

A Prospective Competency Training Program for Public School Substitute Teachers

By

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Abstract

The purpose of this project is to develop a quality education program to address the need for high-quality substitute teachers. Substitute teachers are expected to handle all the day to day responsibilities of any teacher and their subject matter. However, findings show that most states have limited if any systematic training for substitutes. Although substitute teachers are responsible for nearly a full year of a student's K-12 education, few substitutes receive more than a cursory training in behavior management and far less training in the content area they are substitute teaching. The important impact substitute teachers have on student achievement can't be minimized. Creating a competency-based system to train and retain highly qualified substitute teachers is a problem that has, and will continue to plague many school districts across the United States. The purpose of this project is to provide school districts with a viable solution to the problem of training and retaining highly qualified substitute teachers through a competency-based approach to their training. Public schools across the nation need to look towards the substitute teacher pool as a necessary resource for school improvement plans.

Keywords: substitute teacher, teacher education, teacher training,

A Prospective Competency Training Program for Public School Substitute Teachers

Public education is constantly in the crosshairs of reform initiatives. Recent federal reforms have been fueled by student achievement data collected through the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)'s Program for International Student Assessment (OECD, 2018). Approximately 540,000 students completed the assessment in 2015, representing about 29 million 15-year-olds in the schools of the 72 participating countries and economies. The 2015 PISA data ranks the US 39th in math, 24th in reading, and 25th in science, placing it well behind many other developed nations (OECD, 2018). These rankings cause the question to be asked, why is one of the most powerful nations on the planet unable to compete with countries like Finland, Singapore, or South Korea, which have consistently been the top three nations in the PISA rankings? One explanation, according to Fullan and Hargreaves (2012), is that countries like Finland and Singapore typically draw their teachers from the top 30% of the graduating class, while the United States typically draws their teachers from the bottom 40% of graduating classes.

There is a great deal of research attesting the impact of high-quality teachers on student achievement (Hattie, 2012; Marzano, 2010; Gusky, 2015). However, new teachers most often develop their skills in the classroom after graduating from college (Moir, 2015). There are very few instances of teachers leaving teacher training prepared to successfully handle a classroom on their own (Ingersoll & Strong 2011; Ganser, 2002). This might help to explain why our public schools can expect 8% of their teachers to leave the profession each year, two-thirds of them for reasons other than retirement

(Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). Public educators are under pressure to guarantee that their students perform on high stakes tests (Nichols & Berliner, 2008) and they often receive very little systematic support from their school district (Mizell, 2010).

The pressure on public educators is evident. However, one influential group of educators has gone largely overlooked—substitute teachers. Public school students will spend at least one year of their K-12 educational experience with substitute teachers (Longhurst, 2000). Substitute teaching is one area of influence to improve public education (Glatfelter, 2006). In public education systems across the country, substitute teachers are expected to do everything our classroom teachers are expected to do—from classroom management to instructing students in specific content, yet very little systematic professional development goes towards substitute teachers (Glatfelter, 2006). According to Glass (2001) nearly 13% of America's school children are instructed by substitute teachers every school day. The minimum qualifications for many substitute teachers are far from what one might expect. Gresham, Donihoo, and Cox (2007) note that school districts in 21 US states require only a high school diploma. Delsio (2008) indicates that only about 42% of substitute teachers are required to go through any kind of substitute orientation. It is imperative that substitute teachers are adequately prepared for the classroom. Substitute teachers face issues of lack of professional development, lack of systematic induction programs and pressures for their students to succeed just like a regular classroom teacher (Byer, 2008).

In order to provide quality, competent substitutes, prospective teachers should undergo competency-based education. Competency-based education is quickly gaining popularity among many educational institutions in both public education and higher

education. According to Button (2014), advocates say competency-based education puts the focus on students' capabilities rather than how many hours per week they spend in the classroom. By one estimate, at least 200 institutions have competency-based education programs. It raises accountability issue in higher education, however, and differs radically from the traditional model of instruction, assessment, and awarding credit. Instead, students simply pass an assessment and are awarded credit, with the emphasis placed on demonstrating skills rather than undergoing instruction. Guskey (2015) highlights the need for educators to create effective proficiency scales and rubrics that provide the right feedback to educators to make the best decision for what comes next in relation to the student and their performance on an assessment. Brookhart et al (2016) argue that educators wanting to move to a competency-based approach, are most successful at impacting student achievement when clear learning goals are established and when their focus remains on using grades to provide feedback. Finally, Schimmer, Hillman, & Stalers (2018) found that creating a systematic approach to data is key for anyone transitioning from a traditional grading system to a competency-based system. Effective competency-based systems use data to inform instruction, rather than to report on it, which is a key factor to get right for anyone trying to implement a competency-based approach.

Competency-based education allows learners a great deal of flexibility in terms of the rate at which they are able to complete course requirements and the amount of time it may take to develop mastery of a skill (Morello, 2017). The shift away from credit hour requirements to a mastery model, on which students are awarded credit based on evidence of their skills regardless of what courses they have taken, is a fundamental shift

in education (O’Conner, 2017). Attention must be paid to mastery-based learning approaches, because educational institutions are increasingly emphasizing skill-learning over fulfilling seat-time and course-completion requirements (Morello, 2017). Morello (2017) found the two most distinct differences in competency-based education as opposed to traditional education is the pacing and the way in which learning is communicated. Colby (2018) found that one of the benefits to a competency-based approach is that it provides both the educator and the learner, the opportunity to deliver and experience a more personalized approach to education, which can result in higher levels of learning, as students receive feedback in a more expedient and clear manner in a competency-based approach. Abbott (2017) found that one of the more common concerns with mastery or competency-based education is that students in a K-12 setting are less likely to receive college admittance or scholarship due to variances in transcripts. Upon further research, it was found that concerns about mastery-based transcripts are largely unfounded, and more often than not, they are based on assumptions that are easily dispelled once people recognize that transcripts are merely an information-display problem, not a curriculum, teaching, or learning problem (Abbott, 2017). Truong and Patrick (2018) supports the idea that competency-based transcripts, cause no harm to students, and actually argue that competency-based transcripts offer more transparency in college admissions as college admissions officers who have access to a competency-based transcript are provided a clearer view on the applicants’ college readiness. Even more support for assisting schools in moving towards mastery can be found in the Mastery Transcript Consortium and the New England Secondary School Consortium. Sturgis (2018) identified these two initiatives, as two to watch, as they are

trying to build support for those seeking a move towards competency-based education. These two initiatives have had 100 percent of the state colleges and universities sign a proficiency pledge to ensure that no student is harmed in the college admissions process by going to a competency or proficiency-based high school. This level of support and commitment are powerful, as educators feel empowered to attempt implementing a new way of learning, without fear of harming the opportunities for the students in their care.

A prerequisite for the implementation of competency-based education is the development of clear instructional standards of both skills and skill-assessment. competency-based education lends itself to a more individualized approach with emphasis being placed on giving highly personalized instruction and intervention to students in order to ensure that the students are able to improve their performance at the skills they have been tasked with mastering.

Review of Literature

The focus of this literature review is on the provision of quality teacher training and competency-based education in order to identify best practices for high-quality substitute training. Four common themes related to teacher preparation emerged from these resources: university teacher preparation, alternative routes to teacher licensure (ARL), teacher recruitment, and school and district level induction programs. In addition, a brief history of competency-based education will be given as an introduction to the subsequent discussion of how to build a research-based approach to educating potential substitute teachers. Special attention will be paid to methods of generating organizational change to help facilitate the shift to competency-based education.

Aspects of successful teacher training courses

Teacher preparation. Teacher preparation programs are essential for developing high-quality teachers who have the skills to take over the responsibilities of classroom teaching (Zubrzycki, (2012). Darling-Hammond (2010) outlines best practices in teacher preparation programs. She presents research suggesting that high-quality teacher preparation courses must have clear, linear connections between the student teaching experience and the candidate's future teaching assignments. In addition, they must align their curriculum with that of the district in which their students gain their practical classroom experience, and must offer students the opportunity to apply their experience to a relevant capstone project. To be successful, teacher preparation courses need to help candidates apply what they are learning in the classroom to their practical experience (Glatfelter, 2006). According to Darling-Hammond (2010), it is essential that prospective teachers need to practice in real situations, with expert guidance, which is essential to becoming a great teacher.

High-quality practice with focused feedback is necessary for educator improvement (Levine, 2006). Teacher preparation should mirror professional clinical training (Allen, 2002). An important measure of success for teacher education programs should be whether they were developed with a focus on student achievement (Rice, 2002). The author also recommends setting the norm for teacher preparations programs at five years in length, to allow sufficient time for both adequate depth of content as well and practical experience (Levine, 2006; Walsh, 2011). And finally, it is recommended that teacher education programs create incentives to draw exceptional students from other fields of study into primary and secondary education (Levine, 2006).

Alternative Routes to Licensure. The idea of recruiting leading talent from business and industry to become public school teachers is not a new one. The Teach for America (TfA) program has championed the notion that professionals can give back to the American public education system by dedicating a few years to serve as teachers in some of the most difficult schools and districts in the United States (Penner, 2012). In some U.S. inner city schools, conditions for teachers are so poor that the schools could not feasibly operate without TfA because traditionally licensed teachers will not accept teaching jobs there (Thomas & Mockler, 2018).

Many states are implementing alternate routes to teacher licensure similar to TfA to help address teacher shortages in public schools (Wang, Coleman, Coley, & Phelps, 2003). Darling-Hammond et al (2006), examine whether formal teacher preparation programs are still necessary and desirable nonetheless. They focus on student achievement data from the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills, comparing TfA teachers to teachers certified by traditional education programs in the Houston area. The authors concluded that student achievement in reading and mathematics in grades 3-8 (the entire population studied) were higher under traditionally certified teachers than under uncertified TfA teachers. Feistritzer and Haar's (2008) study provides an overarching view of alternative routes to teacher licensure. It discusses conceptual aspects of alternate routes to teaching, and why they developed. The authors address the TfA phenomenon and summarize the available research on the effectiveness of alternate routes to licensure. They report seemingly conflicting results from studies on the TfA program. On the one hand, there are claims that because TfA provides a streamlined process for moving non-licensed professionals into classroom settings, it has had a

significant positive effect on the teacher shortage in urban school districts. On the other hand, the teachers then leave those same urban schools after the first year at an alarming rate, and none stay more than a few years, as the TFA program is not designed for long-term placements.

Teacher Recruitment. Another major issue in teacher recruitment and retention is teacher pay. Fowler (2003) examines the utility of using teacher bonuses to improve teacher quality. The effort here is to pay teachers significantly more in order to recruit stronger candidates into the profession. The study reported on a program (modeled on Teach for America) that paid a \$20,000 bonus to teachers after seven weeks of training at the Massachusetts Institute for New Teachers (MINT). The program had mixed results; Massachusetts spent more than \$50,000 recruiting candidates from states outside the Northeast over the first four years of the program, and produced only seven successful graduates from that group, only four of whom were still teaching three years later. More than this, the program produced only a few teachers who are members of minority groups or grew up in urban environments, and showed low rates of teacher retention, even though this effort was modeled after Teach for America. Although a movement towards bonuses and salary increases has occurred in the US, there is little evidence to suggest that it is effective in recruiting high quality teachers (Hanushek & Rivkin, 2007).

Teacher Induction. A key element to preparing and retaining quality teachers occurs during the initial years of their career (Michael, 2008). Teacher induction is the set of guidance, support, and education services that help teachers begin their first teaching positions. Districts with successful induction programs demonstrate improvements in student achievement because of better trained teachers (Wong, 2004).

This can be accomplished by hiring teachers with natural talent, or by guaranteeing that all newly-hired teachers receive excellent training through sustained professional development and induction programs. Such a program would consist of teachers working in collaborative teams, with master teachers mentoring and coaching less experienced colleagues throughout the school year (Heller, 2003).

The issue of high teacher turnover is closely tied to systems of support (Wong, 2003). Wong finds that districts with low teacher turnover have a systematic, multiyear induction process for new teachers to train, support, and retain them (2003). Accordingly, districts should focus on training teachers and supporting them in such a way that they stay in the profession, and in the school in which they are teaching (Finster, 2015). Ingersoll and Smith (2004) look at support, guidance and orientation for new teachers, asking whether they have a positive effect on retention. The analysis shows that beginning teachers who received multiple levels of support in the form of mentor/coaching, collaboration, and extra time were less likely to leave after their first year. Research suggests that the teacher shortage plaguing public education is not necessarily caused by a lack of teachers coming out of education programs, but rather an inability to slow down the revolving door of those teachers entering and leaving the profession after one to five years of practice (Ingersoll & Smith, (2004).

Competency-Based Education

Competency-based education has been used in post-secondary American schools for more than forty years (Gallagher, 2013). Its basic premise is the adoption of the mastery learning model, which is the idea that students ought to progress through a curriculum at a rate that is determined by their specific needs. Bloom (1971) defines

mastery learning as a process in which students are given instruction in subject-based units, and formative assessments are utilized to track student skills. Once mastery of a unit or concept is obtained, the student progresses on to the next area. Bloom (1974) also found that if instruction can be tailored to the individual needs of each student by means of these tools, the student is more likely to succeed in meeting learning objectives.

The push for competency-based education is based on a desire to implement mastery learning methods. Institutions such as Alverno College pioneered the concept in the early 1970s, awarding students credit for courses only when mastery of the material could be demonstrated. This system results in what Alverno College referred to as “Outcome Based” reforms (Crain & Rogers, 2010). However, outcome based reforms have only slowly gained traction in higher education, as institutional reform is often difficult to achieve (Anderson, 2017). One example of successful implementation is offered by Western Governor’s University, which Klein-Collins (2011) found was succeeding in attracting students using a competency-based education model. In addition to successfully implementing reform, they developed a system to readily convert competency credit to course credit, allowing students to transfer credits both to and from Western Governor’s University.

The issue of assigning credit value to competency units is one many competency-based universities face. Adelman, Ewell, Gaston and Schneider (2014) suggests that there are many problems still to be solved in regard to what competency-based education at the collegiate level looks like on a transcript. This problem is not unique to institutions of higher education, as competency-based education reforms have been met with resistance in the K-12 arena. Abbott (2017) found that one of the more common

concerns with mastery or competency-based education is that students in a K-12 setting are less likely to receive college admittance or scholarship due to variances in transcripts. Upon further research, it was found that concerns about mastery-based transcripts are largely unfounded. And more often than not, they are based on assumptions that are easily dispelled once people recognize that transcripts are merely an information-display problem, not a curriculum, teaching, or learning problem. Truong and Patrick (2018) supports the idea that competency-based transcripts cause no harm to students, and actually argue that competency-based transcripts offer more transparency. College admissions officers, who have access to competency-based transcripts, are provided a clearer view on the applicants' college readiness. The ability for a college to effectively transition to competency-based education may begin with colleges ensuring admission processes are in place that support it, and end with colleges creating an internal system with instructors that focuses on skill acquisition rather than points. Schimmer, Hillman, & Stalets (2018) found that creating a systematic approach to data is key for anyone transitioning from a traditional educational system to a competency-based system. Moreover, effective competency-based systems use data to inform instruction, rather than to report on it, which is a key factor to get right for anyone trying to implement a competency-based approach.

Arguments in favor of competency-based education are very compelling. Sturgis and Patrick (2010) argue that competency-based education forces institutions to move away from a time-bound system and move toward a system which places more emphasis on the acquisition of skills and knowledge, thereby offering a more personalized educational experience to students. This personalized approach requires a very clear

understanding between the student and instructor. This is also a prerequisite for effective education in general; as Hattie (2012) points out, of all of the influences on student learning, feedback is among the most important. Hattie and Zierer (2018) emphasize the need for educators to be self-reflective in the learning process and evaluate how educators' actions impact student achievement. Ultimately, educators that are able to accurately self-identify their impact on student achievement and take intentional steps with students to intervene or extend learning, are the educators that have the greatest effect on student learning. It is thought that by creating a system in which the flow of information between students to instructors is extremely open, students' overall educational experiences are improved, along with instructor satisfaction and efficacy (Heflebower, 2014). For instance, O'Connor (2017) argues that student achievement can be improved if the student is involved throughout the assessment and grading process.

Sturgis and Patrick (2011) identified five key factors of a successful competency-based education plan:

1. Students advance upon mastery.
2. Competencies include explicit, measurable, transferable learning objectives that empower students.
3. Assessment is meaningful and a positive learning experience for students.
4. Students receive timely, differentiated support based on their individual learning needs.
5. Learning outcomes emphasize competencies that include application and creation of knowledge, along with the development of important skills and dispositions.

Taken together with the evidence for their efficacy, Sturgis and Patrick's (2011) work makes it clear that competency-based education approaches place the student at the center of the educational system, and that they require clearly defined learning goals to be identified in order for students to demonstrate mastery. Marzano (2007) found that if students have guaranteed access to curriculum that is both commonly paced and commonly assessed, student achievement becomes predictable and interventions and extensions can be specifically tailored to the individual needs of the student. Marzano (2010) also found that a standards-based or competency-based grading system might offer a more accurate measurement of student learning as multiple nodes of student achievement are used when determining grades in a competency-based approach. Schmoker (2011) echoes this point, arguing that a well-developed instructional program is one that has components of simplicity, clarity and priority. Competency-based education programs need detailed information to guide their decision-making and enable them to achieve this, and that information can only be provide by effective data management. Data should be at the forefront of any instructional program, and district leaders must determine what types and sources of data are critical to include in the program (Buffum, 2008). Barr (2006) goes as far as suggesting that effectively embedding reflection on student data into teaching practices is necessary for student success in competency-based education programs.

This highlights the need for institutions utilizing competency-based education to create effective means of intervening when students experience difficulty learning. This idea is not new to education, and is commonly referred to as a Response to Intervention (RTI). RTI is a component that, when implemented correctly, has been shown to

improve student achievement, and one that is very similar to mastery based learning methods (Guskey & Jung, 2011). The central assumption behind RTI is that with appropriate time and instruction, the student can obtain competency of the skill or concept that is being taught (Harkins, 2015).

In order for an institution to implement a competency-based approach to education, it is imperative that the it first develop a robust instructional program that takes into account all of the factors needed to ensure that students can and will master all course competencies. In particular, an effective instructional program is one that ensures that clear, nonnegotiable goals for achievement and instruction are identified through a collaborative goal-setting process (DuFour & Marzano, 2011). Once these goals have been identified, policies must be put in place to support them, and adequate resources must be allocated to meet them (Marzano & Waters 2009). Crain & Rogers, 2010, highlighted Alverno College as one college, that understood the need for the entire approach to education to shift, to students mastering content as opposed to students accumulating credit hours.

Summary

Teacher recruitment, preparation, and retention are national problems (Hargreaves & Fullan (2012). The challenges they represent are complex, and will not be resolved by simple solutions such as disposing of ineffective teachers or paying more to teachers performing at high levels. Such methods fail to address the need for greater consistency and capacity on the part of teachers. That outcome can only be achieved through multi-layered support, professional training, collaborative professional communities, and the provision of sufficient time to do all this work outside of the act of teaching.

Recommendations for improving education abound in the literature. Despite surface-level disagreements, every study reviewed here advocated the same over-arching message: to improve educational outcomes, recruit strong candidates into teacher preparation programs, training them through extensive practical experience, and systematically induct them into their school districts with copious time and support. Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) state, “Let’s concentrate our efforts not on bigger budgets, smaller classes, changing the curriculum or altering the size of schools—but on procuring and producing the best teachers we can get” (p. 13).

Competency-based education is a reform movement that has gained momentum since the early 1970s as Crain & Rogers (2010) highlight, Alverno College was one of the first institutions to advocate and implement this approach. Drawing on the work of Bloom and others, competency-based education focuses on allowing students to master essential learning targets. These targets must be clearly defined and have measurable outcomes in terms of student achievement. Should a student not achieve mastery of a unit of instruction, it is critical that the instructor provide targeted intervention for them, based on established procedures.

Some of the greatest benefits of competency-based approaches are that students receive more personalized instruction, and that time and money can be saved by tailoring amounts of classroom time to students’ background knowledge and pre-existing competence. The greatest challenges that face these approaches involve instituting major educational reform. As discussed above, moving to competency-based education requires a myriad of steps including developing a sound instructional program, garnering stakeholder support, and aligning financial and personnel resources to support the

program. In addition, institutions must be able to meaningfully compare competency units to traditional credit units.

Problem

There exists no comprehensive program that guarantees the appropriate skills training for substitute teachers in Uintah County. The lack of training for substitute teachers has left many schools with subpar candidates or no substitutes at all. Some teacher substitutes have even violated the law due to their lack of behavior management or reporting skills. The primary cause of this difficulty is that many substitute teachers lack quality professional training, and for this reason, they face significant problems with student behavior and often resign from substituting at certain schools or quit substituting all together. From the review of literature, the issues surrounding teacher training and the importance of competency-based education are evident. The focus on teacher training and competency-based education is the central themes in answering the problem of how to develop teacher substitutes.

Purpose of Project

The purpose of this project is to develop a competency-based substitute training program. The program will directly address Utah's lack of substitute teachers by offering high-quality, readily available competency-based education to potential substitute teachers, guaranteeing not only that they are accredited, but that they are prepared to enter public schools and provide the needed skills. The proposed program would teach candidates the following core competencies:

1. Basic Classroom Management
2. School District Policy, and School Law

3. Age Appropriate Instruction

The curriculum, scope and sequence, and assessment, for each competency will be created through a partnership with Uintah Basin Technical College and Uintah County School District. Completion of this program will conclude with a credential. The credential will be recognized by the school district and validated through an increased wage and marketability for the substitute teacher. This will provide an incentive for substitute teachers to become better trained. This will also help ensure that substitutes are more successful and more likely to be retained, or receive additional training to become a certified teacher.

Research Question

The goal of this project is to answer the following question:

1. What concepts and elements need to be developed in order to create a competency-based substitute training program?

Method

Background

A baseline retention rate of substitute teachers within Uintah County School District has been developed by analyzing the retention rate of substitute teachers between 2014 and 2017. Currently, Uintah County School District retains approximately 60% of the substitute teachers trained each year. In addition, over the past 3 years, approximately 7% have been removed due to poor performance or for other specific causes. In order to resolve this problem, all Uintah County School District substitute teachers will be required to complete a competency-based substitute training course. The cost of this course will be covered by the person taking it, and will need to be completed

prior to that person working as a substitute teacher in Uintah County School District. In order to incentivize current substitute teachers and prospective substitute teaching candidates to take the course, Uintah County School District will raise the hourly rate for those substitute teachers who complete the basic substitute teaching course.

In order to create a viable substitute teacher training program, a partnership between UBTech and the Uintah County School District will be created. UBTech will facilitate the competency-based substitute training program by providing the content, physical location, and instructor for the basic substitute teacher training course. Uintah County School District will require all substitute teachers to take the basic substitute training course, and will adjust their hourly rate of pay once the course is completed.

Uintah County School District will continue to work with course completers to develop capacity in education that goes beyond the basic training course as they substitute teach within the district by encouraging substitute teachers to attend the advanced substitute teaching program through UBTech. This will allow the substitute teacher the ability to acquire a greater depth of knowledge, as well as becoming better prepared for a career in education. The advanced credential that is awarded at the conclusion of the substitute training course will assist the recipient in earning an increased wage in the short-term, and may provide for increased marketability for the teacher substitute in the future.

Participants

The participants of this project will be adults wanting to substitute teach for Uintah County School District. Currently, Uintah County School District requires 200 substitutes to be trained on an annual basis. Participants in this project will be 18 years

and older, with no specificity on gender, race, age, class, or education level. The only participants who will be excluded, will be those who are unable to pass a criminal background check. There are no other exclusion criteria.

At the conclusion of the basic substitute training course, all participants will be required to complete a competency-based assessment as well as complete a self-assessment which rates confidence in each of the concepts taught within the course. As all participants will be required to complete the exam and survey at the conclusion of the course, the sample methodology is best described as a quantitative convenience sample as all participants have a non-zero chance of being selected.

Materials

The authors will develop and teach an instructional curriculum that focuses on three key themes:

1. Basic Classroom Management
2. School District Policy, and School Law
3. Age Appropriate Instruction

At the conclusion of instruction, participants will complete a competency-based assessment which measures the competency of the participant in relation to the three key themes. In addition to measuring the participants will be required to complete a survey, where participants self-reflect and self-report their confidence in their competence of educational concepts taught during the course, using a 4-point Likert scale (from 1= “Strongly disagree” to 4= “Strongly agree”).

Design

This project could be best described as semi-experimental, within-subject design with the dependent variable being the performance on the competency-based assessment, and the independent variable being competency-based instruction. Many statistical tests could be run at this point to determine what, if any, generalizations can be made from the data. The authors could calculate the frequencies of participants for each question on both the competency-based exam as well as the survey. This would be helpful to the authors as it would help to identify the strengths and weaknesses of each category (question) of the curriculum. The authors could also compare the scores between males and females or two other criteria by using a Mann Whitney test to determine the distribution of two groups.

Procedure

The authors will facilitate a basic substitute training course which emphasizes three key themes within education. At the conclusion of this course, participants will be given an assessment which measures competence acquired within the three themes as well as a survey where participants self-reflect and report their own confidence in mastering the three themes. At this point, authors could run a myriad of statistical tests within-subjects to determine the distribution of the data.

Protocols for Results**Project Overview**

This project is best described as a practical applied doctoral project. Through the implementation and use of the materials provided a school district will be able to teach an instructional curriculum that focuses on three key themes: basic classroom management;

school district policy, and school law; age appropriate instruction. The curriculum is designed to be delivered through many different media and is assessed through a competency-based format.

At the conclusion of instruction, participants will complete a competency-based assessment which measures the competency of the participant in relation to the three key themes. In addition to measuring the participants will be required to complete a survey, where participants self-reflect and self-report their confidence in their competence of educational concepts taught during the course, using a 4-point Likert scale (from 1= “Strongly disagree” to 4= “Strongly agree).

Materials

The materials needed to facilitate the competency-based substitute training courses are as follows:

- 1- Basic Substitute Course Description (Appendix A)
- 2- Basic Substitute Course Standards and Objectives (Appendix B)
- 3- Basic Substitute Course Curriculum (Appendix C)
- 4- Basic Substitute Course Comprehensive Exam (Appendix D)
- 5- Basic Substitute Course Comprehensive Exam Answer Key (Appendix E)

Discussion

Summary

The authors of this project will facilitate a basic substitute training course which emphasizes three key themes in education identified within this project. At the conclusion of this course, participants will be given an assessment which measures competence acquired within the three themes as well as a survey where participants self-

reflect and report their own confidence in mastering the three themes. This project is semi-experimental, within-subject design with the dependent variable being the performance on the competency-based assessment, and the independent variable being competency-based instruction. Many statistical tests could be run at this point to determine what, if any, generalizations can be made from the data. The authors could calculate the frequencies of participants for each question on both the competency-based exam as well as the survey.

Recommendations

Once the analysis of data from the first year following implementation has been completed, more concrete decisions can be made based on the effectiveness of the program. In the meantime, there are recommended steps that the district can take to ensure the success of candidates who complete the substitute training program.

Observing Practice and Providing Feedback. Support and feedback are crucial for professional growth and improvement. It is important for school district personnel to actively pursue the retention of qualified substitute teaching candidates by offering meaningful oversight and responses to their work. Many school districts fall short of providing meaningful critique and formative feedback to substitute teachers regarding job performance. In the age of accountability, it is imperative for school districts to develop and implement a substitute teacher observation system that offers formative feedback for teachers so that they have the ability to improve their practice. This benefits districts as well as teachers; teachers enjoy greater success, while districts enjoy a clearer picture of teacher performance. As Schmerler (2012) points out,

Unions and school administrators are negotiating far more thorough processes of

observations, broadening the pool of people involved in evaluation, and, for good measure, throwing more professional development, coaching, and peer support into the assessment mix. It is, one trusts, these latter processes that will survive at the end of this wave, when the dominance of test scores recede. (p. 32)

It is also imperative that administrators keep accurate records of substitute teacher observations. As Rebore (2011) highlights, “Accurate and timely kept records could make the difference in the dismissal” (p. 220). While dismissal is never the intent of observing classrooms, it is sometimes necessary and is always best carried out by incontrovertible evidence, and clear documentation of conduct that violates well-communicated rules or regulations. Teacher observations have the capacity to provide all of these elements.

Many tools exist for providing formative feedback to teachers, but as Milanowski, Heneman and Kimball (2011) concluded from their study of eight instruments, any effective tool includes three basic components. First, the feedback system must be implemented precisely as intended. Second, because there is no one “best” collection mechanism, the system should use several. Finally, all data collection methods must be based on a single competency model. Hinchey (2010) recommends that any assessment system that is implemented should focus on continual improvement of the staff. He further recommends the timely dismissal of those who do not improve. Hinchey’s underlying assumption is that any feedback system should be oriented toward instructor improvement. If substitute teachers continually improve, school districts are less likely to have to remove them for poor performance. Regardless of the chosen system used to observe substitute teachers, it must be reliable and trusted by all parties. As Ho and Kane

(2013) states,

The only way a district can monitor the reliability of classroom observations and ensure a fair and reliable system for teachers would be to use multiple observers and set up a system to check and compare the feedback given to teachers by different observers. (p. 30)

To ensure unbiased results, regular reliability checks among those trained in teacher observation must be instituted. The reliability efforts should not fall solely on the shoulders of observers. Youngs (2013) urged multiple levels of support. He posited that “Districts can support principals’ efforts to provide timely, meaningful feedback to teachers based on observation data and connect them to tailored opportunities to improve their professional practice” (p. 4). For instance, if the central office is privy to teacher data, they can offer targeted professional development opportunities to building-level administrators, which ultimately supports the growth of the teaching core.

When successful, formative classroom observations provide an opportunity for substitute teachers to engage in reflective practice. As substitute teachers are presented with data from classroom observation, they are able to modify their perspective on their work, changing their classroom practices and plans (York-Barr, Sommers, Ghore, & Montie, 2006). One consequence of this is that in designing their observation systems, districts ought to look to the grade level the substitute intends to teach, and provide feedback in a format, channel, and manner that matches the style of teaching suitable to that grade level. This idea is highlighted by Pianta (2012) who concluded that “Users are advised to consider the specific design of the instrument, including its age range and the grade levels from which data on the psychometric properties of the instrument have been

obtained” (p. 16).

Professional Development. Professional development is a crucial component of substitute teacher improvement. Substitute teachers should be included in district trainings for teachers. Many districts offer professional development days for teachers. Those days should be offered to include the substitute teachers as well. It is the next step administrators must take to assist substitute teachers in remedying deficiencies, it must be undertaken deliberately and with foresight. Guersney and Ochshorn (2011) found that,

Professional development and high-stakes evaluations of programs and individual teachers should be aligned to ensure that all teachers’ trainings and evaluations are based on common definitions of effective teaching; if used in high-stakes evaluations, valid and reliable observation tools for assessing teachers should also be at the core of programs to help them improve. (Guersney & Ochshorn, 2011, p. 17)

Whatever observation system is developed, it is clear that constructive feedback based on detailed, reliable observation using established criteria can be formative, in that it can provide opportunities for educators to improve their practice. It is also critical to train staff in the observation system and to provide professional development opportunities for educators that build on its results.

Future Implications. As school districts implement this project, the anticipated short-term result is a creation of a better qualified substitute teacher pool, as they have received training on research-based, evidence-proven strategies within the field of education. This project also has the potential to increase the quality of education for

students, as successfully completing the requirements of this project should lead to more competent and more qualified substitute teachers.

Substitute teachers who complete the proposed curriculum will also gain confidence and competence in their skills as educators. It is anticipated that increased skills and confidence will increase substitute teacher job satisfaction, which will increase retention of qualified substitute teachers. Substitute teachers who stay in a school district long-term will better understand the unique climate and culture of the district.

Finally, school districts could also begin to internally recruit successful project completers, who demonstrate successful implementations of the strategies taught within the project to enter into a teacher education program, in order to become a fully licensed teacher. In the end, this project could ultimately be the starting point for school districts to develop a “grow your own model” that is competency-based and focused on ensuring the success of both the student and the educator.

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Appendix A



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Basic Substitute Course Description

The Basic Substitute Course introduces students to current issues affecting education today. Students will be expected to spend 32 hours completing the basic training course in addition to passing the final exam at 80% mastery in order to receive certification.

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Students will develop and teach an instructional curriculum that focuses on three key themes:

- 1- Basic Classroom Management
- 2- School District Policy, and School Law
- 3- Age Appropriate Instruction

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Appendix B



Basic Substitute Course Standards and Objectives

STANDARD 1: Professionalism

- Standards for Dress & Appearance
- Use of Appropriate Language
- Appropriate Use of Technology
- Guidelines for Social Media

STANDARD 2: Setting The Stage

- Arrival Time
- Checking In
- Understanding The Sub Plan
- Checking Out

STANDARD 3: Classroom Management Essentials

- Explaining Your Role
- Setting Expectations
- Seating Chart
- Hall Pass/Exiting Class
- Active vs. Passive Supervision

STANDARD 4: Reporting

- Inappropriate Behavior
- Types of Abuse
- Confidentiality

STANDARD 5: Blood Borne Pathogens

- Who To Contact
- What To Do
- What Not To Do

STANDARD 6: Sexual Harassment

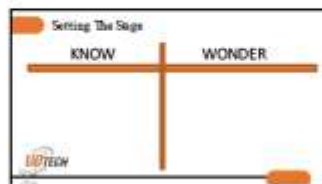
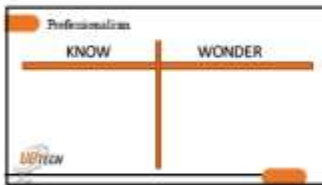
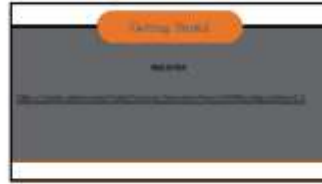
- Definition
- Ways To Stay Safe
- Reporting

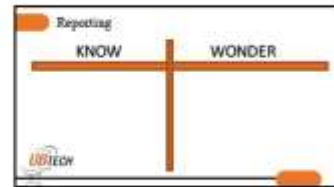
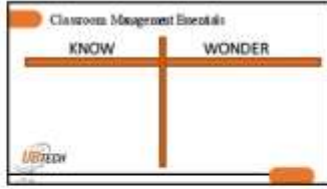
STANDARD 7: Emergency Procedures

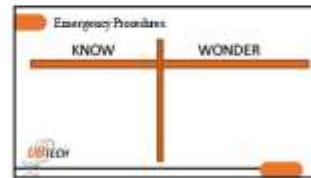
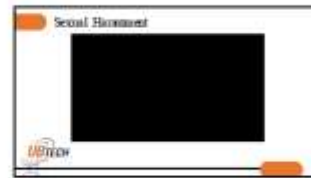
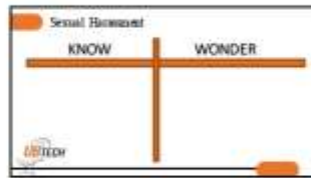
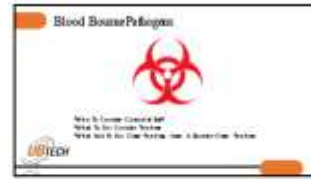
- Fire Drill Procedures
- Lockdown Procedures



Appendix C









Appendix D

BASIC SUB COURSE EXAM

Certification Will Occur With 80% Or Higher

- 1- What is the expectation for dress?
 - a. Whatever you would like
 - b. Business casual
 - c. Suit or dress
 - d. To the level of the students

- 2- When is it appropriate to post on social media about your day?
 - a. Always
 - b. Never
 - c. When you get home
 - d. When you are at school

- 3- What is the expectation for language at school?
 - a. Keep it professional
 - b. Cursing is ok so long as you are cursed at first
 - c. Jokes about students are acceptable, as long as the student agrees to it
 - d. Adult language can be used around adults

- 4- What time is recommended for your arrival?
 - a. 1 hour before school starts
 - b. As school starts
 - c. 15 minutes before school starts
 - d. 30 minutes before school starts

- 5- Where is the first place you should go when you arrive at the school?
 - a. To the classroom
 - b. To the office
 - c. To find a someone to let you into the room
 - d. To the commons area

- 6- What should you leave the teacher you subbed for?
 - a. A thank you note
 - b. A note about the day
 - c. Your contact information for the next time they need a sub
 - d. A list of things you would do differently if you were them

- 7- What is one of the first things you should do with each class you sub?
 - a. Explain your role
 - b. Explain your back story
 - c. Explain why you love subbing
 - d. Explain why you are in charge

- 8- You have the discretion to follow or not follow a seating chart.
- True
 - False
- 9- You don't need to account for students as they leave class with a hall pass.
- True
 - False
- 10- You have a duty to report any type of abuse to the principal or school authority immediately.
- True
 - False
- 11- What should you NOT do in regards to abuse?
- Leave a note about it
 - Post on social media about it
 - Talk to your partner/spouse about it
 - All of the above
- 12- Which of the following are types of abuse that need to be reported?
- Sexual
 - Physical
 - Mental
 - All of the above
- 13- Who should you contact if there is a blood borne pathogen present?
- The principal
 - Another teacher
 - A trusted student
 - The custodian
- 14- What should you do if you see a blood borne pathogen?
- Nothing
 - Find the person who made the hazard and have them clean it
 - Keep the area clear until it is cleaned
 - Take a picture of it and post it to social media
- 15- What should you NOT do if you see a blood borne pathogen?
- Attempt to clean it yourself
 - Have a student clean it
 - Nothing
 - All of the above

- 16- Sexual harassment is all of the following except.
- a. Unwelcome advances
 - b. Quid pro quo situations
 - c. Telling an obscene joke
 - d. Someone telling you to have a nice day
- 17- You should immediately report sexual harassment to the principal or school authority.
- a. True
 - b. False
- 18- You should ask the person to stop if you believe they are sexually harassing you.
- a. True
 - b. False
- 19- Emergency drills aren't something you need to worry about understanding.
- a. True
 - b. False
- 20- You should keep your emergency procedures guide and attendance during an emergency.
- a. True
 - b. False

Appendix E

Answer Key

Q1: B	Q2: B	Q3: A	Q4: C
PTS: 1	PTS: 1	PTS: 1	PTS: 1
Q5: B	Q6: B	Q7: A	Q8: B
PTS: 1	PTS: 1	PTS: 1	PTS: 1
Q9: B	Q10: A	Q11: D	Q12: D
PTS: 1	PTS: 1	PTS: 1	PTS: 1
Q13: D	Q14: C	Q15: D	Q16: D
PTS: 1	PTS: 1	PTS: 1	PTS: 1
Q17: A	Q18: A	Q19: B	Q20: A
PTS: 1	PTS: 1	PTS: 1	PTS: 1

Standard Info

Core: CSTM-Technical Ed. - Utah

Name: **Basic Substitute**

Short Description: Basic Substitute