
Volume 3

Issue 3 CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS:
NOVEMBER 7th-8th, 2013


Article 14

8-2013

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Recommended Citation

Taylor, Diane (2013) "Maintaining the Boundaries: Teacher Education Program Admission Criteria for Screening Quality Candidates," *Administrative Issues Journal*: Vol. 3 : Iss. 3 , Article 14.
Available at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/aij/vol3/iss3/14>

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Maintaining the Boundaries: Teacher Education Program Admission Criteria for Screening Quality Candidates

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University – based teacher education programs are currently under attack by the general public for producing non-effective teachers. In order to combat the perception of the “disintegration of teacher preparation” (Baines 2010), Teacher Preparation Programs need to demonstrate to the public the rigor of their screening measures and admissions criteria as a beginning to demonstrating program rigor. This presentation will detail one university’s efforts to collect and analyze admission criteria to Teacher Education Programs in universities across the state.

University – based teacher education programs are currently under attack by the public for producing non-effective teachers. In order to combat the perception of the “disintegration of teacher preparation” (Baines 2010), Teacher Preparation Programs need to demonstrate to the public the rigor of their screening measures and admissions criteria as a beginning to demonstrating program rigor. In addition, the field of education also deals with the general public attitude that teaching is not a profession and therefore anyone can do it. In order for education to be viewed through the same lens as other equivalent professions, University TEP’s must act with similar standards as organizations the public deems to be professions.

This study presupposes the idea that teachers need to be proficient in content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, pedagogical skills, and have positive attitudes towards teaching (Casey & Childs, 2007). Given this idea, screening measures and admission criteria to teacher preparation programs should focus on these four areas, however, current research indicates teacher preparation programs have a variety of screening measures and admissions criteria that focus on varying of aspects of quality teachers (Casey & Childs, 2007, Cohen-Schotanus et al., 2006, Helm, 2006, Uno, Blackwell, & Leonardson, 2001).

As university-based teacher education programs continue to come under fire, it becomes increasingly important to maintain the boundaries on who is qualified to become a teacher. Holding high standards of admission to teacher education programs requires a coherent plan for admitting candidates (Fallon & Ackley, 2003, Salvatori 2001, Truell & Woolsley, 2008), which, in turn, requires universities to evaluate current admissions requirements. This study examined Texas university-based teacher preparation program screening measures and admission criteria, illuminating measures and criteria that either address or neglect to address the candidates’ content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, pedagogical skills, and attitudes towards teaching. The paper will detail the results of the research and the analysis of data.

During presentation of research, authors will discuss with participants trends revealed in the study and solicit input regarding research findings.

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