

A grayscale image of the Purdue University clock tower, featuring a clock face with Roman numerals and a pointed top with a spire.

# PURDUE

---

## UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

Teacher Perceptions



# Perceived needs of pre-service teachers regarding gifted learners: Evidence and suggestions for teacher preparation programs

Jillian C. Gates

Nielsen Pereira

Purdue University

# Who are we?

- Doctoral candidates in gifted education
- Teaching assistants in classroom management course
- Classroom teachers 12+ years (ESL, special education, general education)

Who are you and why are you here in 30 seconds or less?



# Purpose

- An apparent disconnect exists between pre-service teachers' expectations regarding classroom management course content and textbook selection.
- This study investigated these perceived needs of pre-service teachers regarding the needs of gifted learners.

# Research Questions

- What do pre-service teachers perceive as their needs regarding classroom management?
- In what manner and to what extent are these needs related to published textbooks and research on classroom management?

# Theoretical Framework

- One of the biggest challenges in the transition from the college classroom to the real-life classroom is in the area of classroom management (Stoughton, 2006).
- This dissonance between theory and practice is an area of recent research interest (Thibodeau & Hillman, 2003; Silvestri, 2001; Stoughton, 2006).

# Methods

- Participants
  - All students enrolled in a classroom management course during fall 2007 ( $n=92$ ) and spring 2008 ( $n=88$ ) semesters.





# Methods (2)

- Data Sources
  - Students posed questions to guest lecturers.
- Questions
  - 1,672 questions from 180 students
  - Posted on WebCT/BlackBoard
  - Questions were not graded
- Textbook content of two texts used in the course.

**Table 1. *Lecture topics for each semester.***

Lecture Topic	Speaker	Lecture Topic	Speaker
Differentiation	Course Instructor	Differentiation	Course Instructor
Student-Based Strategies	Content Expert	Student-Based Strategies	Content Expert
Praise Effort	Course Instructor	Praise Effort and Love & Logic	Course Instructor
Motivation	Content Expert	Motivation	Content Expert
Positive Discipline	Veteran, practicing teacher	Problem Behaviors and Discipline	Veteran, practicing teacher
A Superintendent's Perspective	Retired Superintendent	A Superintendent's Perspective	Retired Superintendent
Getting a Job	Elementary school principal	Getting a job	Elementary school principal
Student Teaching	Student teachers	Student Teaching	Student teachers
Parent Communications	Parent of a school-aged child	Teacher Panel (from the inside)	Practicing teachers
Classroom Management	Course instructor	The Essence of Math	Course instructor
First Year Teacher Concerns	First-year teacher	First Year Teacher Concerns	First-year teacher
Special Education	Special education case manager	Student Panel	Elementary school students

# Analysis

- Questions
  - Reality-testing framework
  - Constant comparative method
- Textbooks
  - Content analysis
    - Inductive
    - deductive
- Analysis
  - Research group did initial inductive analysis
  - Researchers did second round of deductive analysis
  - Second research group completing third round of deductive and inductive analysis.

# Results - Themes

1. Learning to deal with discipline
2. Meeting students' needs
3. Dealing with a feeling of uncertainty towards 'real' teaching experiences
  - Transition from pre-service to in-service teaching
4. Positive relationships
  - Parents, teachers, students, staff, & administration

Table 2. Presence of questions relating to the four themes found

Lecture Topics	Theme 1 Discipline	Theme 2 Students' needs	Theme 3 Transition	Theme 4 Relationships
Differentiation		X	X	X
Student-Based Strategies		X	X	X
Praise Effort	X	X	X	X
Motivation	X	X		X
Positive Discipline	X	X		X
A Superintendent's Perspective	X	X	X	X
Getting a Job	X		X	X
Student Teaching	X		X	X
Parent Communications	X		X	X
Classroom Management	X	X	X	X

Table 2. Presence of questions relating to the four themes found (cont.)

Lecture Topics	Theme 1 Discipline	Theme 2 Students' needs	Theme 3 Transition	Theme 4 Relationships
Special Education	X	X	X	X
Praise Effort and Love & Logic	X	X		X
Problem Behaviors and Discipline	X	X	X	X
Teacher Panel (from the inside)	X	X	X	X
The Essence of Math	X	X	X	
First Year Teacher Concerns	X	X	X	X
Student Panel	X	X		X

# Differentiation

- What kind of professional development do you have for teachers with respect to differentiation? (A Superintendent's perspective, spring 2008)
- What three things can I as a teacher do to make learning easier for you in this class? (Student Panel, spring 2008)

# Transition

- Is it normal to make lesson plans for the first year and then reuse them for the following years? (Differentiation, spring 2008)
- Have you been able to see any improvement in your weaknesses since you've started teaching? (First-year teacher concerns, spring 2008)



# Giftedness

- How do you manage to all of the gifted and learning disabled children within your classroom without boring one group of children? (Classroom Management, fall 2007)
- Are "regular" students capable of completing "gifted" work with extra assistance? (Student-Based Strategies, spring 2008)

# Giftedness

- How do I motivate students that are gifted? (Motivation, fall 2007)
- What strategies would you suggest for a gifted/talented student who does not want to participate in the class curriculum in any way? (Student-Based Strategies, fall 2007)

# Results - Textbooks

## **Burden (2006)**

- Focus on theories of discipline
- Limited information on meeting students' needs
- No information about the transition from pre-service teachers to real teaching experiences or the student-teaching process

# Results – Textbooks (2)

## **Henley (2006)**

- Main theme: building a classroom climate (management, learning, and discipline)
- Discussion about meeting students' needs at a more philosophical level
- Limited information about real teaching experiences

# Discussion

- Textbooks analyzed do not deal with all the issues about which students perceive they need to know
- Disconnect between pre-service teachers' needs regarding classroom management and course offerings
- High frequency of fairly basic questions (i.e. What is differentiation?)
- Need for right answers when the best way to learn to teach is to teach

# Changes to Teacher Education Programs

- Principles of gifted education benefit students at all achievement/ability levels.
- Understanding of differentiation and all its forms.
  - Developmental readiness
  - Learning styles
  - Product
- Emphasis on both special and gifted education

# Share

- What has worked in teacher preparation programs?
- What has not worked in teacher preparation programs?
- What do you see as lacking in teachers of gifted learners?
- What do you perceive the needed changes are?

# References

- Brouwer, N., & Korthagen, F. (2005). Can Teacher Education Make a Difference? *American Educational Research Journal*, 42 (1), 153 – 224.
- Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.
- Mueller, J. (2006, April). Does talking the talk mean walking the walk? A case for forging closer relationships between teacher education and educational foundations. *Educational Studies*, 39(2), 146-162.
- Patton, M.Q. (2002). *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods*. 3rd Ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Silvestri, L. (2001) Pre-service Teachers' Self-Reported Knowledge of Classroom Management. *Education*, 121 (3), 575 – 580.
- Stoughton, E.H. (2006) “How Will I Get Them to Behave?”: Pre-service teachers reflect on classroom management. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 23, 1024-1037.



# For copies of this presentation

[www.purdue.edu/geri](http://www.purdue.edu/geri)

Professional Development  
Presentations and Handouts

Jillian Gates

[jcgates@purdue.edu](mailto:jcgates@purdue.edu)

Nielsen Pereira

[npereira@purdue.edu](mailto:npereira@purdue.edu)