participants to complete the Exit Questionnaire (see Appendix F).

### Research Design

The design for the study was quasi-experimental. The study used mixed methods that included collecting and analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data. The study consisted of an intervention group and a comparison group that included SRU elementary education preservice teachers who were completing their Internship II experience. The intervention group included nine preservice teachers that participated in a bi-weekly Senior Seminar pilot. The Senior Seminar pilot was designed to provide instruction and support to the intervention group while they were completing their elementary Internship II experience. The comparison group consisted of twenty elementary preservice teachers that were not participating in the Senior Seminar pilot but were also currently enrolled in



Internship II. Propensity score matching was used to pair participants from the comparison group to participants in the intervention group.

The researcher for the study sought to collect data regarding preservice teachers' self-efficacy beliefs, preservice teachers' perceptions of teacher preparedness, and the intervention participants' perceptions of the Senior Seminar.

### Selection of Participants

Purposive sampling was chosen for the study which allowed for a specific population of preservice teachers attending SRU to be included. Purposive sampling is a technique that the researcher can use to ensure participants are selected based on the purpose of the study (Lee-Jen Wu, Hui-Man, & Hao-Hsien, 2012). The target population for the study was all elementary preservice teachers enrolled in Internship II from the main campus of SRU during the fall, 2016 semester. This population of participants was the focus for the study since the pilot of the Senior Seminar was implemented at SRU in the elementary department.

To ensure that all participants had the same requirements during their internship, the Internship II preservice teachers enrolled through the regional campuses were excluded from the study. The concern was that some regional campuses have different requirements for Internship II which may have influenced some of the data that was collected.

After the SRU Internal Review Board provided approval for the study (see Appendix A), the elementary preservice teachers were invited to participate in the Senior

Seminar by an email invitation distributed by the director of SRU's Office of Clinical Experiences. The Office of Clinical Experiences handles all internship assignments and coordination for the preservice teachers. The email provided an explanation of the pilot Senior Seminar's goals along with the format that would be used for the session meetings. The director of Clinical Experiences sent the email invitation to a group ( $n = 20$ ) of elementary preservice teachers that were enrolled for Internship II during the fall, 2016 semester. Preservice teachers that responded that they would like to be included in the Senior Seminar were sent a follow up email with an acknowledgment of participation. Any respondents that expressed that they were not interested were removed from the list of contacts. After the initial email distribution, the target of 9 participants was not achieved so the director of Clinical Experiences sent the email invitation to another group of preservice teachers ( $n=20$ ). The second email resulted in reaching the target of 9 participants for the Senior Seminar intervention group so no further requests were sent out.

To compose a comparison group, the director of Clinical Experiences sent out an email invitation to complete the Teacher Sense of Self-Efficacy Survey (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001) to all elementary preservice teachers enrolled in Internship II during the fall 2016 semester at the main campus of SRU but who would not be participating in the Senior Seminar ( $n=88$ ). The survey was completed through Qualtrics which is an online service that helps to facilitate data collection.

The Senior Seminar intervention group included 9 elementary preservice teachers enrolled in Internship II at the main campus of SRU. The comparison group included 20

elementary preservice teachers who were also enrolled in Internship II at the main campus of SRU. Propensity score matching was used to match participants from the comparison group to participants in the intervention group. Propensity score uses predetermined characteristics to match participants; for the study conducted the characteristics included whether the participant was a transfer student, if they had already earned a degree, sex, ethnicity, and age. Propensity score matching helps to reduce the selection bias (Randolph, Falbe, Manuel, & Balloun, 2014). Each of the nine participants of the Senior Seminar were matched to the participant in the comparison group that had the closes propensity score.

### Instrumentation

#### Quantitative Measures

##### Teacher Sense of Self-Efficacy Survey

Data on teacher self-efficacy was collected through an online survey by the use of the long form of the Teacher Sense of Self-Efficacy Survey (TSES; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001, see Appendix B). The TSES (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001) consists of 24 items that are related to efficacy of instructional strategies, efficacy for classroom management, and efficacy for student engagement. A 9-point scale was used ranging from *1-nothing* to *9-a great deal of control*. The TSES (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001) has been used with preservice teachers and Cronbach's alpha for the subscales ranges from .90 to .93. For this study, Cronbach's alpha for the subscales ranged between .90 and .96. There is a correlation between teacher efficacy beliefs and

teaching strategies which indicates that the TSES (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001) has good predictive validity (Nie, Lau, & Liao, 2012).

### Perceptions of Preparedness for the Teaching Profession

The Perceptions of Preparedness for the Teaching Profession (see Appendix C) was a researcher-created instrument designed to collect data regarding pre-perceptions of preparedness for the necessary skills required to be successful in the teaching profession. The instrument was developed using the Florida Educators Accomplished Practices and the competencies that preservice teachers should be proficient in as they enter the teaching profession (Florida Department of Education, 2011). The Teacher Candidates' Perceptions of Preparedness survey (Lee, et al., 2012), which collected open-ended responses from preservice teachers, was also inspiration for this instrument. More specifically, the Teacher Candidates' Perceptions of Preparedness provided a framework for how to develop the Perceptions of Preparedness for the Teaching Profession.

The instrument consisted of eight statements, each using a 7 point continuum reflecting level of agreement and ranging from *1-low agreement* to *7- high agreement*. For this study, Cronbach's alpha was .93.

### Demographic Information

Demographic information (see Appendix E) included age, gender, ethnicity, degrees earned, and whether the participant was a transfer student to SRU.

## Qualitative Measures

### Exit Questionnaire

Senior Seminar participants completed a researcher created questionnaire (see Appendix F). The Perceptions of Professional Learning survey helped guide the creation of the questionnaire (Chien, 2015). The questionnaire was completed on paper at the conclusion of each session. The purpose of the questionnaire was to gain insight on topics that the participants needed further clarification and discussion on and allowed for participants to indicate their understanding of the session's topic, and to plan for implementation of strategies and techniques discussed into their internship and future classroom. The participants' responses for two of the questions found on the questionnaire was used during the Senior Seminar to help inform instruction for the next session meeting and was not reported in the findings.

### Open-Ended Questions

The open-ended questions were researcher-created and based on the goals that were created for each of the Senior Seminar session meetings. The five questions included on the post-survey were 1) Did you successfully complete Internship II? 2) How prepared are you to teach in your own classroom after you graduate? 3) What key skills did you learn as a result of the senior seminar? 4) What aspects of the senior seminar did you find most useful? 5) What suggestions do you have on how to improve the senior seminar?

## Procedures

Data collection using the TSES (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001) and the Perceptions of Preparedness for the Teaching Profession occurred twice. To collect pre self-efficacy data, the first data collection was completed in August prior to Internship II and the Senior Seminar sessions beginning. To collect post self-efficacy data, the second data collection was completed in December after the completions of Internship II and the final Senior Seminar meeting. Post self-efficacy data was collected using the TSES (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001) and Perceptions of Preparedness for the Teaching Profession was similar to the pre self-efficacy instruments that were utilized. In addition, open-ended questions were added to collect qualitative data regarding post perceptions of preparedness to teach. These instruments were administered through Qualtrics. Participants received an email asking them to complete the surveys. A reminder email was sent two weeks after the first request to those that had not yet completed the survey.

Formative, qualitative data were collected at the end of the Senior Seminar sessions by use of the Exit Questionnaire. The Exit Questionnaire was a paper questionnaire. The Senior Seminar participants were given time at the end of each session meeting to complete the questionnaire.

## Data Analysis

Four research questions were the focus of the study.

To answer research questions 1 and 2 concerning changes in self-efficacy and perceptions of preparedness, propensity score matching was used to create a comparison group. Using the matched groups, a two-factor split-plot (one within-subjects factor and one between-subjects factor) ANOVA was conducted to answer each research questions.

Qualitative methods, guided by Creswell (1998), were used to investigate the third and fourth research question by analyzing the open-ended questions and the bi-weekly Senior Seminar questionnaire data.

The open-ended questions and the bi-weekly Senior Seminar questionnaire were coded. The data was analyzed by coding the responses to identify common themes and trends that were reported by the participants. The coding was conducted by categorizing the data collected into smaller subsections. To categorize participants' responses in a consistent manner, specific steps were used as a guideline for determining which categories to establish. The steps that were followed included determining if the participant's answer correlated with the question that was asked, determining if the response given answers a different question, and determining if the comment given says something important regarding the topics being discussed (Krueger & Casey, 2009).

### Summary

The researcher for the study used a quasi-experimental, mixed method design to pilot a Senior Seminar with SRU's elementary Internship II preservice teachers. The primary source of data was the long form of the Teachers' Sense of Self-Efficacy Scale which was used as a pre- and post- test measure. An additional eight question researcher

created survey was used as pre- and post- test measure to collect participants' perceptions of preparedness for teaching.

Open response questions included on the post survey were used as an additional measure to collect data on teacher self-efficacy, perceptions of preparedness to teach, and as a means for participants to provide feedback on how they will implement content from the Senior Seminar in their future classroom.

Additionally, qualitative data collected at the end of each of the bi-weekly Senior Seminar sessions provided formative data that assisted in the design of instruction for future session meetings.

The qualitative data collected will provide participants' perceptions and attitudes towards the Senior Seminar course. The qualitative data will be used to make key decisions on what aspects of the Senior Seminar were beneficial for the participants. In addition, the data will provide information regarding components of the Senior Seminar that preservice teachers believe need to be changed or modified. The qualitative responses will provide data that will enhance the design of the Senior Seminar and provide a framework for other administrators of teacher preparation programs to follow.



## CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

### Introduction

The purpose of the study was to introduce elements to preservice teachers that research suggests will increase both efficacy and preparedness. The additional instruction was conducted during a pilot of a new course titled Senior Seminar with South Ridge University's elementary preservice teachers during their Internship II experience. The Senior Seminar was created with anticipation of increasing the Internship II preservice teachers' self-efficacy for teaching and their overall perceptions of their preparedness for the teaching profession.

All elementary preservice teachers ( $n=88$ ) who were completing their Internship II during the fall, 2016 semester were invited to participate in the Senior Seminar. Nine preservice teachers volunteered to participate in the Senior Seminar. Both the preservice teachers that participated in the pilot of the Senior Seminar and those that did not were asked to complete the pre- and post-surveys collecting information on self-efficacy of teaching and perception of preparedness to teach. Thirty-one (35% of the population of elementary preservice teachers) completed the pre-surveys and twenty-nine (94% of those that completed the pre-surveys) also completed the post-surveys. Propensity score matching was used to create a comparison group for the nine participants of the Senior Seminar.

In chapter four, both the quantitative and qualitative data that were used to answer the four research questions proposed in the study will be discussed. The qualitative data

collected from the open-ended post-survey questions and from the “exit slips” completed by the Senior Seminar participants at the end of each session will also be examined to identify common themes and trends.

### Demographics

Demographic information was collected from all of the participants in the intervention and the comparison group regarding ethnicity, gender, age, whether they transferred to SRU, and if they had earned a prior degree (see Tables 1 through 5).

Both the intervention and comparison groups had similar proportions of participants who self-identified as White (56% and 55%, respectively) and Hispanic/Latina (33% and 25%, respectively). However, 15% of the comparison teachers self-identified as African American, as compared to zero intervention teachers. There was a slightly higher proportion of intervention teachers that were Asian/Islander (11% and 5%, respectively).

Table 1

Intervention and Comparison Group Ethnicity (Frequencies and Percentages)

Ethnicity	Intervention Group Number	Comparison Group Number
White	5 (56%)	11 (55%)
Hispanic/Latina	3 (33%)	5 (25%)
African American	0 (0%)	3 (15%)
Native American	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Asian/Islander	1 (11%)	1 (5%)

Both the intervention and comparison groups were comprised of similar proportions of male (0% and 10%) and female (100% and 90%) participants. The sex of the participants is reported in Table 2.

Table 2

Intervention and Comparison Group Sex (Frequencies and Percentages)

Sex	Intervention Group Number	Comparison Group Number
Male	0 (0%)	2 (10%)
Female	9 (100%)	18 (90%)

A summary of the intervention and comparison groups' ages is presented in Table 3. Eighty-nine percent of the intervention group participants fell in the 21-25 year range and only 11% were in the 26-30 year range. The comparison group included 65% whose age fell in the 21-25 year range, 20% in the 26-30 year range, 5% in the 31-40 year range, and 10% were 41 years or older.

Table 3

Intervention and Comparison Group Age (Frequencies and Percentages)

Age	Intervention Group Number	Comparison Group Number
Under 21	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
21-25	8 (89%)	13 (65%)
26-30	1 (11%)	4 (20%)
31-40	0 (0%)	1 (5%)
41-older	0 (0%)	2 (10%)

A summary of whether the participants transferred to SRU or not is presented in Table 4. About 2/3 (67%) of intervention participants were non-transfer students as compared to less than ½ (40%) of comparison teachers.

Table 4

Intervention and Comparison Transfer Student (Frequencies and Percentages)

Transferred to SRU	Intervention Group	Comparison Group
	Number	Number
Yes	3 (33%)	12 (60%)
No	6 (67%)	8 (40%)

A summary of whether participants had earned a prior degree is reported in Table 5. None of the intervention group participants had earned a prior degree. 20% of the comparison group had earned a prior degree while 80% had not.

Table 5

Intervention and Comparison Prior Degree (Frequencies and Percentages)

Prior Degree	Intervention Group	Comparison Group
	Number	Number
Yes	0 (0%)	4 (20%)
No	9 (100%)	16 (80%)

The demographics of the matched comparison group that was comprised after the propensity score matching was conducted is summarized in Table 6. The matched comparison group consisted of the same demographics as did the intervention group in

regards to ethnicity, age, being a transfer student or not, and whether education will be the participant's first degree. The only difference was in regards to the sex of the participant; the matched comparison group contained 11% percent male participants and 89% female whereas the intervention group consisted of 100% female participants.

Table 6

Matched Comparison Group (Frequencies and Percentages)

Frequencies and Percentages	
<b>Ethnicity</b>	
White	5 (56%)
Hispanic/Latina	3 (33%)
African American	0 (0%)
Native American	0 (0%)
Asian/Islander	1 (11%)
<b>Sex</b>	
Male	1 (11%)
Female	8 (89%)
<b>Age</b>	
Under 21	0 (0%)
21-25	8 (89%)
26-30	1 (11%)
31-40	0 (0%)
41-older	0 (0%)
<b>Transfer Student</b>	
Yes	3 (33%)
No	6 (67%)
<b>First Degree</b>	
Yes	9 (100%)
No	0 (0%)

## Analysis of Results in Relation to Research Questions

### Research Question 1

Does the participation in the Senior Seminar change elementary preservice teachers' self-efficacy beliefs for classroom instruction, classroom management, and student engagement when compared to a matched comparison group? For each outcome, the following are addressed: 1) Is there a mean difference in preservice teachers' self-efficacy beliefs (for classroom instruction, classroom management, and student engagement) pre- and post-intervention? More specifically, this is the main effect for time. 2) Is there a mean difference in preservice teachers' mean self-efficacy beliefs (for classroom instruction, classroom management, and student engagement) between groups (i.e., comparison and intervention)? More specifically, this is the main effect for group. 3) Is there a mean difference in preservice teachers' self-efficacy beliefs (for classroom instruction, classroom management, and student engagement) by group (i.e., comparison and intervention)? More specifically, this is the time by group interaction effect.

#### Self-efficacy of Classroom Instruction

A two-factor split-plot (one within-subjects factor and one between-subjects factor) ANOVA was conducted. The within-subjects factor was the preservice teachers' self-efficacy of classroom instruction measured prior to and after intervention and the between-subjects factor was group (specifically, comparison and intervention group). The null hypotheses tested included the following: 1) preservice teachers' mean self-efficacy scores for classroom instruction were equal pre- and post-intervention (more

specifically, this is the main effect for time); 2) preservice teachers' mean self-efficacy scores for classroom instruction were equal between groups (i.e., comparison and intervention) (more specifically, this is the main effect for group); and 3) preservice teachers' mean self-efficacy scores for classroom instruction by group (i.e., comparison and intervention) were equal (more specifically, this is the time by group interaction effect).

There were no missing data and no multivariate outliers. The assumption of normality was tested via examination of the residuals. Review of the Shapiro-Wilks test for normality (*SW* pre self-efficacy of classroom instruction = .933,  $df = 18$ ,  $p = .215$ ; *SW* post self-efficacy of classroom instruction = .931,  $df = 18$ ,  $p = .202$ ), and skewness (pre self-efficacy of classroom instruction = -.843; post self-efficacy of classroom instruction = -.630) and kurtosis (pre self-efficacy of classroom instruction = .306; post self-efficacy of classroom instruction = -.372) statistics suggests that normality was a reasonable assumption. The boxplot suggested a relatively normal distribution shape with no outliers. The Q-Q plots suggested normality was reasonable for the residuals. The two-factor split-plot ANOVA is robust to violations of normality with equal sample sizes of groups as is evident in this design (Lomax & Hahs-Vaughn, 2012).

Although preservice teachers were not randomly assigned to group, the assumption of independence was met through the creation of matched groups using propensity score matching.

The results of the two-factor split-plot ANOVA indicate: 1) statistically significant within-subjects main effect for self-efficacy of instruction between pre and

post ( $F = 13.622$ ,  $df = 16.000$ ,  $p = .002$ , Cohen's  $f = .92$ ); 2) non-statistically significant between subjects main effect for group (i.e., comparison and intervention), ( $F = .000$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p = .989$ , Cohen's  $f = .0$ ); and 3) non-statistically significant interaction effect of time (pre and post) and group (comparison and intervention) ( $F = .022$ ,  $df = .16.000$ ,  $p = .884$ , Cohen's  $f = .03$ ). Post hoc power for the main effect for time was .933, for group was .050, and for the time by group interaction was .052.

The statistically significant main effect for the within-subjects factor suggests that there were mean differences over time for the preservice teachers' self-efficacy of classroom instruction, such that the scores increased from pre- to post-. Based on Cohen's  $f$ , there is a large effect.

The non-statistically significant main effect for the between-subjects factor suggests that there are not mean self-efficacy of classroom instruction differences between the intervention and comparison group. Based on Cohen's  $f$ , there is no effect.

The non-statistically significant interaction effect of time (pre and post) and group (comparison and intervention) suggests that there are not mean differences in preservice teachers' self-efficacy of classroom instruction from pre- to post-intervention based on group (i.e., comparison or intervention). Based on Cohen's  $f$ , there is almost no effect.

### Self-efficacy of Classroom Management

A two-factor split-plot (one within-subjects factor and one between-subjects factor) ANOVA was conducted. The within-subjects factor was the preservice teachers' self-efficacy of classroom management measured prior to and after intervention and the



between-subjects factor was group (specifically, comparison and intervention group). The null hypotheses tested included the following: 1) preservice teachers' mean self-efficacy scores for classroom management were equal pre- and post-intervention (more specifically, this is the main effect for time); 2) preservice teachers' mean self-efficacy scores for classroom management were equal between groups (i.e., comparison and intervention) (more specifically, this is the main effect for group); and 3) preservice teachers' mean self-efficacy scores for classroom management by group (i.e., comparison and intervention) were equal (more specifically, this is the time by group interaction effect).

There were no missing data and no multivariate outliers. The assumption of normality was tested via examination of the residuals. Review of the Shapiro-Wilks test for normality (*SW* pre self-efficacy of classroom management = .969, *df* = 18, *p* = .782; *SW* post self-efficacy of classroom management = .939, *df* = 18, *p* = .279), and skewness (pre self-efficacy of classroom management = -.264; post self-efficacy of classroom management = .094) and kurtosis (pre self-efficacy of classroom management = -.733; post self-efficacy of classroom management = -1.118) statistics suggests that normality was a reasonable assumption. The boxplot suggested a relatively normal distribution shape with no outliers. The Q-Q plots suggested normality was reasonable for the residuals. The two-factor split-plot ANOVA is robust to violations of normality with equal sample sizes of groups as is evident in this design (Lomax & Hahs-Vaughn, 2012).

Although preservice teachers were not randomly assigned to group, the assumption of independence was met through the creation of matched groups using propensity score matching.

The results of the two-factor split-plot ANOVA indicate: 1) statistically significant within-subjects main effect for self-efficacy of classroom management between pre and post ( $F = 12.655$ ,  $df = 16.000$ ,  $p = .003$ , Cohen's  $f = .90$ ); 2) non-statistically significant between subjects main effect for group (i.e., comparison and intervention), ( $F = .017$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p = .898$ , Cohen's  $f = .03$ ); and 3) non-statistically significant interaction effect of time (pre and post) and group (comparison and intervention) ( $F = .283$ ,  $df = 16.000$ ,  $p = .602$ , Cohen's  $f = .013$ ). Post hoc power for the main effect for time was .916, for group was .052, and for the time by group interaction was .079.

The statistically significant main effect for the within-subjects factor suggests that there are mean differences over time for the preservice teachers' self-efficacy of classroom management. Based on Cohen's  $f$ , there is a large effect.

The non-statistically significant main effect for the between-subjects factor suggests that there are not mean self-efficacy of classroom management differences between the intervention and comparison group. Based on Cohen's  $f$ , there is almost no effect.

The non-statistically significant interaction effect of time (pre and post) and group (comparison and intervention) suggests that there are not mean differences in preservice

teachers' self-efficacy of classroom management from pre- to post-intervention based on group (i.e., comparison or intervention). Based on Cohen's  $f$ , there is a small effect.

#### Self-efficacy of Student Engagement

A two-factor split-plot (one within-subjects factor and one between-subjects factor) ANOVA was conducted. The within-subjects factor was the preservice teachers' self-efficacy of student engagement measured prior to and after intervention and the between-subjects factor was group (specifically, comparison and intervention group). The null hypotheses tested included the following: 1) preservice teachers' mean self-efficacy scores for student engagement were equal pre- and post-intervention (more specifically, this is the main effect for time); 2) preservice teachers' mean self-efficacy scores for student engagement were equal between groups (i.e., comparison and intervention) (more specifically, this is the main effect for group); and 3) preservice teachers' mean self-efficacy scores for student engagement by group (i.e., comparison and intervention) were equal (more specifically, this is the time by group interaction effect).

There were no missing data and no multivariate outliers. The assumption of normality was tested via examination of the residuals. Review of the Shapiro-Wilks test for normality ( $SW$  pre self-efficacy of student engagement = .940,  $df = 18$ ,  $p = .295$ ;  $SW$  post self-efficacy of student engagement = .932,  $df = 18$ ,  $p = .208$ ), and skewness (pre self-efficacy of student engagement = -.140; post self-efficacy of student engagement = .031) and kurtosis (pre self-efficacy of student engagement = -1.275; post self-efficacy of

student engagement = -1.326) statistics suggests that normality was a reasonable assumption. The boxplot suggested a relatively normal distribution shape with no outliers. The Q-Q plots suggested normality was reasonable for the residuals. The two-factor split-plot ANOVA is robust to violations of normality with equal sample sizes of groups as is evident in this design (Lomax & Hahs-Vaughn, 2012).

Although preservice teachers were not randomly assigned to group, the assumption of independence was met through the creation of matched groups using propensity score matching.

The results of the two-factor split-plot ANOVA indicate: 1) statistically significant within-subjects main effect for self-efficacy of student engagement between pre and post ( $F = 12.239$ ,  $df = 16.000$ ,  $p = .003$ , Cohen's  $f = .87$ ); 2) non-statistically significant between subjects main effect for group (i.e., comparison and intervention), ( $F = .007$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p = .934$ , Cohen's  $f = .000$ ); and 3) non-statistically significant interaction effect of time (pre and post) and group (comparison and intervention) ( $F = .101$ ,  $df = .16.000$ ,  $p = .755$ , Cohen's  $f = .07$ ). Post hoc power for the main effect for time was .907, for group was .051, and for the time by group interaction was .060.

The statistically significant main effect for the within-subjects factor suggests that there are mean differences over time for the preservice teachers' self-efficacy of student engagement. Based on Cohen's  $f$ , there is a large effect.

The non-statistically significant main effect for the between-subjects factor suggests that there are not mean self-efficacy of student engagement differences between the intervention and comparison group. Based on Cohen's  $f$ , there is no effect.

The non-statistically significant interaction effect of time (pre and post) and group (comparison and intervention) suggests that there are not mean differences in preservice teachers' self-efficacy of student engagement from pre- to post-intervention based on group (i.e., comparison or intervention). Based on Cohen's  $f$ , there is almost no effect.

## Research Question 2

Does the participation in the Senior Seminar change elementary preservice teachers' perceptions of preparedness when compared to a matched comparison group? More specifically, the following are addressed: 1) Is there a mean difference in preservice teachers' perceptions of preparedness scores pre- and post-intervention? This is the main effect for time. 2) Is there a mean difference in preservice teachers' perceptions of preparedness between groups (i.e., comparison and intervention)? More specifically, this is the main effect for group. 3) Is there a mean difference in preservice teachers' mean perceptions of preparedness scores by group (i.e., comparison and intervention)? This is the time by group interaction effect.

### Perceptions of Preparedness

A two-factor split-plot (one within-subjects factor and one between-subjects factor) ANOVA was conducted. The within-subjects factor was the preservice teachers' perceptions of preparedness measured prior to and after intervention and the between-subjects factor was group (specifically, comparison and intervention group). The null hypotheses tested included the following: 1) preservice teachers' mean perceptions of

preparedness scores were equal pre- and post-intervention (more specifically, this is the main effect for time); 2) preservice teachers' mean perceptions of preparedness scores were equal between groups (i.e., comparison and intervention) (more specifically, this is the main effect for group); and 3) preservice teachers' mean perceptions of preparedness scores by group (i.e., comparison and intervention) were equal (more specifically, this is the time by group interaction effect).

There were no missing data and no multivariate outliers. The assumption of normality was tested via examination of the residuals. Review of the Shapiro-Wilks test for normality (*SW* pre perceptions of preparedness = .881,  $df = 18$ ,  $p = .027$ ; *SW* post perceptions of preparedness = .927,  $df = 18$ ,  $p = .173$ ), and skewness (pre perceptions of preparedness = -.996; post perceptions of preparedness = -.561) and kurtosis (pre perceptions of preparedness = -.422; post perceptions of preparedness = .084) statistics suggests that normality was a reasonable assumption. The boxplot suggested a relatively normal distribution shape with no outliers. The Q-Q plots suggested normality was reasonable for the residuals. The two-factor split-plot ANOVA is robust to violations of normality with equal sample sizes of groups as is evident in this design (Lomax & Hahs-Vaughn, 2012).

Although preservice teachers were not randomly assigned to group, the assumption of independence was met through the creation of matched groups using propensity score matching.

The results of the two-factor split-plot ANOVA indicate: 1) statistically significant within-subjects main effect for perceptions of preparedness between pre and

post ( $F = 37.802$ ,  $df = 16.000$ ,  $p = .000$ , Cohen's  $f = 1.53$ ); 2) non-statistically significant between subjects main effect for group (i.e., comparison and intervention), ( $F = 2.441$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p = .138$ , Cohen's  $f = .39$ ; and 3) statistically significant interaction effect of time (pre and post) and group (comparison and intervention) ( $F = 17.819$ ,  $df = 16$ ,  $p = .001$ , Cohen's  $f = 1.05$ ). Post hoc power for the main effect for time was 1.000, for group was .312, and for the time by group interaction was .977.

The statistically significant main effect for the within-subjects factor suggests that there are mean differences over time for the preservice teachers' perceptions of preparedness. Based on Cohen's  $f$ , there is a large effect.

The statistically significant interaction effect of time (pre and post) and group (comparison and intervention) suggests that there are mean differences in preservice teachers' perceptions of preparedness from pre- to post-intervention based on group (i.e., comparison or intervention). Based on Cohen's  $f$ , there is a large effect.

The non-statistically significant main effect for the between-subjects factor suggests that there are not mean perceptions of preparedness differences between the intervention and comparison group. Based on Cohen's  $f$ , there is a large effect.

The estimated marginal means of pre- and post- perceptions of preparedness for the intervention and comparison groups are illustrated in Figure 1.

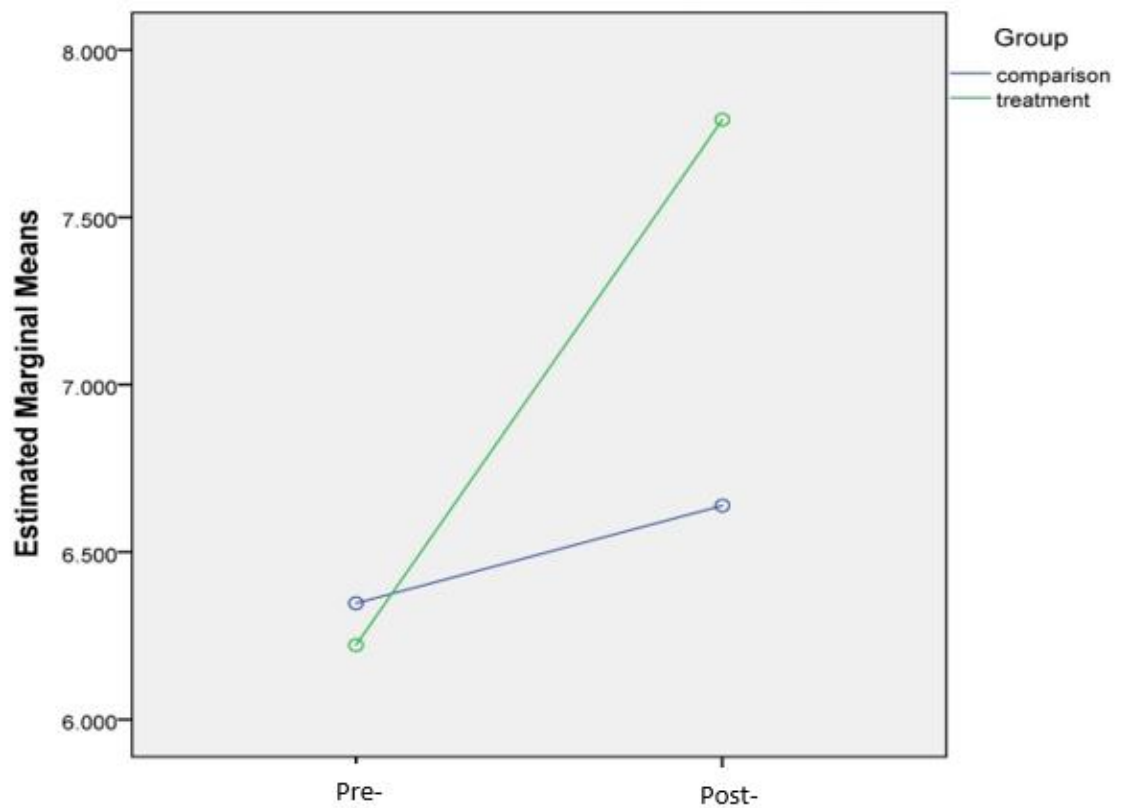


Figure 1. Estimated Marginal Means of Perceptions of Preparedness

### Research Question 3

What instructional strategies were most salient to the seminar participants after each seminar session?

Senior Seminar participants responded to open-ended exit slips after each of the session meetings. The questions were “Did you learn any new strategies from the session today?” and “How do you plan to implement what you learned today in your classroom?” The responses were examined for trends and themes. Prominent themes reported from



Senior Seminar participants are listed in Table 7 in order from the most frequently mentioned to the least on the exit slips completed at the end of each session.

Table 7

Frequency of Senior Seminar Participants' Responses on Exit Slips

Theme	Frequency
Implementing a new behavioral management system	16
Establishing procedures/routines	9
Planning effective assessment	7
Maintaining a positive classroom environment	6
Differentiative instruction	5
Culturally responsive teaching	5
Designing classroom centers	4

#### Research Question 4

What are the participants' perceptions of the most valuable aspects of the Senior Seminar?

Senior Seminar participants responded to open-ended questions on the post-survey which were used to collect their perceptions of the value of the Senior Seminar during their internship experience. All nine (100%) of the Senior Seminar participants responded with multiple aspects that they identified as being valuable. The responses were examined for trends and themes. Prominent themes reported from the Senior Seminar participants are listed in Table 8 in order from the most frequently mentioned to

the least along with the percentage of the nine participants that reported the them to be most valuable.

Table 8

Frequency of Senior Seminar Participants' Responses on the Post-Survey

Theme	Frequency
Topic Discussions	6 (67%)
The support system provided	5 (55%)
Opportunity to share internship experience	4 (44%)
Exit slips guiding seminar instruction	3 (33%)

The response that occurred most often (67% of the participants) was that the participants found the weekly topic discussions to be useful during their Internship II experience. The second most common response (56% of the participants) was the support system that the Senior Seminar provided to them while completing Internship II. One participant stated the most useful aspect of the Senior Seminar was “having a group of people that are going through the same thing and being able to have somewhere to go when lost, confused or unsure.” The opportunity to share about their internship experience at the Senior Seminar sessions was a response that 44% of the participants gave as being valuable. One of the common themes regarding sharing about their internship experiences included “having the opportunity to discuss our internship at every session made it feel like you were not alone.” Thirty-three percent of the participants found value in that the session exit slips were used to help guide the instruction and discussion topics for the future session meetings.

## Summary

Chapter four presented the results of the quantitative and qualitative data in relation to the four research questions proposed. The quantitative results from the pre- and post- survey results included teacher self-efficacy and perceptions of preparedness from the intervention and the comparison group. Qualitative data collected from the Senior Seminar exit slips and the open responses from the post-survey were also included. Chapter 5 will provide a more detailed explanation of the quantitative and qualitative findings, implications, limitations, and areas for future research.

## CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

### Introduction

In chapter 4, the analysis of the data was reported. Chapter 5 will expand on the results and the data that was presented in chapter 4. Chapter 5 will begin with a summary of the study that was conducted followed by a discussion of the findings as they relate to each of the four research questions that were proposed in this study. Implications for the organization and teaching practice will be proposed. In addition, study limitations and recommendations for future research will be suggested. Finally, the researcher's conclusion will be presented which synthesizes the purpose and findings from the research that was conducted.

### Summary of Study

The purpose of the quasi-experimental, mixed methods study was to examine how a Senior Seminar pilot conducted during elementary preservice teachers' Internship II semester could potentially increase their teacher self-efficacy and perceptions of preparedness to teach in the anticipation of impacting the likelihood of their retention in the teaching profession. The study explored the following four research questions:

1. Does the participation in the Senior Seminar change elementary preservice teachers' self-efficacy beliefs for classroom instruction, classroom management, and student engagement when compared to a matched comparison group?

2. Does the participation in the Senior Seminar change elementary preservice teachers' perceptions of preparedness when compared to a matched comparison group?
3. What instructional strategies were most salient to the seminar participants after each seminar session?
4. What are the participants' perceptions of the most valuable aspects of the Senior Seminar?

The design for the study was quasi-experimental and used mixed methods. The study consisted of an intervention group and a comparison group that were comprised of South Ridge University elementary education preservice teachers who were completing their Internship II during the fall 2016 semester. The intervention group included nine preservice teachers that participated in a Senior Seminar pilot program. The Senior Seminar pilot was designed to provide support and instruction to the intervention group during their Internship II experience. The Senior Seminar consisted of bi-weekly session meetings that were held in the evening. The goal of the Senior Seminar was to provide an overview of skills and competencies in teaching and learning as identified by the Florida Educator Accomplished Practices (Florida Department of Education, 2011).

The competencies included during the Senior Seminar were focused on instructional design and lesson planning, maintaining a classroom environment conducive to learning, instruction delivery and facilitation, assessment, continuous professional development, and professional responsibility and ethical conduct. The comparison group consisted of twenty elementary preservice teachers that were not participating in the

Senior Seminar pilot but were also currently completing their Internship II. Propensity score matching was used to help create the comparison group for the intervention group.

Data regarding participants' pre- and post- teacher self-efficacy was collected by use of the long form of the Teacher Sense of Self-Efficacy Survey (TSES; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). The TSES (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001) consists of 24 items that are related to efficacy of instructional strategies, efficacy for classroom management, and efficacy for student engagement. Participating teachers were asked to rate how much confidence they have in their ability for each of the items included on the survey. A 9-point scale was used ranging from *1-nothing* to *9-a great deal of control*.

To collect data regarding pre- and post- perceptions of preparedness for the teaching profession, participants of the Senior Seminar and the comparison group responded to eight researcher-created statements. A 7 point continuum was used to report their level of agreement for each of the items ranging from *1-low agreement* to *7-high agreement*. Statements were centered around preparedness to complete different teaching tasks and teacher classroom responsibilities.

In addition to the pre- and post- quantitative measures, qualitative data was collected at the end of every Senior Seminar session. Senior Seminar participants completed a researcher- created questionnaire to report which instructional strategies discussed during the session they were planning to implement in their own classroom. Open-ended questions were also included on the post-survey to collect the participants'

perceptions of the overall impact that the Senior Seminar had on their internship experience.

### Discussion of Findings

#### Research Question 1

Does the participation in the Senior Seminar change elementary preservice teachers' self-efficacy beliefs for classroom instruction, classroom management, and student engagement when compared to a matched comparison group?

For the study conducted, data was collected for specific tasks and were categorized into three different areas including classroom instruction, classroom management, and student engagement. The data collected from the pre-survey and post-survey showed that both the Senior Seminar participants and the preservice teachers in the comparison group had growth in self-efficacy for classroom instruction, classroom management, and student engagement. There was a large effect for time from pre- to post-survey. Both groups' self-efficacy for classroom engagement, classroom instructions, and classroom management grew from pre-survey to post-survey. Although the Senior Seminar participants had larger growth in their self-efficacy of classroom instruction and classroom management, the growth was not found to be statistically significant.

With self-efficacy being only one of the few reliable predictors of instructional practices and student outcomes in the classroom, any amount of growth in self-efficacy will be positively reflected in the classroom (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001).

Since preservice teachers' self-efficacy of teaching is developed during their student teaching experience, the participants demonstrated that their self-efficacy was enhanced during their internship experience which is likely to provide favorable results in the classroom (Brown, et al., 2015).

It is conceivable that the results may not have shown significance due to the fact that the preservice teachers' pre-survey data regarding self-efficacy may have been inflated as a result of the preservice teachers not having complete understanding of what the specific task was referring to for each of the survey items that they responded to; this may have been due to a lack of experience in the classroom. Before beginning Internship II the preservice teachers may have overestimated their self-efficacy beliefs because they did not fully realize what all the tasks entailed (De Jong, Van Tartwijk, Wubbels, Veldman, & Verloop, 2013; Hoy & Spero, 2005). After having an opportunity to complete their internship experience and gain the knowledge and realization of what each task was, their post-survey scores were a more accurate judgement of their true self-efficacy beliefs.

## Research Question 2

Does the participation in the Senior Seminar change elementary preservice teachers' perceptions of preparedness when compared to a matched comparison group?

One of the primary goals of the Senior Seminar was to increase South Ridge University's elementary preservice teachers' perceptions of their preparedness for the teaching profession. With the research discussed in chapter 2 indicating that there tends



to be a lack of preparedness for preservice teachers, increasing preservice teachers' sense of preparedness was a major focus for the implementation of the Senior Seminar.

The post-survey data collected from the participants of the Senior Seminar indicated that the support and instruction provided during the bi-weekly sessions equipped the preservice teachers with additional preparedness that they were not provided strictly during their internship classroom experience. The findings show that the preservice teachers that participated in the Senior Seminar had statistically significant differences in their mean growth when compared to the matched comparison group. The mean scores for the perceptions of preparedness post-survey data collected from participants of the Senior Seminar grew over five times more than those preservice teachers in the comparison group. The Senior Seminar participants' mean post-perception of preparedness score increase was 1.60 points versus the comparison group mean increase of .30. This growth suggests that the Senior Seminar pilot provided the participants with knowledge, skills, and strategies that they were previously lacking and not necessarily gaining strictly from their Internship II experience.

Since many teachers leave the profession due to lacking a sense of preparedness for the profession, one of the main goals for the study was to provide SRU elementary preservice teachers with an avenue for increasing their perceptions of preparedness for teaching (Torres, 2012). Finding support and interventions that will help increase perceptions of preparedness during the time preservice teachers spend in their teacher preparation program is vital since this is the most influential time for growth to occur (Brown, et al., 2015; Lee, et al., 2012). The added support and instruction of the Senior

Seminar that was provided to the preservice teachers during their Internship II experience helped to increase the perceptions about their preparedness for the teaching profession. The impact on their perceptions of preparedness will help them to be successful in the classroom and maintain a commitment to the teaching profession.

Teacher preparation programs are designed to equip preservice teachers with the knowledge and skills necessary to be successful in the classroom, and it is crucial that they identify areas of their program that need to be enhanced (Chesley and Jordan, 2012). The findings from this study are important to SRU and other teacher preparation programs because the data suggests that the Senior Seminar enhances preservice teachers' sense of preparedness to teach. With the results indicating that the Senior Seminar provided preservice teachers with the additional support and instruction necessary to increase their sense of preparedness, teacher preparation programs should consider the implementation of the seminar with all of their students.

### Research Question 3

What instructional strategies were most salient to the seminar participants after each seminar session?

The data for research question three included analysis of the open-ended questionnaires that were completed by the participants of the Senior Seminar. The questionnaires were completed at the end of each of the Senior Seminar sessions. The purpose of the questionnaire was to gain insight on the topics and information that the participants found useful as this should be the focus of adding additional instruction and

support during an internship (Clark, et al., 2015). In addition, the questionnaire gave the participants an opportunity to report their plans for the implementation of the specific strategies and techniques into their internship and future classrooms.

Several common themes and trends could be identified among the Senior Seminar participants' responses in regards to which instructional strategies presented were most important to them and which they were able to implement into the classroom. Among the prominent themes reported from participants was that they learned how to implement a new behavioral management system in their classroom and establish classroom procedures. Interestingly, teachers that have chosen to leave the profession have reported that their inability to maintain classroom management had influenced their decision to leave (Freeman, Simonsen, Briere, & MacSuga-Gage, 2014) so this topic was a focus for the Senior Seminar, and the participants found this to be useful. Another prominent theme that Senior Seminar participants reported gaining knowledge in was the planning of effective assessments that are aligned with their instruction which is also an area that many teachers report that they were lacking confidence in (Zhang & Zeller, 2016). The other main strategies that participants felt that they became more prepared for during their participation in the Senior Seminar included maintaining a positive classroom environment, differentiating instruction based on the students' needs, promoting culturally responsive teaching, and designing and implementing effective classroom centers.

All of the common themes identified from the participants' end of session questionnaires align with the focus of the bi-weekly Senior Seminar topics. The data

suggests that the participants of the Senior Seminar were presented with beneficial and relevant information during each of the seminar sessions. Participants reported that they were able to implement the information during their Internship II and that the Senior Seminar assisted in better preparing them for the classroom.

#### Research Question 4

What are the participants' perceptions of the most valuable aspects of the Senior Seminar?

One of the main areas of concern for teacher preparation is the lack of support provided during the student teaching experience (Campbell & Dunleavy, 2016). The Senior Seminar pilot was designed to provide SRU's elementary preservice teachers with an added means of support and instruction during their Internship II semester. The support and instruction provided by the Senior Seminar was implemented through bi-weekly session meetings. To collect the perceptions of the Senior Seminar, participants answered open-ended questions on the post-survey. Data collected from these open-ended questions was extremely favorable regarding the aspects that the participants found most useful from the Senior Seminar experience. Some common themes that could be identified from the participants' responses regarding what aspects they found most valuable included the topic discussions, the support system that the Senior Seminar provided them, and that the Senior Seminar allowed for the participants to share about their internship experiences during each meeting. The areas that were identified by participants as being the most valuable are directly aligned with the areas that previous

research found as lacking in teacher preparation (Greenberg, et al.2015). Based on the feedback from the open-ended survey questions, several conclusions can be drawn regarding the participants' perceptions of the Senior Seminar experience.

The Senior Seminar participants had a similar positive reaction to the Senior Seminar as was found in with participants in other teacher preparation programs' interventions (Auhl & Daniel, 2014). The first conclusion that can be drawn is that all of the participants reported that their involvement in the Senior Seminar pilot was a positive experience. Second, the Senior Seminar provided a place for the participants to feel like they were consistently provided with support and guidance during the completion of their internship. Another conclusion that can be drawn is that the session meetings allowed for collaboration among the participants. Lastly, the Senior Seminar provided the participants with a connection to the university while they were in their full-time Internship II experience.

An additional theme to emerge from the analysis of the post-survey open-ended questions was that the participants would have preferred to have had more session meetings for the Senior Seminar. Rather than bi-weekly meetings, the theme among participants' responses was that they would have preferred to have met weekly. Given that wanting to meet more frequently was a common theme, this is a strong indication that the Senior Seminar was a positive and valuable experience for the participants.

### Implications for the Organization and Practice

The research discussed in the literature review highlighted the areas that teacher preparation programs ought to improve (American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education, 2013; Campbell & Dunleavy, 2016; Greenberg, Walsh, McKee, & National Council on Teacher Quality, 2015; Grisham, et al., 2014). The study conducted provides evidence of the addition of a Senior Seminar during Internship II may address the areas identified as lacking in teacher preparation. Preservice teachers' beliefs regarding their sense of preparedness have been found to be a good predictor of their ability to perform the required teaching tasks (Brown, et al., 2015 & Siwatu, 2011).

The data collected during the study suggests that the Senior Seminar provides some important and practical implications for the organization and for teacher education in general. The results offer suggestive evidence that South Ridge University's elementary education department should implement the Senior Seminar with all of their preservice teachers that are completing their Internship II experience to increase participants' perceptions of their preparedness for the teaching profession. By implementing the Senior Seminar, SRU can enhance the elementary teacher preparation program that they offer to preservice teachers.

The Senior Seminar offered participants an opportunity to discuss the mastery experiences from their internship. Participants had an opportunity to debrief with their peers each session with regular time for scaffolding provided from the instructor. The addition of a Senior Seminar will ensure that SRU is providing their preservice teachers

with an opportunity to increase their perceptions of preparedness and better equip them with the necessary skills and competencies required to be successful in the classroom.

With the implementation of the Senior Seminar during the Internship II experience resulting in an increase in the preservice teachers' perceptions of preparedness for teaching, SRU's Senior Seminar can provide an effective model for other teacher preparation programs to follow. The Senior Seminar pilot used in the study can provide a framework for how other teacher preparation programs can provide added support and instruction to their preservice teachers in the hopes of better preparing them for the profession.

With the addition of the Senior Seminar to teacher preparation programs, universities will be producing teachers that have a higher perception of preparedness to teach. This increase in preparedness has the potential of positively affecting the current teacher retention rate.

Administrators of teacher preparation programs that would like to implement the Senior Seminar framework with all of their preservice teachers will need to follow several specific steps.

- a) Identify how many preservice teachers will be participating in the Senior Seminar.
- b) Identify how many faculty members are necessary to facilitate the seminar, ideally, no more than 25 preservice teachers per facilitator.
- c) Determine what themes to cover during each session. The themes should be guided by the skills and competencies required by the program. The themes used for the study are outlined in chapter 3.

- d) Decide on a time and location for where the session meetings will occur. For the current study, the sessions were held in the evening at the university as to not interfere with the preservice teachers' required internship hours.
- e) To help the facilitator provide scaffolding to the preservice teachers, an exit slip should be used to collect any questions or clarifications that the preservice teachers may report at the end of each session (see Appendix D). The information collected can be used to guide the instruction for following sessions.

### Limitations

The study focused on the impact that an added Senior Seminar would have on SRU elementary preservice teachers' teacher self-efficacy, perceptions of preparedness for teaching, and their Internship II experience. Although overall the data suggests the participants found the Senior Seminar favorable, there are some limitations that should be considered for the study. One of the main limitations that can be identified from the study is that the researcher was an employee at SRU which is the university where the study was conducted. The researcher for the study was also involved in the development of the Senior Seminar and was the facilitator of the bi-weekly session meetings. Given that the researcher was also the facilitator, it is possible that the participants' professional relationships with the researcher may have influenced the results of the study based on the participants' personal opinions towards the researcher.

Another limitation is that the participants volunteered for the study making the results less generalizable. However, evidence suggests that if the population has similar



characteristics then the results will be similar. For this study, propensity score matching was used to combat this limitation.

In addition, although some of the data provided significant results, the sample size was fairly small which could limit the generalizations that can be made. Additionally, the sample of participants were all enrolled at the same university's elementary teacher preparation program which also limits the generalizations that can be made for other universities and the programs that they provide.

The next limitation comes from the original planned meeting schedule for the Senior Seminar sessions. Due to two different hurricanes that occurred during the semester that the research was conducted, two of the session meetings had to be canceled. The cancelled sessions may have impacted the post-data scores that were reported by the participants for the topics that were scheduled to be discussed during those session meetings that had to be canceled.

Another limitation that should be considered for the study was that the researcher collected only self-reported data from each of the participants. Self-reported data may skew the results specifically when collecting perceptions of efficacy for one's specific abilities (Hoy & Spero, 2005). People often tend to underestimate or overestimate their true abilities when asked to self-report.

The last limitation to consider is that the power was too low to avoid possible type II errors in testing for group differences.

### Recommendation for Future Research

The study adds to the body of research that has been conducted regarding the benefits of additional support and instruction provided to preservice teachers during their internship experience. There are several recommendations for future research on this topic.

The first recommendation is to use a larger sample size of preservice teachers. With a larger sample size, the results would be more generalizable to other universities and their teacher preparation programs.

Another recommendation is to conduct a study that implements the additional support and instruction that is provided by the Senior Seminar to secondary preservice teachers. By implementing the Senior Seminar with secondary preservice teachers, the researcher can determine if the same outcome occurs for this population as it did at the elementary level.

The next recommendation is to conduct a study that uses preservice teachers' internship observations and rubric assessment scores as an instrument to collect data. The data could then be analyzed to determine if the participants of the Senior Seminar scored higher on their classroom performance when compared to a control group's observations and rubric assessments.

An additional recommendation would be to examine data regarding the power of having a sense of community and support versus time costs. For example, participants of the Senior Seminar reported that they would have liked to have met more often during the

semester although that would have required them to give up more of their time in the evenings.

The last recommendation is to conduct a longitudinal study that examines the retention of the participants in the classroom after three years of teaching. The study's focus would be on whether the participants of the Senior Seminar remained in the teaching profession more than those teachers that were in the comparison group.

### Conclusion

The purpose of the study was to explore the impact that a Senior Seminar would have on South Ridge University's elementary preservice teachers' teacher efficacy, perceptions of preparedness for the profession, and Internship II experience. With current teacher retention rates being low, and with many teachers reporting leaving due to lacking a sense of preparedness for the demands of the profession, the study examined how added support and instruction during internship may better prepare preservice teachers.

The data collected provides value in suggesting that there needs to be additional support and instruction paired with preservice teaching experiences. The results indicate that added support and instruction can provide preservice teachers a positive experience while completing their Internship II and increase their perceptions of preparedness for the teaching profession. Participants of the Senior Seminar reported that they found value in the Senior Seminar experience and that it provided them with support and guidance during their Internship II. They reported that they were able to implement the strategies

discussed during the seminar sessions into their internship classrooms. They also expressed that they viewed the bi-weekly session meetings valuable and that they would have preferred to have met more often. The participants finished their Internship II with overall higher levels of perceptions of preparedness for teaching when compared to the comparison group.

The study provides insight to how teacher preparation programs can enhance the preparation they provide preservice teachers and ultimately have a positive influence on the current teacher retention issues that have been identified across the teaching profession.

## APPENDIX A: IRB APPROVAL



University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board  
Office of Research & Commercialization  
12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501  
Orlando, Florida 32826-3246  
Telephone: 407-823-2901 or 407-882-2276  
[www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html](http://www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html)

## Approval of Exempt Human Research

From: **UCF Institutional Review Board #1  
FWA00000351, IRB00001138**

To: **Shane Marie Trenta**

Date: **July 20, 2015**

Dear Researcher:

On 07/20/2015, the IRB approved the following activity as human participant research that is exempt from regulation:

Type of Review:	Exempt Determination
Project Title:	Preparedness of Elementary Education Intern II Students
Investigator:	Shane Marie Trenta
IRB Number:	SBE-15-11423
Funding Agency:	
Grant Title:	
Research ID:	NA

This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether these changes affect the exempt status of the human research, please contact the IRB. When you have completed your research, please submit a Study Closure request in iRIS so that IRB records will be accurate.

In the conduct of this research, you are responsible to follow the requirements of the [Investigator Manual](#).

On behalf of Sophia Dziegielewski, Ph.D., L.C.S.W., UCF IRB Chair, this letter is signed by:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joanne Muratori".

Signature applied by Joanne Muratori on 07/20/2015 04:12:47 PM EDT

IRB manager

APPENDIX B: TEACHER SENSE OF SELF-EFFICACY SURVEY

Directions: The questionnaire is designed to help us gain a better understanding of the kinds of things that create difficulties for teachers in their school activities. Please indicate your opinion about each of the statements below using the 9-point scale provided.

Nothing		Very Little		Some Influence		Quite A Bit		A	
Great Deal									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		9

1. How much can you do to get through to the most difficult students?
2. How much can you do to help your students think critically?
3. How much can you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom?
4. How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in school work?
5. To what extent can you make your expectations clear about student behavior?
6. How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in school work?
7. How well can you respond to difficult questions from your students?
8. How well can you establish routines to keep activities running smoothly?
9. How much can you do to help your students value learning?
10. How much can you gauge student comprehension of what you have taught?
11. To what extent can you craft good questions for your students?
12. How much can you do to foster student creativity?
13. How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules?
14. How much can you do to improve the understanding of a student who is failing?
15. How much can you do to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy?
16. How well can you establish a classroom management system with each group of students?
17. How much can you do to adjust your lessons to the proper level for individual students?
18. How much can you use a variety of assessment strategies?
19. How well can you keep a few problem students from ruining an entire lesson?
20. To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused?
21. How well can you respond to defiant students?
22. How much can you assist families in helping their children do well in school?
23. How well can you implement alternative strategies in your classroom?
24. How well can you provide appropriate challenges for very capable students?
25. How confident are you that you will be successful as a classroom teacher?



## APPENDIX C: PERCEPTIONS OF PREPAREDNESS

Directions: Please mark your level of agreement to each of the following statements.

The following questions will be answered on a 7 point continuum (low to high agreement)

Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
-------------------	-------	-------------------	-------------------------------	----------------------	----------	----------------------

I am prepared to implement positive classroom management skills.

I am prepared to use effective instructional strategies.

I am prepared to create meaningful learning experiences.

I am prepared to plan for appropriate instruction across the curriculum.

I am prepared to use appropriate parent/family communication.

I am prepared to instruct students with exceptionalities.

I am prepared to meet the needs of diverse learners.

I am prepared to integrate technology in the classroom.

## APPENDIX D: POST QUALITATIVE SURVEY

Did you successfully complete Internship II? **If yes**-What contributed to your success during internship? **If no**-What are the reasons that you were unable to complete your internship?

How prepared are you to teach in your own classroom after you graduate? Why? What key skills did you learn as a result of the senior seminar?

What aspects of the senior seminar did you find most useful?

What suggestions do you have on how to improve the senior seminar?

## APPENDIX E: DEMOGRAPHICS

Demographic Information

**-Did you transfer to UCF from another college?**

Yes/No

**-Will elementary education be your first college degree? If not, what degree have you already earned?**

**-What is your sex?**

Male

Female

Transgender

Prefer not to answer

**-What is your ethnicity?**

White

Hispanic or Latina

African American

Native American

Asian/Pacific Islander

**-What is your age?**

Under 21 years old

21-25 years old

26-30 years old

31-40 years old

41 years or older

Prefer not to answer

APPENDIX F: EXIT SLIP

1. Did you learn any new strategies from the discussion today?
2. How can you implement anything you learned today in your classroom?
3. What questions do you have regarding anything we discussed today?
4. Is there anything specific you would like to discuss/learn next week?



## APPENDIX G: RESOURCE SUGGESTIONS

<p><b>Module 1: Classroom Management Begin Wong Text, Routines and Procedures</b></p>	<p><b>Videos</b></p> <p>Building Good Relationship Primary, <a href="http://search.alexanderstreet.com/ediv/view/work/1781444">http://search.alexanderstreet.com/ediv/view/work/1781444</a></p> <p>Discipline and Procedure- Harry Wong <a href="http://search.alexanderstreet.com/ediv/view/work/1840599">http://search.alexanderstreet.com/ediv/view/work/1840599</a></p> <p>Textbook Readings--Ongoing discussion will occur during the semester as the students read through the Harry Wong text.</p>
<p><b>Module 2: Instructional Design, Lesson Planning and Teacher Work Sample</b></p>	<p><b>Video</b></p> <p>Improving Practice: Collaboration and Planning <a href="https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/power-of-teacher-collaboration">https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/power-of-teacher-collaboration</a></p> <p><b>Website</b></p> <p>The Use of PLCs <a href="http://edglossary.org/professional-learning-community/">http://edglossary.org/professional-learning-community/</a></p>
<p><b>Module 3: Parent and Family Communication and Involvement</b></p>	<p><b>Videos</b></p> <p>Parent Conference Tips <a href="https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/parent-teacher-conference-tips/?utm_source=newsletter201510131/">https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/parent-teacher-conference-tips/?utm_source=newsletter201510131/</a></p> <p>Parent Communication <a href="http://search.alexanderstreet.com/ediv/view/work/1780623">http://search.alexanderstreet.com/ediv/view/work/1780623</a></p> <p><b>Suggested Assignment</b></p> <p>Parent Teacher Conference Simulations</p>
<p><b>Module 4: ESE including Gifted and Twice Exceptional, Autism and Inclusion</b></p>	<p><b>Videos</b></p> <p>Ted Talks-Inclusive Culture in Schools Transforms Communities by Heidi Heissenbuttel <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gsbNR2pIts">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gsbNR2pIts</a></p> <p>What is Twice Exceptional and Gifted by Dan Peters <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PlQ4z-1OVw4">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PlQ4z-1OVw4</a></p> <p><b>Websites</b></p> <p><a href="http://www.nsgt.org">www.nsgt.org</a> <a href="http://www.flagifted.org">www.flagifted.org</a></p> <p><b>Article</b></p> <p>Winebrenner, S. (2003). Teaching Strategies for Twice-Exceptional Students. <i>Intervention In School &amp; Clinic</i>, 38(3), 131.</p>

<p><b>Module 5: Culturally Responsive Teaching and Urban Education</b></p>	<p><b>Videos</b></p> <p>The Classroom Mosaic: Culture and Learning  <a href="http://search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/1840563">http://search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/1840563</a></p> <p>The World of Differences  <a href="http://search.alexanderstreet.com/education/view/work/1783598">http://search.alexanderstreet.com/education/view/work/1783598</a></p> <p><b>Article</b></p> <p>Ford, B. A., Stuart, D. H., &amp; Vakil, S. (2014). Culturally Responsive Teaching in the 21st Century Inclusive Classroom. <i>Journal Of The International Association Of Special Education</i>, 15(2), 56-62.</p>
<p><b>Module 6: Technology in Education</b></p>	<p><b>Video</b></p> <p>New Teacher Survival Guide: Technology in the Classroom  <a href="https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/technology-in-the-classroom">https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/technology-in-the-classroom</a></p> <p><b>Websites</b></p> <p>25 Teaching Tools  <a href="http://www.teachthought.com/the-future-of-learning/25-teaching-tools-to-organize-innovate-manage-your-classroom/">http://www.teachthought.com/the-future-of-learning/25-teaching-tools-to-organize-innovate-manage-your-classroom/</a></p> <p>Technology in Education: An Overview  <a href="http://www.edweek.org/ew/issues/technology-in-education/">www.edweek.org/ew/issues/technology-in-education/</a></p>

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