Faculty Research Grant

Final Report

Arkansas Tech University

Mid-South Educational Research Association

Knoxville, TN

November 5 – 7, 2014

Stephanie P. Pepper, Ed.D

Assistant Professor of Curriculum & Instruction

B. Restatement of Problem

The Mid-South Educational Research Association (MSERA) Annual Meeting was held in Knoxville, TN, November 5 – 7, 2014. My paper "*Examining factors affecting pre-service teachers' self-efficacy in curriculum decisions and classroom management strategi*es" was presented at this conference. This venue offered an excellent opportunity for the dissemination of the research results. Additionally, the conference proved to be informative and beneficial as I made professional contacts and attended many informative sessions.

My paper, "*Examining factors affecting pre-service teachers' self-efficacy in curriculum decisions and classroom management strategi*es" addresses self-efficacy as one of the major traits of a successful teacher. The authors' research studied ATU's Early Childhood Education (ECED) junior and senior pre-service teachers' self-efficacy and identified the need for improvement in the areas of curriculum and classroom management. As a result of this research, the researchers gained a better understanding of the value of mentoring and professional development as invaluable means to help sustain teachers' enthusiasm and growth. Furthermore, the researchers always strive to integrate the results of research into the curriculum at ATU for the betterment of the students.

C. Brief Review of the Research Procedure Utilized

The MSERA Annual Meeting afforded me the opportunity to interact with other professionals from across six states to present papers and discuss current research trends and local, state and national initiatives. My presentation concerned the issue of pre-service teachers' self-efficacy. The participants in the study were 123 preservice teachers (undergraduate), enrolled in curriculum and classroom management courses at ATU. The participants were

surveyed in their junior year and again in their senior year to see if their self-efficacy beliefs changed. The information that I disseminate while attending conferences is of some importance in our current educational environment. Furthermore, this venue allowed me to share techniques for improving self-efficacy and to report the results of this research.

D. Summary of Findings

The focus of this study is to examine several factors related to curriculum and classroom management affecting preservice teachers' self-efficacy, specifically:

1. Is there correlation between pre-service teachers' self-efficacy and their use of technology?

2. Is there correlation between pre-service teachers' self-efficacy dimensions (engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management) and the use of technology?

3. Does preservice teachers' self-efficacy differ based on gender?

4. Is there correlation between preservice teachers' self-efficacy and learning styles?

The results for each of these questions are summarized below.

Question 1 – the results showed that there was a strong, negative correlation between pre-service teachers' self-efficacy in curriculum decisions and classroom management strategies and their use of technology. Thus, higher pre-service teachers' self-efficacy in curriculum decisions and classroom management strategies were associated with lower use of technology.

Question 2 – the results indicated that there was a strong, negative correlation between pre-service teachers' self-efficacy in engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management and their use of technology. Higher pre-service teachers' self-efficacy in

engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management were associated with lower use of technology.

Question 3 – the results show that although the metacognitive skills of female preservice teacher were higher than male, these differences weren't significant – a suggestion that gender does not have an effect on the preservice teachers' overall self-efficacy.

Question 4 – the results showed that there was no correlation between preservice teachers' self-efficacy and learning styles.

E. Conclusions and Recommendations

The finding of the first two questions regarding students' self-efficacy and the use of technology indicate that there was significant and negative correlation between pre-service teachers' self-efficacy and their use of technology in curriculum decisions and classroom management strategies course. Based on this finding, higher pre-service teachers' self-efficacy was associated with lower use of technology or higher use of technology is associated with lower self-efficacy. These findings were demonstrated by the strong and negative correlation between students' self-efficacy and their use of technology. The results of these questions were consistent with previous findings observed in different learning contexts and provides insight into preservice teachers' self-efficacy and technology acceptance and use (Thatcher & Perrewe, 2002). Another significant finding of this study is related to students' self-efficacy and gender. The finding of the third question indicates that gender does not have an effect on the preservice teachers' self-efficacy. This finding was demonstrated by insignificant correlation between students' self-efficacy and their gender. This result was found to be related to most of the prior research on gender and self-efficacy, which showed inconsistent findings (Meece, Glienke, &

Burg, 2006). Finally, an interesting aspect of the present study emerged through the finding that there was no correlation between preservice teachers' self-efficacy and learning styles. This result was demonstrated by no correlation between both variables.

In conclusion, this research proved valuable in gaining information about students' views after taking courses in our curriculum. The research illustrated the need for strengthening our approaches within the courses. Thus, as the research revealed, the case is made for developing effective teaching techniques for maximizing our students' knowledge in curriculum and classroom management courses, increasing their level of participation on campus and in field-based experiences, and exposing them to more uses of technology for instructional use.

References:

Meece, J. L., Glienke, B. B., & Burg, S. (2006). Gender and Motivation. Journal of School

    Psychology, 44, 351-373. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsp.2006.04.004

Thatcher, J. B., & Perrewe, P. L. (2002). An empirical examination of individual traits as

    antecedents to computer anxiety and computer self-efficacy. *Mis Quarterly*, 381-396.

Conference Name Tag

MSERA Annual Meeting
November 5-7, 2014   Knoxville, TN

Stephanie P Pepper
Arkansas Tech University

43nd **Annual Meeting**
Mid-South Educational Research Association

PRESIDER