

Student Perception of Professional Education Organizations

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Acceptance of Senior Honors Thesis

This Senior Honors Thesis is accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for graduation from the Honors Program of Liberty University.

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Abstract

Topics covered in this thesis include the development of qualities of effective teachers, field experiences within teacher preparation programs, the definition of professionalism, pre-service teachers and professionalism, the perceptions of in-service teachers of professional development, education organizations, the psychological details of organizational dynamics, benefits of membership in professional education organizations for both pre-service and in-service teachers, and community involvement. Topics also include current research on teacher satisfaction with professional organizations and Liberty University's professional education organizations. The investigation of the aforementioned topics will reveal the correlation between professional education development training and undergraduate professional education organization involvement. This thesis will utilize the obtained information to analyze the data received from an online survey given to Liberty University Education students. Ultimately, this thesis seeks to expose and examine student, or pre-service teacher, perception of professional education organization involvement.

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Student Perception of Professional Education Organizations

Introduction

Steffy, Wolfe, Pasch, and Enz (2000) assert that undergraduate education for aspiring teachers can be perceived “as one end of a continuum that spans the entire career of a teacher” (p. 40). The preparation teachers receive while in college begins their professional journeys and determines what standard of excellence they will pursue throughout their careers. With the importance placed on preparation in teacher education programs, there exists an emphasis on evaluating the various aspects and requirements that make up the preparation programs. For this thesis, the aspect of student involvement in professional education organizations presents a thought-provoking question: does the pre-service teacher ultimately believe that membership in an educational organization is beneficial in his or her pursuit of becoming an effective teacher?

Students in Liberty University’s Education program may pursue Elementary Education Licensure, Secondary Education Licensure, or Elementary and Special Education Dual Licensure. Currently, the candidates for graduation from Liberty University’s School of Education are required to join and participate in at least one professional organization. Organizations may include Kappa Delta Pi (KDP), Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), and other reputable organizations (either on-campus or online). This requirement is found in the School of Education Field Experience Summary (FES) document and is assessed during the student teaching semester. The purpose of the survey was to explore student perception of this professional requirement.

The research and results of this study could potentially have long-term effects for Education majors at Liberty University. The requirement for professional organization

membership may continue or the requirement may be reconsidered if the overall student perception is strongly in opposition to organizational involvement.

This study will reveal the beliefs of pre-service teachers concerning organizational membership. Pajares suggests the beliefs of teachers are “complex” and “difficult to identify, define, and describe.” Words such as “*attitudes, dispositions, knowledge, and perspectives*” may be used to explain teacher beliefs. Defining teacher beliefs can be challenging and confusing (Parker and Brindley, 2008, p. 1). Hart and Pajares proclaim that the beliefs held by preservice teachers “are a powerful vehicle for providing effective teacher preparation and for understanding teachers’ classroom practices and behaviors” (Parker and Brindley, 2008, p. 2).

This research aims to show that understanding Liberty University’s Education students’ perceptions of and beliefs toward organizational involvement is necessary for the enhancement of Liberty’s undergraduate teacher preparation program. According to Combs, Blume, Newman, and Wass (1974), evaluation of teacher preparation programs through feedback from learners is vital in order to improve future program decisions.

Education Preparation Programs

The Development of Qualities of Effective Teachers

Society frequently blames teachers or educators for the inadequacies of today’s younger generation of students. However, society often overlooks the institutions of higher learning from which teachers received their schooling. Society fails to recognize that teachers are products of universities, and, more specifically, the outcomes of teacher preparation programs. Should higher education accept the blame for the failure of teachers in the education profession? Do teacher preparation programs truly influence

professionals in the world of education? (Pushkin, 2001). Does undergraduate preparation influence teacher effectiveness? These questions require higher education programs to evaluate whether or not they are adequately preparing and developing effective teachers.

What characteristics and qualities mark an effective teacher? Stronge (2002) shares that an effective teacher recognizes the complexity of each individual student, how each student learns, and the process of teaching knowledge. An effective teacher also clearly communicates by expressing expectations, content knowledge, and encouragement. Students must be able to “receive, respond, adapt, and use” communicated information successfully (p. 63). Additionally, an effective teacher conscientiously serves, meaning that a teacher dedicates time and efforts to students. In order to serve students better, a teacher must be willing to reflect on all aspects of his or her teaching in order to make the necessary adjustments for more effective teaching. Overall, effective teaching is a combination of several factors, which include the teacher’s background, interaction with other people, and specific teaching strategies. Stronge (2002) also notes that knowledge and caring are necessary attributes for a teacher to portray in order to be effective.

Cullingford (1995) reveals that the characteristics of an effective teacher include integrity, learning, organization, communication, and humor. His description of integrity involves doing the best one possibly can in all matters. Learning involves being curious and enjoying learning new things. Organization is shown through classroom management and good preparation. Being able to demonstrate an interest in other people describes communication. Humor, as another characteristic of an effective teacher, allows teachers to survive and avoid emotional and mental exhaustion.

How long does it take to become an effective teacher? Stronge (2002) states that becoming an effective teacher is “a lifelong pursuit” (p. 64). The previously mentioned qualities are developed through years of practice and experience (Cullingford, 1995). However, teacher preparation programs are vital to the formation and development of the qualities of effectiveness in pre-service teachers. Combs et al. (1974) asserts that preparing effective teachers requires training on a personal, individual level. To produce effective teachers, teacher preparation programs assist pre-service teachers in helping them discover their personalities, who they really are, and how to perceive themselves in a positive manner. It is only when the pre-service teacher has a feeling of personal adequacy that he or she feels confident enough to give adequate attention to the needs of students and, thus become effective in teaching.

Research from Mohan and Hull (1975) confirms that a teacher preparation program may produce more effective teachers by developing personalities, giving opportunities to form positive self-concepts, teaching so that pre-service teachers are well-informed, and providing communication experiences. By spending as least as much time on developing pre-service teachers’ personalities as time spent on knowledge itself, pre-service teachers become effective as whole individuals. Furthermore, if teacher preparation programs allow students to participate in groups, counseling processes, and training in how to be sensitive to others, they produce professionals who portray the qualities of effective teachers.

Professional organization membership is vital to developing effective teachers. Organizations provide pre-service teachers with the opportunities to develop the previously described characteristics of effective teachers as well as develop personalities

that are conducive to effectiveness in the education field. For example, The Council for Exceptional Children is an organization that exists to promote the education success of children who are either disabled and/or have exceptional talents. One of its core values for existence is to promote “effective individualized education for all individuals with exceptionalities” (CEC, 2009, para. 2). How does a teacher provide an effective education? By becoming an effective teacher.

Experiences within Preparation Programs

Learning and field experience prior to entering the education field is vital for preparing effective teachers. The following research shows the significance of undergraduate student experiences that may be obtained through professional organization membership.

Combs et al. (1974) asserts that a student preparing to become a teacher has traditionally participated in a classroom experience that has been called “practice teaching” or a “teaching internship” (p. 148). In the late 1980s, preparation programs began to ask students to go beyond their coursework and into the classroom by implementing a final internship into the program curriculum (Pushkin, 2001). Today, students may call their final experience before graduating “student teaching” (Combs et al., 1974, p. 149).

In the past, the student teaching experience (being the only field experience) came toward the end of a professional teaching program after the student had learned head-knowledge in how to teach. No other in-classroom experiences took place. According to Combs et al. (1974), the method of having only one experience within a preparation program showed lack of success. Teachers did not feel or appear to be comfortable or

confident in the classroom. However, as programs began to implement *continuous* practical experiences *throughout* a student's education preparation, teachers showed more success. Teachers had experienced what classrooms were like, and felt more at ease to fill the role of educator.

Teacher-preparation programs in the past completely focused on courses and the acquisition of knowledge, having been solely residential with no required field experiences. Combs et al. (1974) says that teacher preparation programs should not only enable their students to gain knowledge, but they should also allow students opportunities to act on their knowledge. In fact, Combs considers one of the least effective methods of teacher preparation to be telling students *how* to be teachers without *showing them* their need to be effective teachers. Educators who teach students in preparation programs "have long been convinced of the importance of involvement" (Combs et al., 1974, p. 36).

Steffy et. al (2000) considers field experiences with partnering schools or in other settings to be "the most meaningful component of formal teacher education" (p. 35). During the 1980s and 1990s, the Professional Development School (PDS) movement gained momentum and continues to be found in most teacher education programs today. PDS involves a college or university partnering with local schools to provide college students with field experiences. PDS partnerships provide a smoother and more effective transition into the teaching profession (as cited in Steffy, et. al, 2000). The experiences gained by pre-service teachers allow them to be immersed in the classroom setting and become better acquainted with all aspects of a school and of teaching. Thus, teacher preparation programs that utilize PDS partnerships and require their students to have in-

school experiences more effectively prepare future teachers than do traditional campus-based programs (as cited in Steffy, et. al, 2000).

Field experiences provide the pre-service teacher with opportunities to experience various teaching approaches and classroom management techniques. Students also have opportunities to interact with diverse students who have varying socioeconomic statuses and come from differing backgrounds and cultures. Furthermore, the more experiences a pre-service teacher has, the more likely he or she will be drawn to a specific age of children or grade level and desire to teach a similar age group (Combs et al., 1974).

By being a member in a professional education organization, pre-service teachers receive numerous experiences in classrooms and with children in general. Professional organizations at universities sponsor service projects in local schools and hold community events. For example, in the Spring of 2009, the Liberty University chapter of the Council for Exceptional Children sponsored a walk-a-thon to raise money to install a chair-lift into the campus pool. The members of the university's chapter of Kappa Delta Pi also participated in the event ("KDP and CEC," 2009). Through this service project, organization members gained community experience outside of the classroom.

As an additional advantage, many teacher preparation programs ask students to prepare portfolios to be shown to future employers. More and more preparation programs are moving towards the usage of electronic portfolios, such as LiveText (Ntuli, Keengwe, & Kyei-Blankson, L., 2009). With the implementation of field experiences into preparation programs, students not only gain necessary teaching experience, but they also gain information, pictures, and professional practice that may be documented and later shown to employers. Portfolios help "build the level of self-knowledge and sense of

responsibility needed” during the transition from student to teacher (as cited in Steffy, et. al, 2000, p. 38). Professional education organizations allow students to obtain what can be shown to employers and school systems as evidence for experience.

Professionalism

Professionalism Defined

The term “professionalism” encompasses a broad spectrum of aspects and can be defined in various ways. According to Baggini (2005), a professional is one who can “deal with the challenges and tasks that are specific to the job they do, using skills, experience and expertise which are also specific to that job” (p. 11). For the teacher, Helterbran (2008) states: “professionals take ownership of their job responsibilities, assignments, and personal conduct. Being a professional is a matter of personally emulating and modeling the qualities we demand of our students and colleagues” (p. 126).

The etymology of the word “professionalism” reveals Latin roots similar to the words “professor” or “profession.” To proclaim or “profess” to be a “professor” or “professional” historically meant that someone professed to be an expert in a certain skill or field of study (Baggini, 2005, p. 6). In order to excel in the field of education, both pre-service and in-service teachers alike must strive to be professional.

Perceptions of Professionalism

Helterbran (2008) declares that “the perception that anybody can teach is ubiquitous” (p. 123-124). Today’s society often views the job of teaching as an effortless, insignificant profession. As a whole, society holds teachers to lower standards and expects less in terms of professionalism than it does for other careers, such as business,

law or the medical field (Helterbran, 2008). Despite long hours, taking schoolwork home to finish in the evenings, and the stresses of interacting with children, teachers do not receive the status and respect they deserve. Negative media attention is demeaning to the teaching profession (Steffy, et. al, 2000).

Therefore, despite society's perceptions, teachers should strive for and develop their expertise and professionalism. After all, the only way to change the overall view of society is to provide and portray reasons for society to change its perception. It is the job of each educator to learn to represent the teaching profession in such a way that professionalism is not questioned, but rather praised. If teachers are asking students to become professionals in society, should teachers not pursue excellence in professionalism as well? (Helterbran, 2008).

Pre-service Teachers and Professionalism

The pre-service teacher who has recently finished his or her undergraduate work and steps into the classroom to student teach may be referred to as a novice (Steffy, et. al, 2000). Dewey explains that the transition from college to the classroom must come after a teacher is prepared with a repertoire of strategies, skills, and experiences (as cited in Steffy, et. al, 2000). On the other hand, despite the number of field experiences and strategies provided by a teacher education program, there is no comparison to the decision-making and reality of the first year of teaching in the classroom (Steffy, et. al, 2000).

Research proposes that pre-service teachers who received professional development in a teacher education program will exhibit greater classroom success than those who strive to excel on their own (as cited in Steffy, et. al, 2000). Students may join

organizations such as The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM), an education organization for mathematics educators, to receive professional development. NCTM regards professionalism highly as seen in its mission statement: “The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics is a public voice of mathematics education, supporting teachers to ensure equitable mathematics learning of the highest quality for all students through vision, leadership, professional development, and research” (NCTM, 2010).

As another example, Kappa Delta Pi’s mission statement clearly reflects that its members pursue excellence in professionalism: “The mission of Kappa Delta Pi is to sustain an honored community of diverse educators by promoting excellence and advancing scholarship, leadership, and service” (Kappa Delta Pi, “About KDP,” 2010). Therefore, NCTM and KDP represent two of the many organizations that provide professional development and allow pre-service teachers to become teachers who excel professionally in the classroom.

In-service Teachers’ Perceptions of Professional Development

For definition purposes, an in-service teacher is a teacher who is already in the classroom and has more than one year of experience. Tichenor (2004) describes a study conducted with in-service teachers to investigate in-service teacher perception of professionalism. The study included focus group interviews at four elementary schools. Each elementary school was a Professional Development School (PDS) that partnered with a university teacher education program. The study shows how in-service teachers perceive professional development.

Tichenor (2004) reveals that teachers recognize the importance of collaboration with administration, colleagues, parents and the community, thus revealing that “professionalism should impact many educational settings” (p. 93). During focus group interviews, participation in professional organizations was commented on as a “beyond the classroom” advantage to enhance professionalism. Other factors included “effective communication (with parents, colleagues, community members), being a role model, mentoring fellow teachers, and cooperation with others. One overall conclusion to the study was the importance for the local educational community to “determine ways to enhance the professionalism of all teachers” (Tichenor, 2004. p. 93).

The results of the study also revealed, yet did not answer, the question of whether “character” in respect to professionalism is taught during the teaching years or brought to the teaching profession. It can be concluded that involvement in professional organizations for undergraduate students greatly contributes to character that can be brought into classroom (Tichenor, 2004, p. 93).

As members of organizations, in-service teachers receive professional development training that directly affects student success. According to Stronge (2002), there exists a positive relationship “between student achievement and how recently an experienced teacher took part in a professional development opportunity such as a conference, workshop, or graduate class” (p. 6). Therefore, student achievement is related to the professional training of in-service teachers as a result of organization involvement.

Education Organizations

According to Combs (1974), no teacher preparation program or even one specific education course should try to provide the pre-service teacher with all of the answers to

the problems he or she will encounter in teaching. Preparation is ultimately an on-going process. For this reason, undergraduate programs must attempt to providing students with a broad spectrum of professional knowledge and experiences. This can be accomplished through education organizations. Involvement in professional education organizations are one of the many vital building blocks to the preparation of a teacher.

The Psychological Details of Organizational Dynamics

Arthur P. Brief (1998) researched the attitudes of employees and customers of companies or businesses. His research may be applied to pre-service teachers who purchase memberships in professional organizations. Pre-service teachers become customers who desire to receive goods (knowledge, experience, community, classroom ideas, etc.) from the professional education organization of choice. This section addresses how pre-service teachers, as customers, form attitudes of organizations.

Arthur P. Brief (1998) begins his explanation of attitude formation by establishing that some beliefs are inherited while other beliefs are conditioned. An example of inheriting beliefs is as follows: suppose education is highly regarded by parents of a young adult. The young adult from this family may be more likely to pursue a college education than a young adult whose family did not provide a positive influence concerning education. Ultimately, the attitude of the young adult is influenced by his family.

What does this say about the influence of others on pre-service teachers? Should professors promote an appreciation of organizational involvement to influence student membership decisions? Those in authority, whether parents or professors, are viewed as examples. The beliefs held by those in authority greatly influence those under authority.

Therefore, pre-service teachers form their attitudes toward organizations based off of the attitudes of professors and how they view organizations.

In terms of conditioning the formation of an attitude, Arthur P. Brief (1998) explains that when a person encounters a physical object on multiple occasions and receives a positive feeling from the encounter, the attitude is more likely to be positive.

Therefore, Brief explains the following:

a personal encounter with an attitude object, including mere exposure to it, as well as expecting to interact with the object, being asked one's attitude about it, and having considerable knowledge about the object, has been identified as influencing attitude formation. (p. 69)

Therefore, a pre-service teacher forms his or her attitude toward a professional organization by two means: organization involvement and giving honest answers when asked about the involvement. As will be emphasized in the survey presented later, asking students' to reveal their perception of profession organization involvement helps to form their attitude towards the organization of their choice. Therefore, as customers purchasing goods, pre-service teachers reflect on their organization involvement (what the product has done for them) and honestly present their beliefs and attitudes towards the organization.

Benefits of Education Organizations

Benefits during preparation for teaching profession. There are countless benefits to joining professional education organizations to students who are preparing for the teaching profession. Hurst and Reding (2009) state that "one of the advantages of joining as a student is that you will be able to get reduced membership rates" (p. 66). For

most nationally recognized education organizations, students pay a smaller membership fee than do professional educators. Another benefit for joining an organization is the inclusion of organization involvement on a résumé. Organization involvement shows future employers that an aspiring teacher was committed to professional education prior to seeking school employment. Furthermore, as previously mentioned, employers who look at created portfolios may see pictures and descriptions of organizational and community involvement during the hiring process.

Far beyond résumé benefits is the benefit of developing students as well-rounded, knowledgeable people through membership in professional education organizations. Members gain necessary skills for being effective teachers, practice leadership, commit to service, and attend conferences and workshops to gain insight into the education profession (Kappa Delta Pi).

Organizations help improve pre-service teacher practice. Seiffert (1999) proclaims that “professionalism is a process more than an outcome” (as cited in Helterbran, 2008, p. 126). This statement can be transferred to the experiences and training in professionalism in undergraduate teacher education programs. For members of professional education organizations, the process of learning and practicing professionalism is begun through involvement in the organizations and carried into the teaching profession.

When pre-service teachers participate as active members in professional education organizations, they learn, practice, and receive instruction in becoming effective teachers. For example, in the Fall 2009 edition of *New Teacher Advocate*, a journal distributed to Kappa Delta Pi members, KDP members may read the article

entitled “Six C’s of Effective Teachers.” Readers learn practical ways that beginning teachers put the “Six C’s of Effective Teachers” into practice. The Six C’s are: care, competency, clarity, creativity, consistency, and collegiality (Quick, 2009). Before entering the classroom, pre-service teachers who are KDP members gain knowledge concerning teacher effectiveness that comes from their organizational membership.

Professional education organizations also teach pre-service teachers how to dress professionally. Informing students on this matter teaches them to dress appropriately for their work environment as well as portray self-respect and respect for others (Compton, 2007). By asking pre-service teachers to participate in community and school functions, they are given opportunities to wear attire appropriate for the teaching profession and become more adapted to professional dress.

Sense of community and camaraderie within organizations. Membership in any professional organization promotes a sense of community and camaraderie among like-minded people. For example, Tusculum College in Tennessee promotes organizational involvement for those students interested in English. A description for an on-campus English organization says it “fosters a sense of community and camaraderie among the English Department, other departments and organizations on campus, and members of the surrounding community” (Tusculum College, 2009, para. 12).

The National Art Education Association also promotes a sense of camaraderie amongst its nationwide members with the following explanation of online community opportunities: “Connections matter. That’s why we’re connecting you to knowledge, colleagues, best practices, and vast networks through the NAEA Community” (NAEA, 2010, para. 1).

When teachers come together as fellow members of a specific organization, they adopt similar values and goals pertaining to their specific area of education. With a common purpose, they pursue excellence in their area by striving to promote excellence in the students they teach and excellence in professionalism. Members of education music organizations focus on excellence in music. Science organization members focus on excellence in science. As the members pursue their goals, they not only sharpen their specific group of students (art students, history students, etc.), but they also sharpen who they are as professional teachers, as colleagues, and as partners in their area of education. Through common values, attendance at monthly meetings, organization events, and fellowship, camaraderie and community result as members of an organization fulfill their intended mission.

Benefits of education organizations and the community. What is the value of meaningful service to pre-service teachers? Field experience for pre-service teachers should not come from classroom experience alone. According to Combs et al. (1974), student involvement should be “*community-wide* in scope” (p. 152). The student’s insight will be enriched by taking advantage of community opportunities. Combs et al. (1974) continues to promote community involvement with the following statements:

Such opportunities are endless – an evening’s participation in a school-sponsored bazaar, attending church services; playing pool with youngsters at the local Boys’ Club; and sitting in on an occasional school board meeting are just a few examples. Only as the classroom teacher becomes acutely sensitive to the mores of the community in which he or she will be employed can rapport and empathy be established. (p. 152)

Benefits during the teaching profession. A principal named Janice Hogan says, “In order to grow professionally, it is important for teachers to participate in their professional organizations” (Hurst & Reding, 2009, p. 65). What benefits do practicing teachers receive from organization membership and participation?

Hurst and Reding (2009) explain that being a part of a professional organization “is an excellent way to stay up to date in your field” (p. 65). Teachers are able to join organizations that deal directly with the subject they may teach. For example, the International Reading Association (IRA) exists for reading teachers and exists as the “World’s Leading Organization of Literacy Professionals” (International Reading Association, 2010). The National Council for Teachers of English (NCTE) is an organization for English teachers that focuses on literacy, the study of English, and Language Arts (NCTE, 2010). All subjects and areas of learning have similar professional organizations for the various fields of study in math, science, technology and even music. The organizations allow teachers to gain knowledge of the current developments in their area of study and practice.

Organizations host conferences and distribute journals to inform teachers of up to date research in their fields as well as enable them to implement new teaching methods, ideas, and strategies into their classrooms. Conferences held by organizations may last one or two days to one week. Teachers from across the nation and world may come to a chosen city to fellowship, learn with, and learn from fellow educators. Organizations may publish articles, newspapers, journals, or magazines that give excellent and practical advice for teachers. These publications may be distributed monthly, yearly, or on a seasonal basis (Hurst & Reding, 2009).

Some organizations also offer support or defense concerning unjust accusations or discrimination. An additional advantage is that some organizations may offer liability insurance for teachers as a benefit of membership (Hurst & Reding, 2009). Hurst & Reding (2009) encourage new teachers who start a teaching job to “ask teachers in your building or district what organizations they belong to and ask for information regarding these to help you decide which would be the best fit for you” (p. 66).

Not only do teachers benefit from professional organization membership, but their students benefit as well. For Christina DeCarbo, a teacher at Hinkley Elementary in Ohio, being a part of Kappa Delta Pi enabled her students to advance two or three reading levels and increase their reading fluency scores. How did this happen? Quick (2009) portrays a response from a teacher who received a “Classroom Teacher Grant” from KDP:

“I am grateful to be a part of Kappa Delta Pi – an organization that truly supports educators and children. As a result of this grant, I was able to begin Book Buddies, a special project based on my students’ individual reading needs – a program I would have otherwise been unable to fund as a first-year teacher.” (p. 9)

Current research on the teaching profession and teacher satisfaction. Pushkin (2001) states that many beginning teachers leave the teaching profession within three to five years of teaching. Teaching is definitely a rewarding profession, but it is also stressful, challenging, and demanding as it requires the physical, mental, and emotional energy of teachers. Smethem (2007) says that many countries are struggling more with

retention of teachers than with recruitment. Does professional organization involvement for in-service teachers encourage educators to stay in the teaching field?

In-service teachers acknowledge the benefits of additional national and subject initiatives geared toward the improvement of teaching. Also, positive relationships with fellow workers and colleagues greatly influence teachers to remain in the field (Smethem, 2007). Collaborative environments create positive working relationships and help retain teachers (Stronge, 2002). Hewitt (2009) suggests that “new teachers need to bond with other people at their schools” and also need support and feedback (p. 3). Teacher retention is more likely to occur when teachers “believe in what they are teaching, feel they really can make a difference in pupils’ lives and are supported in doing so” (Smethem, 2007, p. 14). Thus, involvement in professional organizations requires time set aside for meetings, functions, and activities that encourage fellowship, mutual exchanges and support, and therefore the deepening of relationships. The relational aspect of organizations contributes to teacher satisfaction and retention.

What about professionalism and teacher satisfaction? Are teachers satisfied with how they are being developed as professionals? According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (2001), in the year 2000, only 12% to 27% of teachers attributed teaching improvement to the professional development provided by their districts (as cited in Helterbran, 2008). Helterbran (2008) declares that teachers who receive very little professional development from their districts or teachers who claim their professional development only comes from their district alone truly do themselves a disservice. Lee and Kent proclaim that all teachers, despite number of years of experience or their perceptions of how well their district implements professional development,

should personally seek to actively continue their professional development (as cited in Helterbran, 2008). Whether the development comes from the district or personal efforts, teachers need continual professional development at the beginning of and throughout their teaching careers. Teachers can continue in their professional development by joining professional organizations, attending conferences, working with professional area learning groups, and researching content (Helterbran, 2008).

Liberty University's Professional Education Organizations

Liberty University currently requires students in the Teacher Licensure Program to be involved in at least one professional organization for one year prior to graduation. This requirement is in place to ensure education majors are being prepared for the education field through field experience, service learning, and community. Students may choose to join organizations that have Liberty campus chapters such as Kappa Delta Pi (KDP) and Council for Exceptional Children (CEC). Membership in online national organizations is also acceptable. The following describes each of the previously mentioned local chapter organizations at Liberty University:

Kappa Delta Pi

Kappa Delta Pi is an international education honor society. Liberty University's Pi Sigma Chapter of Kappa Delta Pi was founded in 1984 and recently celebrated its 25th Anniversary ("KDP," 2009). The purpose of KDP is to promote excellence in the work of future educators and recognize notable education contributions. Monthly meetings include speakers from area schools and other education professionals. Members may choose to serve as KDP officers as well as apply for scholarships promoted by KDP (Liberty University School of Education, *Kappa Delta Pi*, 2010). The national yearly

membership fee for students is \$38 (Kappa Delta Pi, “Join KDP,” 2010). Liberty student members pay a local chapter fee of \$10 (“KDP,” 2009).

Student members participate in on-campus and community activities. Activities include Liberty’s on-campus Scholastic Bookfair, reading days at local schools as well as other partnership activities with area schools.

KDP membership requirements are as follows:

- a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0,
- admission to the Teacher Licensure Program,
- and the recommendation of a faculty member, who is also a member of Kappa Delta Pi. (Liberty University School of Education, *Kappa Delta Pi*, 2010)

KDP’s mission statement is as follows:

- recognizes scholarship and excellence in education,
- promotes the development and dissemination of worthy educational ideas and practices,
- enhances the continuous growth and leadership of its diverse membership,
- fosters inquiry and reflection on significant educational issues, and
- maintains a high degree of professional fellowship. (Liberty University School of Education, *Kappa Delta Pi*, 2010)

Liberty University Kappa Delta Pi members also have the opportunity to receive Honor Cords to wear at graduation by meeting the following requirements:

- The wearer of the cords has earned membership in Kappa Delta Pi.
- Honor cords must be earned by an accumulation of at least THREE (3) points of service during each semester that you are a member of Kappa Delta Pi, including your Student Teaching semester.

(Students are able to earn one point for each of the following:

chapter events, service projects, fundraisers, Pi Sigma Functions (Pledge Reception & Banquet). (Liberty University School of Education, *Kappa Delta Pi*, 2010)



Figure 1. KDP Chapter Meeting

*obtained from <http://www.liberty.edu/academics/education/index.cfm?pid=2865>



Figure 2. Literacy Alive Day at Linkhorne Elementary: students receiving door prizes to encourage reading

*obtained from KDP President: Danielle Clark (2009)

Council for Exceptional Children

The Council for Exceptional Children, the largest professional organization for disabled children or children with exceptionalities, provides support for exceptional children and their families. Liberty University started a chapter of CEC in the Spring of 2005 that seeks to maintain strong leadership and network with those in the Lynchburg, Virginia community. In the 2008-2009 academic school year, CEC had 67 active members (12 have national membership and 55 have local membership only). As of the 2009-2010 academic school year, Liberty University requires all undergraduate students seeking teacher licensure in Special Education to become members of CEC. Therefore, CEC has 160 members as of 2009-2010. Any student from other majors are welcome (Liberty University School of Education, *Council for Exceptional Children*, 2010).

CEC requirements are as follows:

- Members must attend 2 out of 3 chapter meetings
- Members must participate in 3 out of 4 chapter activities throughout each semester
- Members must pay the national membership fee for CEC: \$69.

(Liberty University School of Education, *Council for Exceptional Children*, 2010)

The mission statement of CEC is as follows:

- To let our light shine by providing support to children with disabilities, their parents, and those who work with these children

in our community. (Liberty University School of Education, *Council for Exceptional Children*, 2010)

The vision and goals for CEC include:

- To advance the education of individuals with exceptionalities
- To promote educational, scientific, and charitable purpose.

(Liberty University School of Education, *Council for Exceptional Children*, 2010)

The Council for Exceptional Children holds meetings where knowledgeable professionals visit as guest speakers. In addition to chapter meetings, CEC members participate in other activities to benefit families in the community with disabled children. Members of Liberty's chapter of the Council for Exceptional Children have raised more than \$4,000 to build a chair lift for the Liberty University indoor swimming pool. The members sponsored a CEC Walkathon in April of 2009 to help pay for the pool ("KDP and CEC," 2009). CEC also partners with Thomas Road Baptist Church in Lynchburg, Virginia to reach out to the local community. Members of CEC have helped with Thomas Road's iKids Halloween Carnival as well as "Breakfast with Santa" in December (Liberty University School of Education, *Council for Exceptional Children*, 2010). The following pictures (next page) are examples of CEC's activities:



Figure 3. CEC Walkathon
* obtained from CEC President
Carrie Clinton (2010)



Figure 4. CEC Fall Carnival
* obtained from CEC President
Carrie Clinton (2010)

Zionts, Shellady, and Zionts (2006) present an interesting study performed by National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) investigated teacher's perceptions of professional standards adopted by the aforementioned organizations. In implementing new standards for teachers, these organizations had two goals in mind: 1. to supervise teacher accountability for student learning and 2. to supervise qualities of teacher preparation program among higher education institutions. The following research questions were addressed in this study:

1. Do special education teachers perceive competencies outlined by CEC professional standards as important? Why or Why not?
2. Do special education teachers perceive the skills outlined in CEC professional standards as easy to implement in their classroom setting? Why or Why not?
3. What types of skills appear to be the most difficult for special education practitioners to implement in daily classroom practice?

In response to a questionnaire, results showed the majority of teacher participants placed high importance on the standards implemented by the organizations. They did, however, find it difficult to implement the standards. For example, one standard was to “access information of various cognitive, physical, cultural, social, and emotional conditions of exceptional individuals.” 10.9% of participants responded that the standard was “easy to implement.” For the standard “use verbal and nonverbal communication techniques” in teaching, 69.5% said the standard was “easy to implement” (Zionts, Shellady, & Zionts, 2006). The influence of professional education organizations can be seen with this study.

Hypothesis

Should membership in a professional organization be a requirement for college students pursuing teacher licensure? The desired outcome of the administered survey was that students would see their membership and involvement in professional education organizations as both beneficial and meaningful. An overall satisfaction is expected regarding Liberty University’s requirement for Education majors to be a member of at least one professional organization.

Method

Participants

The survey was given to 405 Liberty University Education majors. Each student was pursuing one of Liberty University’s Education licensures: Elementary Education Licensure, Secondary Education Licensure, or Elementary and Special Education Dual Licensure. Students were of sophomore, junior, senior, or student teacher status. The specification for student status was set due to the fact that most Liberty University

education majors do not join a professional education organization until their sophomore year of college. Other demographics such as gender or age were not considered in choosing student participants.

Seven professors at Liberty University also played a vital role in the implementation of the survey. A link to the survey created on LiveText was sent in an email to the seven education professors in Liberty University's Education Department. The professors were chosen based on the status of their students. Professors who taught students with the college status of sophomore, junior, senior, or student teacher received an email. The seven professors sent a pre-written email to their specified students.

Materials

The survey was created through LiveText, an online accreditation management system that Liberty University uses as the technological means to develop, assess, and measure student learning (LiveText, Inc., 2009). Professors received a pre-written email and a link to the LiveText survey. Professors sent an email to their Education students asking them to complete the survey located on LiveText. The survey included one question asking the type of licensure the participant was seeking, six Likert scale questions, five open-ended response questions, and one yes or no question. Data was collected from LiveText in the form of an Excel spreadsheet.

Procedures

A link to the survey created on LiveText was sent in an email to professors in Liberty University's Education Department who taught or supervised education students. Professors who taught students of sophomore, junior, senior, or student teacher status received an email with a pre-written email (survey link included) to be sent to their

students. The chosen professors sent a pre-written email with the survey link to their Education students via Blackboard, an online course management system that allows faculty and students to complete assignments and access course materials that supplement in-class teaching (“Blackboard 9 Tutorials (Students),” 2009).

Students were instructed to click the survey link provided in the email, read the given survey background information and instructions, and complete the survey anonymously. Students were asked to complete the survey once for each professional education organization in which they were a member. Organizations may have been on-campus or online. Students were asked to complete the survey by Wednesday, December 16, 2009.

Excel was used to collect and interpret data. After placing the results in a spreadsheet, Likert scale question percentages were calculated to show how many students chose each the following: Strongly Disagreed, Disagreed, Neutral, Agree and Strongly Agree. The open-ended question results were also placed in an Excel spreadsheet for organizational purposes.

Results

Fifty-seven of 405 Liberty University Education students responded to the survey. The results of the six Likert scale questions are reported below. The five open-ended question results are detailed in Appendix C.

Table 1

Licensure of Survey Respondents

Question 4: Which of the following denotes the licensure you are seeking?		
	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Number of Students</u>
Elementary Education Licensure	51%	29
Elementary and Special Education Dual Licensure	33%	19
Secondary Education Licensure	16%	9
<u>TOTAL:</u>	100%	57

Table 2

Question 6: Justifiable Requirement

Question 6: Do you feel that it is a justifiable requirement to join a professional organization?		
	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Number of Students</u>
1 Strongly Disagree	2%	1
2 Disagree	12%	7
3 Neutral	19%	11
4 Agree	40%	23
5 Strongly Agree	26%	15
<u>TOTAL:</u>	100%	57

Table 3

Question 7: Meaningful Service and Contribution

Question 7:		
Did you feel that the organization you chose provided sufficient experience for meaningful service and contribution?		
	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Number of Students</u>
1 Strongly Disagree	7%	4
2 Disagree	12%	7
3 Neutral	14%	8
4 Agree	39%	22
5 Strongly Agree	28%	16
<u>TOTAL:</u>	100%	57

Table 4

Question 8: Learning Opportunities

Question 8:		
Did you feel that the organization you chose provided learning opportunities?		
	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Number of Students</u>
1 Strongly Disagree	5%	3
2 Disagree	7%	4
3 Neutral	9%	5
4 Agree	40%	23
5 Strongly Agree	37%	21
Blank (not answered)	2%	1
<u>TOTAL:</u>	100%	57

Table 5

Question 9: Sense of Community and Camaraderie

Question 9:		
Did you feel a sense of community and camaraderie as a result of membership in the organization of your choice?		
	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Number of Students</u>
1 Strongly Disagree	9%	5
2 Disagree	23%	13
3 Neutral	14%	8
4 Agree	35%	20
5 Strongly Agree	19%	11
<u>TOTAL:</u>	100%	57

Table 6

Question 10: Camaraderie and Chosen Field

Question 10:		
Did this camaraderie with fellow members encourage you to stay in your chosen field and improve your practice?		
	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Number of Students</u>
1 Strongly Disagree	5%	3
2 Disagree	18%	10
3 Neutral	28%	16
4 Agree	28%	16
5 Strongly Agree	21%	12
<u>TOTAL:</u>	100%	57

Table 7

Question 11: Better Prepared for Profession

Question 11:		
Do you feel that you are better prepared for your profession as a result of joining the organization?		
	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Number of Students</u>
1 Strongly Disagree	5%	3
2 Disagree	25%	14
3 Neutral	25%	14
4 Agree	28%	16
5 Strongly Agree	18%	10
<u>TOTAL:</u>	100%	57

Table 8

Question 17: Membership Requirement in the Future

Question 17:		
Do you recommend that Liberty's Education Department keep professional organization membership a requirement in the future?		
	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Number of Students</u>
Y (YES)	61%	35
N (No)	37%	21
Blank (not answered)	2%	1
<u>TOTAL:</u>	100%	57

Discussion

Fifty-seven of 405 Liberty University Education students responded to the survey given via email and LiveText. Results positively confirmed the stated hypothesis that there would exist an overall satisfaction with Liberty University's requirement for Education majors to be a member of at least one professional organization.

Question 4 reflects the number of students of each type of education licensure offered by Liberty University. The students who responded to the survey included: 29 students pursuing Elementary Education Licensure, 19 students pursuing Elementary and Special Education Dual Licensure, and 9 pursuing Secondary Education Licensure.

Likert Scale Questions

The Likert Scale portion of the survey included six questions. The following discusses the results of the Likert Scale questions:

Question 6 asks: "Do you feel that it is a justifiable requirement to join a professional organization?" Students varied in their responses: 26% Strongly Agreed with the requirement and 40% Agreed. 12% Disagreed and 2% Strongly Disagreed. Therefore, a total of 66% of the respondents indicated that Liberty University's requirement to join a professional education organization is a justifiable.

The results to Question 6 are vital to Liberty University's education department. With over half of the respondents in favor of organizational membership, the department can more assertively justify why it requires pre-service teachers to be members of at least one education organization. The benefits of organizational membership in undergraduate teaching programs can be encouraged with greater assurance. Furthermore, Liberty

University's on-campus education organizations may operate in greater confidence with the awareness that students believe in the importance of membership.

Question 7 states: "Do you feel that the organization you chose provided sufficient experiences for meaningful service and contribution?" Results were affirmative in that 39% Agreed and 28% Strongly Agreed while 12% of the respondents Disagreed and 7% Strongly Disagreed. The survey revealed that the service opportunities provided by professional organizations at Liberty University promote contributions to others that were meaningful for the participants.

Question 8 says: "Did you feel that the organization you chose provided learning opportunities?" Results confirmed that organizational membership does provide learning opportunities with 40% Agreeing and 37% Strongly Agreeing. 7% of the respondents Disagreed, and 5% Strongly Disagreed. Students believe their organizations allow them to learn from the opportunities and events in which they participate. Beneficial learning opportunities may come from field experiences with partnerships between organizations and the local schools or the local community.

Question 9 says: "Did you feel a sense of community and camaraderie as a result of your membership in the organization of your choice?" Results showed a mixture of responses: 9% Strongly Disagreed, 23% Disagreed, 14% Neutral, 35% Agreed, and 19% Strongly Agreed. Over half of the respondents Strongly Agreed or Disagreed with this question. However, it should be noted that a large fairly large portion of respondents Disagreed with Question 9. These results may provoke the organizations on Liberty University's campus to provide more opportunities for fellowship and member interaction to promote community and camaraderie within the organizations.

Referring to Question 9, the 10th Question asked: “Did this camaraderie with fellow members encourage you to stay in your chosen field and improve your practice?” Results showed: 5% Strongly Disagreed, 18% Disagreed, 28% were Neutral, 28% Agreed, and 21% Strongly Agreed. Almost half of the respondents assert that the camaraderie among members in their organizations encourage them to continue in preparing to be professional educators and become more effective at teaching.

Questions 11 states: “Do you feel that you are better prepared for your profession as a result of joining the organization?” 5% Strongly Disagreed, 25% Disagreed, 25% were Neutral, 28% were Agreed, 18% Strongly Agreed. A total of 46% Agreed and Strongly Agreed. Therefore, organization members acknowledge they are preparing for their future careers as teachers and believe their preparation through organizational membership is important. It is interesting that 25% of the participants Disagreed. It would be of great interest to ask students to name specific reasons for their acknowledgement of little to no preparation in regards to their organization involvement. Asking for detailed suggestions of how to effectively prepare pre-service teachers through organizational membership may be beneficial as well.

Open-Ended Questions

The open-ended answer portion of the survey revealed various opinions regarding organizations. The following discussion analyzes participant responses to the open-ended questions:

Question 13 says: “Describe your organization.” Participant #6 responded with the following: “I am a member of KDP. This organization is for education majors who are given opportunities to learn and develop their professional career. We have been

given opportunities to be involved around the community, and with different elementary schools.” Participant #51 described his or her organization with the following: “PARC-Piedmont Area Reading Council. This is a group dedicated to implementing and providing up to date reading strategies and studies to equip educators to teach reading strategies to all levels of students in the Virginia Piedmont region.” Both students appeared to have an accurate grasp of the purpose of their organizations due to their personal involvement.

Question 14 says: “What is most beneficial about the organization?” Participant #32 responded: “I think that the information that the meetings give to future teachers in all educational levels is excellent. It gives great ideas for teaching, and allows candidates to see what teaching will be like and how to deal with certain situations.” Survey participant #38 said: “Kappa Delta Pi provides practical experience for what I plan to do with my future.” Both participants noted the more frequent benefits given by survey participants: great ideas, what teaching will involve, and practical experience.

Question 15 says: “What were the most meaningful experiences you had as a member of this organization?” Participant #46 shares: “My most meaningful experiences involved community work that I participated in, A Walk-a Thon for a chair lift in a pool, Literacy Alive, Linkhorne's Fall Festival, donating books and school supplies to Bass Elementary. This organization prepared me and then offered opportunities to work with real students and truly see how effective I was personally. It also opened my eyes to how much I love teaching and brought out my passion for helping people.” As seen here, personal experiences greatly impact organizational members.

Question 16 states: “What things do you wish were different about the organization?” Participant #55 responded: “The prices to join because they are very expensive for college students.” Better organization and community among members were also desires of participants.

According to Question 17, a total of 61% of survey participants said Liberty should keep their professional organization a requirement in the future. With 2% leaving these two questions blank, 37% replied that Liberty should not keep the requirement. It is interesting to note that 66% of respondents believe Liberty’s requirement is justifiable (Likert Question 6) and 61% of respondents believe Liberty should keep the requirement in the future (Yes/No Question 17). These percentages confirm the overall consensus that Liberty’s organization requirement is a justifiable requirement that should continue in the future.

Question 18 allowed participants to expound upon their answers to Question 17. One student who answered that Liberty should keep the requirement said, “I think they should keep requiring it because it gives the future teacher a glimpse of what they will be expected to do when they are educators in the professional world.” This student affirms the preparation he or she is receiving through organization participation.

Another participant affirmed the requirement by referencing professionalism and future employers: “I believe it helps us as students and future educators to plan ahead. These organization[s] are going to mean a lot to our future employers. It will show them that even while we were in the process of becoming teachers we were taking ourselves seriously and presenting ourselves in a professional manner.” This student considers job applications, interviews, and employment coupled with professionalism to be of great

importance. Employers will look to see how teaching applicants have efficiently pursued preparation opportunity and ways to develop professionalism.

Question 18 also revealed students in opposition to Liberty's requirement for students to be organization members. The cost of organizational memberships was mentioned by several survey participants. In the open-ended portion of the survey, the following table shows the number of times various words were negatively referenced:

Table 9

References of words "fee," "money," and "expensive"

<u>Term</u>	<u>Number of Times Negatively Referenced</u>
"fee"	4
"money"	14
"expensive"	11

Time was another issue for many organization members. The following Table 2 shows the how often the word "time" was used in student responses:

Table 10

References of word "time"

<u>Word</u>	<u>Number of Times Negatively Referenced</u>	<u>Number of Times Positively Referenced</u>
"time"	11	9

One student (Participant #2) said, "I can see how joining an organization like KDP or CEC would be beneficial, but it is so hard to join with the price being so expensive and the high number of mandatory events you have to attend."

Revealed weaknesses, or negative aspects, of organizational membership at Liberty include fees and time. These word counts may provoke Liberty University's Education Department to ask organizations to investigate ways to decrease organization fees as well as evaluate the amount of time presently required for members. With "time" referenced negatively eleven times and positively nine times, it is evident that organization time commitments can greatly influence the limited amount of free time education majors have as well as reference the beneficial experiences that committed time allows.

The expected outcome of the administered survey was that students would see their membership and involvement in professional education organizations as both beneficial and meaningful. While student perception of the professional requirement of organizational membership showed various opinions, 66% of respondents agreed that Liberty University's requirement is justifiable.

Liberty University's future organizational endeavors may reflect the survey results. With the addressed strengths, organizations may confidently continue to provide students with opportunities for meaningful service and community contribution. With the results of the survey, organizations may more purposefully spur their members into serving students in local schools and members of the community, recognizing the value in member contributions.

Additionally, organizations may receive assurance in their efforts to provide pre-service teachers numerous learning opportunities. For example, with KDP, students benefit from listening to guest speakers at monthly chapter meetings. Occasionally, panels of either student teachers or principals share wisdom they have acquired through

personal experiences. Members learn and gain insight from hearing experienced educators such as these.

With the weakness revealed from survey results, the organizations may consider and evaluate time commitments and organization fees. Reconsidering the number of activities or the number of required monthly meetings may allow students to more readily approve of requirements. Organizations may also think of ways to build camaraderie at chapter meetings, by implementing games or team-building activities into chapter meetings and events, for example.

The organizational benefits of service opportunities, experiences, professional preparation, community and camaraderie, and learning opportunities give Liberty's organizations a firm foundation for their existences. While focusing on strengths and addressing weaknesses, the organizations may purposefully fulfill their individual missions. Ultimately, should membership in a professional organization be a requirement for college students pursuing teacher licensure? According to the administered survey results: yes, membership in a professional organization should be a requirement for college students pursuing teacher licensure at Liberty University. The benefits and effects are numerous.

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Appendix A

Letter Sent to Professors

Student Perception of Professional Education Organizations
Senior Honors Thesis
Amanda McMillian
Liberty University
Education Department

Dear Education Professors/Faculty Members:

I am writing you concerning the Honors Thesis I will be completing over the next two semesters in order to graduate as a completer of Liberty University's Honors Program in conjunction with an Elementary Education degree.

Liberty's Education Department wants to complete research concerning how pre-service teachers perceive participation in professional organizations. The question at hand is: Do current Education majors feel organization involvement ultimately helps them in their pursuit of becoming effective teachers? Professional organizations include but are not limited to KDP - Kappa Delta Pi, CEC - Council for Exceptional Children, PARC - Piedmont Area Reading Council, and NCTM – National Council of Teachers of Mathematics.

The Education Department will publish this information and is graciously allowing me to be a co-publisher with my completed thesis. We will be conducting a survey in the Education Department to find out necessary and appropriate data for the research. For this reason, I am asking for your assistance.

Please copy and paste the following boxed information and send it via Blackboard email to the students in each section of the Education courses you currently teach.

Education Students:

Please take the time to complete the following survey entitled “Student Perception.” Amanda McMillian, an Education major, is conducting this research for her Honors Thesis.

Please complete the survey one time for each professional education organization in which you have been a member and/or are currently involved. Organizations may include local and online membership(s).

Examples:

CEC – Council for Exceptional Children

KDP – Kappa Delta Pi

PARC – Piedmont Area Regional Council

NCTM – National Council of Teachers of Mathematics
NCTE - National Council of Teachers of English

Note of Consent: This is an anonymous survey that involves minimal risk. Clicking on "Submit" and completing the survey serves as your permission for the data you contribute to be used for educational research conducted by Amanda McMillian and the Liberty University Education Department. Collected data will be used in Amanda McMillian's Honors Thesis as well as published in a professional education journal. You may change your mind at any point during the survey and decide to quit it without penalty. You may choose not to answer particular questions without penalty. If you have questions about the survey research you may contact Amanda McMillian at abmcmillian@liberty.edu. If you would like to discuss the project with someone other than a researcher, you may contact Dr. Fernando Garzon at irb@liberty.edu.

Please follow the survey directions.

You may access the survey by clicking the following:

[Student Perception Survey](#)

Just in case the link above does not work:

<http://college.livetext.com/misk5/formz/public/38663/IVubNNLXJF>

Please complete the survey(s) by Wednesday, December 16, 2009.

Thank you for your time!

Sincerely,

Amanda McMillian

abmcmillian@liberty.edu

I am currently working with Dr. Michelle Goodwin, Dr. Deanna Keith, and Dr. Janet Brown on this research. For confidentiality purposes and the protection of each student, Liberty's Institutional Review Board has approved this survey and study.

I appreciate your time and effort in helping me complete my Senior Honors Thesis. The Education Department is also grateful for your contribution towards the research of professional organizations. With your assistance, Liberty University's Education Department will continue to strive for excellence in serving its students.

Please feel free to contact me at anytime with questions and/or concerns.

Sincerely,

Amanda McMillian

abmcmillian@liberty.edu

Appendix B

Copy of Survey from LiveText

Survey located at: <http://college.livetext.com/misk5/formz/public/38663/IVubNNLXJF>

Student Perception

1. The candidates in the School of Education are required to join and participate in at least one professional organization. Organizations may include Kappa Delta Pi, CEC (Council for Exceptional Children), and other reputable organizations (either on-campus or online). This requirement is found in the FES (Field Experience Summary) and is assessed during the Student Teaching semester. The purpose of this survey is to explore your perceptions of this professional requirement.
2. Please remember to fill out this survey for each professional organization for which you are a member. (For example: If you are a member KDP (Kappa Delta Pi) and NCTE (National Council for Teachers of English), you would fill out two surveys. Thank you!
3. This is an anonymous survey that involves minimal risk. Clicking on "Submit" and completing the survey serves as your permission for the data you contribute to be used for educational research conducted by Amanda McMillian and the Liberty University Education Department. Collected data will be used in Amanda McMillian's Honors Thesis as well as published in a professional education journal. You may change your mind at any point during the survey and decide to quit it without penalty. You may choose not to answer particular questions without penalty. If you have questions about the survey research you may contact Amanda McMillian at abmcmillian@liberty.edu. If you would like to discuss the project with someone other than a researcher, you may contact Dr. Fernando Garzon at irb@liberty.edu.

4. Which of the following denotes the licensure you are seeking?

- Elementary Education Licensure
- Elementary and Special Education Dual Licensure
- Secondary Education Licensure

5. The following are Likert scale questions. Please read each question and choose the number that represents your perception of the question at hand with 5 being Strongly Agree and 1 being Strongly Disagree.

6. Do you feel that it is a justifiable requirement to join a professional organization?

- 5 Strongly Agree
- 4 Agree
- 3 Neutral
- 2 Disagree
- 1 Strongly Disagree

7. Did you feel that the organization you chose provided sufficient experiences for meaningful service and contribution?

- 5 Strongly Agree
- 4 Agree
- 3 Neutral
- 2 Disagree
- 1 Strongly Disagree

8. Did you feel that the organization you chose provided learning opportunities?

- 5 Strongly Agree
- 4 Agree
- 3 Neutral
- 2 Disagree
- 1 Strongly Disagree

9. Did you feel a sense of community and camaraderie as a result of your membership in the organization of your choice?

- 5 Strongly Agree
- 4 Agree
- 3 Neutral
- 2 Disagree
- 1 Strongly Disagree

10. Did this camaraderie with fellow members encourage you to stay in your chosen field and improve your practice?

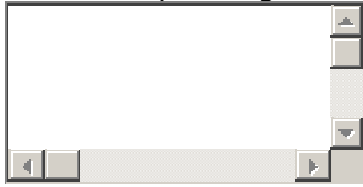
- 5 Strongly Agree
- 4 Agree
- 3 Neutral
- 2 Disagree
- 1 Strongly Disagree

11. Do you feel that you are better prepared for your profession as a result of joining the organization?

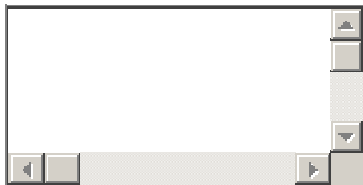
- 5 Strongly Agree
- 4 Agree
- 3 Neutral
- 2 Disagree
- 1 Strongly Disagree

12. The following portion of the survey includes open-ended questions. Please answer the questions according to your personal perception.

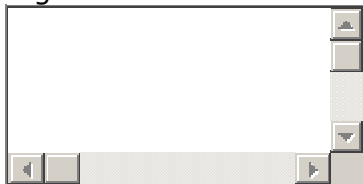
13. Describe your organization.

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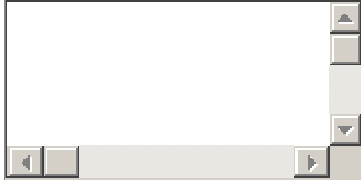
14. What is most beneficial about the organization?

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15. What were the most meaningful experiences you had as a member of this organization?

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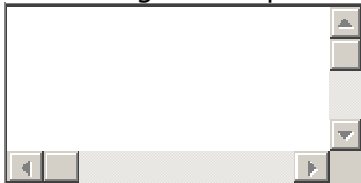
16. What things do you wish were different about the organization?



17. Do you recommend that Liberty's Education Department keep professional organization membership a requirement in the future?

- Yes
- No

18. Referring to the question above, why or why not?



Appendix C

Results from open-ended survey questions.

Survey Participant	Question 13: Describe your organization.
1	Council for Exceptional Children. Focus on Special Education for the disabled.
2	I joined the National Middle School organization online. Besides receiving the membership card and a magazine in the mail, there is nothing that I gained from this organization. Honestly, I think it was a waste of my money.
3	KDP requires a certain number of activities to be completed however, due to a large membership, many members show up and do not have anything to do. Waste of time.
4	CEC - a great program really enjoy it and hope to get more involved next semester!
5	KDP
6	I am a member of KDP. This organization is for education majors who are given opportunities to learn and develop their professional career. We have been given opportunities to be involved around the community, and with different elementary schools.
7	KDP is an honor society organization.
8	
9	Kappa Delta Pi. Exciting. Involved. Active.
10	Kappa Delta Pi is the education honor society. Being involved in this organization allows you to gain experience working with people who could be your co-workers one day as well as give you a chance to work with kids outside of the class by participating in activities such as fall festivals, book fairs, etc. It also allows you to gain insight from people who are already in the field of education. You get to have the opportunity to hear how they dealt with situations, which sort of things were effective and which things weren't. I believe it is a very beneficial organization and is an organization that schools look at favorably when they go to hire teachers.
11	KDP.
12	CEC.
13	CEC stands for the Council of Exceptional Children. It is an organization that deals with special needs individuals. I have not been in this organization long, but I get emails from them that keep me updated with what they are doing.
14	Kappa Delta Pi. Lots of requirements in order to wear the cord, but I don't feel that the requirements really teach the members anything. The Activities do help the community and I am sure others appreciate them.
15	CEC- Council For Exceptional Children is an organization to be aware of the needs of exceptional children and to better serve the community and needs of children.
16	Kappa Delta Pi is an organization to prepare teachers for the activities that go along with being a teacher.
17	KDP, professional.
18	Kappa Delta Pi is an organization that furthers the preparation and appreciation of teachers.
19	Kappa Delta Pi is an organization for Education majors and it provides a great opportunity to be connected and serve with colleagues!
20	I honestly do not know a lot about my organization. I paid the fee to join so that it would count for my credits. I have never made it to a meeting.
21	I am a member of both Kapa Delta Pi and Council for Exceptional Children
22	CEC
23	I was in KDP (Kappa Delta Pi).
24	The Organization with which I am affiliated is the NCTE.
25	The organization I decided to join this semester was KDP.
26	I am a member an officer of Alpha Lambda Delta. This is one of the many honor societies within Liberty University. It is a freshman organization in which your active year is your sophomore year in college. They take part in service projects within the community as well as educational enriching activities throughout the semester.
27	CEC does a wonderful job with interacting with disabled students or children. The activities that were held this semester did a wonderful job in allowing us to get experience with working one on one with special ed. students.

28	The organization is KDP and we do service projects, fundraisers, and participate in the meetings.
29	I am in KDP. It is an organization for education professionals and students. It aims to help future teachers develop into the best they can be.
30	I am in KDP. It is for future teachers and honestly is not the best run organization.
31	It is an educational honor society that provides resources to educators.
32	KDP meets every month to hear a speakers. The speakers give excellent information for teacher candidates. We also have many service opportunities to the local schools.
33	This organization is a great resource for future teachers because of the networking through the organization.
34	It is more geared towards elementary aged teachers, and required unrealistic expectations that were never revealed to secondary education candidates.
35	I am a member of KDP and CEC. KDP I think would be a great organization, however it is so large that when everyone is in a room together there are so many people talking you can not hear the speaker. Because students are forced to join, there are students who do not want to be there. Since they do not want to be there they are talking and making a rucus so the others can not hear and participate. CEC I reallyl enjoy because the speakers are interesting and they have fewer people so everyone pays attention.
36	
37	My organization is the MENC (Music Educator's National Conference). The Liberty Chapter tries to have meetings focused around a professional who has a lot to share. The national organization is focused on providing quality music education to all by educating the teachers. They have national, state, and collegiate conferences throughout the year with many valuable sessions. Their website has a plethora of resources for the members.
38	Kappa Delta Pi is an organization in which there are many oppourtunities provided for members to participate in community service projects. Most of these projects focus on schools in the local school district.
39	
40	The meetings required for KDP seem to be redundant because of the information learned in the classroom. Volunteering activities typically is slow and have too many volunteers.
41	It is designed to get the future special educators an experience with the special needs students of the community.
42	
43	
44	
45	KDP
46	Kappa Delta Pi is an international organization dedicated to the community of educators regardless of position, elementary through collegiate professionals. The purpose of this group is to equip educators with the knowledge and tools necessary to provide the best educational services to students, educating the entire person of each individual and creating productive citizens of tomorrow. Our motto is knowledge, duty, power. We educate, empower, and provide opportunities of service to individuals, local and global communities.
47	I am part of the Council for Exception Children, which is a organization for students who are majoring in special education or going into other career paths that work with those that have special needs.
48	KDP
49	The organization I belong to is committed to furthering the oppourtunities that education majors have within the field of educaiton.
50	
51	PARC-Piedmont Area Reading Council. This is a group dedicated to implementing and providing up to date reading strategies and studies to equip educators to teach reading strategies to all levels of students in the Virginia Piedmont region.
52	Kappa Delta Pi is a honor society for education majors. Kappa Delta Pi not only focuses on a student's grade that he makes to get into Kappa Delta Pi, but also examines the student's involvement with the education field.
53	
54	I am a member of th Council of Exceptional Children. This organization encourages us, as students, to branch out into our surrounding city and work with students with special needs allowing us the experience neccessary for out major.
55	I am a memeber of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) as well as KDP. Both organizations are very involved in the community and allow for students to grow in their area of expertise.

56	KDP is great, but what it really comes down to is spending more money and giving more of my time. I think many students just join because its a requirement...because of that I feel Pi Sigma lacks camaraderie. I think the organizations have a lot of potential, but I do not believe they are meeting it (KDP included).
57	International Reading Association Association for Childhood Education International

Survey Participant	Question 14: What is most beneficial about the organization?
1	Gives insight into teaching learning or physically disabled students.
2	
3	Nothing.
4	the opportunites to serve and meet more people
5	Looks good on a resume.
6	I would say the most beneficial aspect of this organization is the opportunities to work in elementary schools around the Lynchburg area.
7	The service projects performed.
8	
9	It's all about serving others in preparation to become a teacher.
10	It gives you experience working with kids outside of the classroom.
11	Nothing except apparently it gives you a good rep.
12	It gives special education teachers resources.
13	The experience and learning that I get from the organization and from the emails.
14	The help it provides local schools and organizations.
15	It is dedicated to helping others and is not focused on things that are not important.
16	The most beneficial thing about the organization is that I can get extra credit in some of my education classes by being a member.
17	speakers
18	The most beneficial quality of Kappa Delta Pi is the speakers that they bring in for the meetings. With the individual speakers, the audience is able to gain a more broad perception of teaching through learning about the speaker's experiences.
19	Chapter Meetings provide great speakers and tips for teaching!
20	I do not know.
21	Council for Exceptional Children does really beneficial activities. I like that they focus their attention on a few big goals and work towards them. They also provide very beneficial and informational meetings. Kappa Delta Pi is beneficial because it is such a widely recognized organization and have a good reputation in the community.
22	The one meeting I attended about deaf-blind individuals
23	You hear from professional educators and people who are experienced in education.
24	I get many letters in the mail.
25	The most beneficial thing about this organization was getting to know other students in your major. I gained alot of wisdom from getting to know older education majors. They had alot of tips and advice for me that I found very useful.
26	I really enjoyed being an officer and seeing the planning aspect of this organization. I loved being a part of making the schedule and deciding which events we were going to take part in during the year. Having to meet every week as officers helped me improve my time management and leadership skills immensely.
27	Activities that promote interaction with special ed./ disabled children

28	Attending the meetings is most beneficial because the guest speakers are always so encouraging and provide helpful information.
29	It has many great opportunities to work within the community.
30	Getting Professional points.
31	Interesting learning experiences.
32	I think that the information that the meetings give to future teachers in all educational levels is excellent. It gives great ideas for teaching, and allows candidates to see what teaching will be like and how to deal with certain situations.
33	The most beneficial thing about KDP are all the resources that come with the membership.
34	It is have good pamphlets and magazines.
35	They both support students and they give students the opportunity to hear from others in thier profession.
36	
37	see above. Mostly the conferences and the resources on the website.
38	Kappa Delta Pi provides practical experience for what I plan to do with my future.
39	
40	I'm sure it looks nice on an application.
41	It does not have an overwhelming amount of requirements for members but really encourages them to come out and get involved in what they will be doing in their career, by loving on these extraordinary children of Him.
42	
43	
44	
45	It looks good on transcripts.
46	The most beneficial part of this organization is up to date resources, whether it be other educators, physical lesson plans, teaching manipulative tools. As an officer of Liberty's Pi Sigma Chapter I enjoyed the community involvement of our group. Being an officer allowed me to work in both the Christian and inner city school systems. It broadened my horizons and helped me discover what I truly loved to do. I also gained so much in regards to working with other professional educators, planning meetings and fund-raisers, organizing community activities. All of these events encouraged growth with interpersonal skills and conducting oneself in a professional manner.
47	I believe that this organization prepares a student to work with people with special needs through introducing speakers that have experience working with those with special needs and introducing events in which the student can gain experience working with those with special needs.
48	Hearing from other teachers and communicating with other education majors
49	Having the connections that it provides.
50	
51	The VRA Review that is conducted prior to testing The Newsletter with up to date information on Reading skills/ strategies/ practices
52	I think what is most beneficial is when there are the teachers that come from the local area share their teaching experiences with members of Kappa Delta Pi.
53	
54	It provides us with adequate information of the field of work we are preparing for.
55	The organizations provide a lot of community experience.
56	Experience in the community, as well as being able to add another thing to my portfolio.
57	Both organizations provide literature and access to educational website, which will be beneficial when I enter the classroom.

Survey Participant	Question 15: What were the most meaningful experiences you had as a member of this organization?
1	We had some interesting speakers.
2	
3	None.
4	iKIDS parties, opportunities to raise money
5	Fall Festivals- doing service activities with my peers
6	The most meaningful experiences were working along side my friends in the community, and in the schools.
7	completing service projects
8	
9	I did a shoebox last year which was a very meaningful experience as I hopefully made a difference in a child's life around the world!
10	It allows you to get involved with the kids in the school systems and participate in activities that the schools are hosting.
11	Really, there was nothing.
12	I had no experiences with this organizations.
13	I have not been involved very much in any events.
14	Helping with events at LCA and College for a Weekend.
15	I just recently joined but last year I did their walk-a-thon for a pool lift to be put in our school's pool, it was a great cause and well worth my time to attend.
16	I remember some of the meetings and the speakers that came in loved to teach, that was encouraging to me.
17	
18	The most meaningful experience I had through KDP was being a part of the Operation Christmas Child. I loved being able to make a difference in someone else's life.
19	Helping with fund raising events
20	I did not have any experiences with this organization.
21	As a member of CEC working for the Polar Plunge has been one of the most memorable experiences as well as hearing a presentation on how to help deaf students in the classroom. With KDP the most meaningful experience was delivering thank you gifts to the teachers of Linkhorne Elementary.
22	The one meeting I attended about deaf-blind individuals
23	The volunteer times.
24	I did not have any meaningful experiences.
25	The most meaningful experiences I had were getting to know the other students in the education major.
26	We went to the Jubilee Center to have a Thanksgiving Day party this semester. This event was a lot of fun and very meaningful to me because I love interacting with children.
27	working one on one with children that are on different levels
28	Doing the Operation Christmas Child Boxes because these boxes are really meaningful to the children who usually do not receive gifts.
29	When I pledged I was able to help at local schools which was a good experience.
30	Helping at out the iKids carnival.
31	Working with students, and getting to hear about ways to be effective,
32	The meeting where a panel of student teachers spoke to us and answered our questions was eye-opening for me. It assured me that I may feel overwhelmed at times and not know what to do as a new teacher, but it also gave me courage that it would be okay, and I would figure things out.
33	Everything that I have done with the organization has been meaningful.
34	I was able to give school supplies to needy children in the Philippines.
35	Listening to the speakers in CEC...and when I could hear in KDP

36	
37	Going to the conferences and making acquaintances with colleagues in the field.
38	When I was able to participate in school events and work closely with teachers and students.
39	
40	Reading to classes.
41	The activities were a lot of fun! Fall Harvest Party and Breakfast with Santa were meaningful to me!
42	
43	
44	
45	The banquet.
46	My most meaningful experiences involved community work that I participated in, A Walk-a Thon for a chair lift in a pool, Literacy Alive, Linkhorne's Fall Festival, Donating books and school supplies to Bass Elementary. This organization prepared me and then offered opportunities to work with real students and truly see how effective I was personally. It also opened my eyes to how much I love teaching and brought out my passion for helping people.
47	One of the most meaningful experiences I have had with CEC was when we had a speaker, who was a mom to a deaf/blind child, come in. I volunteered when she took volunteers for deaf/blind students. I wanted to see what it was like. It was challenging not only because I had to try and make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich without my sight and hearing, but also because I felt isolated. That experience gave me an idea what it is like to be a special needs child at times. Another meaningful experience was with the Fall Festival we had for children with special needs at Thomas Road Baptist Church. The girl I worked with was Mandy. Mandy was in a wheelchair and had trouble speaking, moving, and eating, yet she could still make facial expressions such as smiling. I helped her with some of the games and we walked around the track. Even though Mandy could not talk with me, I still feel that I was getting to know her through the expressions she would make. I realized that as a future teacher, I needed to get to know my students no matter even if a disability prevents them from communicating back.
48	Hearing from other teachers
49	Working at the iKids fall festival.
50	
51	VRA Review
52	The most meaningful experience was reading aloud to the students of Linkhorne Elementary School. I believed that these students benefited from us reading aloud to them. I think they looked up to us as role models for reading enjoyable stories aloud to them.
53	
54	The iKids carnival for Halloween the kids who had special needs had their own festivity and I was able to see them interact with each other and just enjoy themselves.
55	I loved helping with the iKids activities through CEC such as the Fall Festival/Carnival, as well as Breakfast with Santa. It was neat to reach out to children with special needs.
56	Linkhorne Fall Festival provided a chance to work with students and show them a good time.
57	I have not had any meaningful experiences due to the fact that the organizations are not local.

Survey Participant	Question 16: What things do you wish were different about the organization?
1	I would like to see an equal focus on special education for the gifted and talented.
2	
3	The service requirements for this organization are ridiculous.
4	more activites monthly
5	Not so expensive
6	Sometimes I think the organization could be more organized.
7	having to pay every year for membership
8	
9	I wish their could be some sort of small group interaction. Every meeting I feel like I am just one of many educators and I would love to have that more intimate relationships between my colleagues and professors.
10	Nothing.
11	That we didn't have to join.
12	There were more announcements about events.
13	
14	More lax requirements for the honor cord.
15	None that I have seen yet.
16	
17	
18	I wish we could have small group meetings rather than such huge congregational meetings.
19	Involved more secondary educators
20	I cannot give a fair judgement of the organization because I was not a very attentive member.
21	Their is nothing different that I would do about CEC, they are a very beneficial and well run organization. The only thing that I would do differently would be the number of people involved in the organization. However, with KDP I wish that they were more organized. Many meetings feel as though they were thrown together last minute and no one knows what they are doing. There also seems to be a lack of communication between the officers.
22	Maybe send an email with helpful tips to help different individuals with disabilities.
23	That it was not so expensive to join it.
24	I don't know, it is online.
25	The activies that KDP chose to do could have been alot better. I also wish that they would think of new activies. It would be nice to have social event for the members of KDP to get to know each other such as a Christmas Party.
26	I wish that more people would get involved with it.
27	
28	I wish it was smaller, better organized, and felt like a closer community.
29	Maybe more of a community-like organization and less confusion. Once I became a member I was unclear of what my responsibilities were. It was like once I paid dues I didn't have any real meaning within the organization.
30	The mandatory meetings and activities provide no flexibility and the dues are very high.
31	
32	The fund raising aspect is not as enjoyable as actually working with studnets. This semster the student leadership is not as organized as it seems to have been in previous years.
33	Nothing
34	I wish that they told you what they expected you to do before you got into the organization. Also, I wish that I was given a list of alternative organizations that I could have joined.
35	Smaller groups to get to know one another better, and learn from one another, or simply smaller meeting times because one can not hear the speaker.
36	
37	I wish there were more resources on the site, and a little more direction for the local chapters.
38	There is nothing I wish were different about Kappa Delta Pi.

39	
40	It wasn't required. Education students spend enough money on tests and other things. The additional 73 seems redundant, and too expensive. If there were experiences that actually used in the classroom, it would be much better.
41	Make sure everyone knows the game plan before the actual event.
42	
43	
44	
45	More structured and organized.
46	I wish Liberty's Chapter would allow an education dorm for the ladies, or a campus House. It would make announcements and questions easy for students who typically hunt the officers down in the education hall for questions. As far as the organization. Right now our only international partner is China. I think it would be great to include other international groups and create online communities or opportunities for teachers with students in China to participate in some form of presentations with American students. It would be awesome to set up some kind of program similar to scype where American and Chinese students could ask one another questions. Almost like penpals, but through updated technology.
47	I wish that the organization would communicate better on what events were coming up. The Fall Festival was definitely announced, however the Breakfast with Santa was not announced enough.
48	Better speakers sometimes, more active
49	Occasionally this semester I did not feel as if the leadership was as strong as it should have been.
50	
51	I wish this club was more involved we met 2 times in the semester. The first meeting was to pay our dues and learn about the club. The second was the VRA Review. It would be nice for the VRA to provide maybe a Reading Strategies Workshop with a Professional Educator or work with the Curriculum Library to provide opportunities for reading or implementing reading strategies for students in the community.
52	I do not see anything that needs to be different about the organization.
53	
54	More activites
55	The prices to join because they are very expensive for college students.
56	Less expensive. Also, KDP needs a new president. The current president is dis-organized and rude, two things that do not make a good leader.
57	The organizations would have been more effective if they were local.

Survey Participant	Question 17: Do you recommend that Liberty's Education Department keep professional organization membership a requirement in the future?	Question 18: Referring to the question above, why or why not?
1	N	Although it teaches students the importance of professionalism, the organizations themselves did not seem very beneficial.
2	N	Just like I said, I think joining an online organization is a waste of money. I can see how joining an organization like KDP or CEC would be beneficial, but it is so hard to join with the price being so expensive and the high number of mandatory events you have to attend.
3	Y	Although I do not enjoy this organization, I think it would look good on resumes.
4	Y	it is a way to collaborate and step out of your comfort zone to help others, teaches you similar qualities needed for a teacher
5	N	it should be a student's choice to join and spend that much money
6	Y	I think this is a good requirement because it helps students learn to be professional, and helps students get involved in the community, and schools.
7	Y	Membership in a professional organization looks good on our resume and the extra hours of service are a benefit to us as well as the community.
8	Y	
9	Y	It's all about serving and as Christian's that's what WE should be all about as well.
10	Y	It looks good on a resume if you are a member of a professional organization. Schools see that when they are looking to hire you and find that to be a plus.
11	N	It is pointless and wasted my precious time during a busy semester.
12	N	Because there is no point.
13	N	I am not 100% sure what I think about the question above. Being involved in an organization, CSER, practicums and professional hours can all be a bit overwhelming especially when most education majors, especially dual majors, have 18 credit hours and 8 or 9 classes.
14	Y	It's not a bad requirement, but you have to keep in mind some people can't afford it and don't have the time to participate in all of the activities.
15	N	Because I think that as an Education Major there are so many required activities and by joining a professional organization is just adding to the stress of keeping up on things. I also think that it is a lot of money to put forth that many, including myself, do not have.

16	N	We are in the classroom for almost every class anyway and our schedules are packed and I feel that the organization has not really helped me to grow as a teacher.
17	Y	
18	Y	I think they should keep requiring it because it gives the future teacher a glimpse of what they will be expected to do when they are educators in the professional world.
19	Y	Important for educators to be involved in a professional organization!
20	N	I feel that I attended many KDP meetings and did not learn very much from them. I liked the question and answer time with the student teachers but that could be something done in a classroom. I never went to a CEC meeting, I simply signed up for the credit. Nothing was required of me other than pay a fee.
21	Y	It is beneficial and great experience to be apart of a professional organization. However, I wish that there was a specific semester that it was included in one of your classes. It seems like the local KDP piles on the expenses for membership. It was also difficult because I got caught in the middle of a change in the Special Education department and just after joining KDP was told that I had to also join CEC. This ended up being a lot of extra money for two professional organizations. Professional Organizations are good but they need to be more clearly communicated.
22	N	
23	Y	Because it looks good on your resumes when you apply for a job seeing that you have been in an organization and have put forth energy into the community
24	N	I think that it should be an option and not a requirement.
25	N	There is so much to do in the education major that I hardly have time to attend all of the events. I think membership in a professional organization would be a good opportunity for extra credit. The fee was also very expensive. We are already paying alot for school and the extra money we have to pay for professional organizations is alot of extra money. Plus this is an organization that requires you to pay a fee every year.
26	Y	I believe it helps us as students and future educators to plan ahead. These organization are going to mean a lot to our future employers. It will show them that even while we were in the process of becoming teachers we were taking ourselves seriously and presenting ourselves in a professional manner.
27	Y	This experience is needed to prepare future educators for the classroom.
28	Y	Because it prepares aspiring teachers for a future of attending professional meetings.
29	N	I feel like we already get many opportunities of professionalism. Going into schools and the community are requirements of our education classes. Adding on the professional organization requirement means more money and time from us as students, which is really hard to manage.
30	N	It takes so much time out of my already busy schedule and I see no help to me in my field of teaching.

31	N	It should be a strong recommendation not a requirement. I have heard stories of a students going without food because they had to save money for dues.
32	Y	Yes, I think the professional organization is a good idea, but maybe not having two. I am happy in the organization I am in, and I plan to be in it for two years, yet I still must be a member of a second organization. Also, the required dues can be a hindrance for students who may not have extra money to be in two organizations. I do really do not want to pay to be in my organization another year, I would rather just go to the meetings to learn for free, but I have to pay to be a member until I graduate if I want to wear honor cords.
33	Y	This is a great organization
34	Y	I think that they are good if you get into one that is speaks to your grade level and subject.
35	Y	I do think it is a good requirement, but I do not like how they are run because I can never hear.
36	N	
37	Y	The professional organizations that are specific to your endorsement are extremely valuable. They offer a unique learning opportunity and chances for collaboration with colleagues. The requirement was pointless to me when I thought the only organization that was available was KDP (kappa delta pi) because that has absolutely nothing to do with music education. I would keep the requirement, but make it applicable to the endorsements, not just a random membership.
38	Y	I think it is an important part of the educational process. Students wanting to become teachers need to be prepared and knowledgeable about the different ways to get involved as a teacher.
39	N	
40	N	Because it's very expensive, and education students already have a lot on their plate.
41	Y	It is something that is beneficial to us as future educators. I do not think it is sufficient for students to just do their classwork and be done, but rather get involved; that is what it is all about! Teachers are not only there to help their students in the classroom but to be role models to all those around and if that means taking a step out of their comfort zone I think it is important to be required to do so.
42	Y	
43	N	
44	Y	
45	Y	It does look good to school's that you were an active participant in an organization.
46	Y	YES..KDP is expensive, but the benefits of the organization (if members choose to take advantage of them) far outweigh the cost. There are so many opportunities to impact both the local and global communities and there are so many connections made through the organization that it is worth it. Being a member/ officer has helped shape my own personal educational philosophies and grow me as professional.

47	Y	I believe that a professional organization membership, such as CEC, gives you the experience you need to work with future students with special needs.
48	N	I do not think it should be a requirement because to join takes time and money. I think it should be an option.
49	Y	I believe that it is great exposure. When we are out in the real world and are teaching we will have to be involved with a lot of organizations and events. I believe that this requirement is just one more thing that is helping to prepare us to be a teacher.
50	Y	
51	Y	Yes..it is cheaper than KDP to be a member, however, this club should require more of its members other than two meetings. There should be some sort of service opportunity in the community for college students to be a part of.
52	Y	I think that they should keep the professional organization membership because this society prepares a teacher candidate for the field of teaching.
53		
54	Y	because it is a great way to get experience for work field
55	Y	Yes, because it is a great experience. However, the prices to join the organizations are way too expensive and should be lowered. I know several individuals who would have loved to join other organizations, but it was too expensive for them.
56	Y	Yes, only because it shows students the potential benefits they can have by joining organizations. However, LU needs to explain to the students WHY they should be a part of these organizations (purpose, meaning, benefits) so the students will appreciate the experiences and feel good about shelling over time and money toward them.
57	N	Because most organizations are not local and do not provide a meaningful experience. Also, many of the organizations are quite pricey, which is difficult for students to pay, especially when having to pay for two organizations.

Appendix D

Examples of Professional Education Organizations

<u>Organization</u>	<u>Website</u>	<u>Mission</u>
American Federation of Teachers	http://www.aft.org/	The mission of the American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO, is to improve the lives of our members and their families; to give voice to their legitimate professional, economic and social aspirations; to strengthen the institutions in which we work; to improve the quality of the services we provide; to bring together all members to assist and support one another; and to promote democracy, human rights and freedom in our union, in our nation and throughout the world.
The Association for the Advancement of Computing Education	http://www.aace.org/about.htm	The mission of AACE is advancing Information Technology in Education and E-Learning research, development, learning, and its practical application.
Association for Childhood Education International	http://acei.org/	Our mission is to promote and support in the global community the optimal education and development of children, from birth through early adolescence, and to influence the professional growth of educators and the efforts of others who are committed to the needs of children in a changing society.
Association of Teacher Educators	http://www.ate1.org/pubs/home.cfm	The Association of Teacher Educators was founded in 1920 and is the only national, individual membership organization devoted solely to the improvement of teacher education for

		both school and campus-based teacher educators.
Council for Exceptional Children	http://www.cec.sped.org	CEC is an international community of educators who are the voice and vision of special and gifted education. Our mission is to improve the quality of life for individuals with exceptionalities and their families through professional excellence and advocacy.
International Reading Association	http://www.reading.org/	The mission of the International Reading Association is to promote reading by continuously advancing the quality of literacy instruction and research worldwide.
The International Society for Technology in Education	http://www.iste.org/	ISTE advances excellence in learning and teaching through innovative and effective uses of technology.
Kappa Delta Pi	www.kdp.org	The mission of Kappa Delta Pi is to sustain an honored community of diverse educators by promoting excellence and advancing scholarship, leadership, and service.
National Art Education Organization	http://www.naea-reston.org/	The mission of NAEA is to promote art education through professional development, service, advancement of knowledge, and leadership.
National Association for Music Education	http://www.menc.org/	The National Association for Music Education is to advance music education by encouraging the study and making of music by all.
National Council for the Social Studies	http://www.socialstudies.org/	National Council for the Social Studies is an association of over 25,000 educators who have come together to strengthen the social studies profession and social studies programs in the schools.

National Council of Teachers of English	http://www.ncte.org/	The National Council of Teachers of English is devoted to improving the teaching and learning of English language arts at all levels of education.
National Council of Teachers of Mathematics	http://www.nctm.org	The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics is a public voice of mathematics education supporting teachers to ensure equitable mathematics learning of the highest quality for all students through vision, leadership, professional development and research.
National Middle School Association	http://www.nmsa.org/	National Middle School Association is dedicated to improving the educational experiences of young adolescents by providing vision, knowledge, and resources to all who serve them in order to develop healthy, productive, and ethical citizens.
Piedmont Area Reading Council	Located in VA	
Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc.	http://www.tesol.org/	TESOL's mission is to develop and maintain professional expertise in English language teaching and learning for speakers of other languages worldwide.

Appendix E

Working with Dr. Goodwin, Thesis Committee Chair



Dr. Goodwin (left), Amanda McMillian (right)

Appendix F**Institutional Review Board Approval**

The Institutional Review Board at Liberty University must approve all human subjects research conducted at through the university. The survey created on LiveText and used for research in this thesis was approved by the Committee on the Use of Human Research Subjects as a part of the Institutional Review Board.