

Traditional and Alternatively Prepared Teachers' Perception of Skills: The Induction Year

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T3 at Kean University

- Kean is a comprehensive, urban, multicultural university
- 13,000 students
- 4,000 students in Education majors
- Among the largest producers of teachers in New Jersey

The T3 Project

- Partnership between a large urban university and four urban, high needs school districts
- Prepare teachers in areas of shortages for high need school districts
- Disciplines included Mathematics, Science, Bilingual Education/ESL, and Special Education
- Commitment to teach 3 years in a high needs district

Project Elements

- Identification, recruitment and selection of participants willing to commit to teaching in selected high needs districts in the targeted disciplines;
- Financial assistance to pay for 15 graduate credits;
- Preparation, retention and support in the form of an accelerated university program; and
- Induction support including university mentors who were master teachers who offered ongoing consultation and observation to participating teachers.

Participants

- The population from which the sample was generated included all first year teachers in each school district.
- In total 186 surveys were returned. Due to a survey error, surveys for one district were not coded by type of training (alternative or traditional).
- Among the two districts for which training information was available ($n = 50$), 39 percent were alternative route teachers while 61 percent were traditionally prepared).

Data Collection: Survey

- A survey was developed by a team of researchers and practitioners
- The survey included 15 items requiring self-reflection of ability
- Each item was followed by five response choices:

<u>Choice</u>	<u>Coded</u>
Insufficient	1
Beginning	2
Adequate	3
Competent	4
Strong	5

Survey Items requested participants
to rate their **competence and/or ability**

1. Plan Instruction
2. Use Instructional Strategies
3. Use Instructional Technology
4. Create a Positive Learning Envir.
5. Communicate Effectively
6. Use Formal Assessment
7. Use Informal Assessment
8. Reflect on your Instruction
9. Work with Students' Families
10. Work with the Community
11. Deliver Instruction Effectively
12. Use Classroom Mgt. Tech.
13. Promote Critical Thinking Skills
14. Implement NJ Core Curriculum
15. Work with a diverse student body

Data Collection

- Surveys were distributed to all first year teachers in May of their induction year.
- Focus group discussions were held with T3 participants during the summer, post their induction year.

Results by Training

Mean Self Rating of Ability: Alternate Route vs. Traditional

Item	Alternate	Traditional	t-test	Eta Squared
C1. Plan Instruction	3.68	4.30	2.43*	.11
C2. Use Instructional Strategies	3.53	4.30	3.08**	.17
C3. Use Instructional Technology	3.50	3.70	0.68	.01
C4. Create a Positive Learning Envir.	4.00	4.40	1.53	.05
C5. Communicate Effectively	4.10	4.50	1.81+	.06
C6. Use Formal Assessment	3.74	4.10	1.42	.04
C7. Use Informal Assessment	3.77	4.30	2.21*	.09
C8. Reflect on your Instruction	3.81	4.15	1.34	.04
C9. Work with Students' Families	3.45	3.80	1.09	.02
C10. Work with the Community	3.23	3.45	0.70	.01
C11. Deliver Instruction Effectively	3.71	4.30	2.26*	.10
C12. Use Classroom Mgt. Techniques	3.52	4.15	1.93+	.07
C13. Promote Critical Thinking	3.77	4.15	1.53	.05
C14. Implement NJ Core Curriculum	3.90	4.35	1.74+	.06
C15. Work with a Diverse Student Body	4.10	4.55	1.97+	.07

* $p < .05$

+ $p < .10$

Overall Results in Order of Ability

Rating of Ability: Overall Sample in Order of Reflection

Self Rating of Ability	Mean	(Num)
C15. Work with a Diverse Student Body	4.41	(178)
C4. Create a Positive Learning Envir.	4.36	(177)
C5. Communicate Effectively	4.35	(178)
C11. Deliver Instruction Effectively	4.12	(178)
C14. Implement NJ Core Curriculum	4.11	(178)
C8. Reflect on your Instruction	4.08	(177)
C13. Promote Critical Thinking	4.07	(178)
C1. Plan instruction	4.05	(176)
C7. Use Informal Assessment	4.00	(178)
C6. Use Formal Assessment	3.99	(178)
C2. Use Instructional Strategies	3.96	(176)
C12. Use Classroom Mgt. Techniques	3.91	(177)
C3. Use Instructional Technology	3.80	(176)
C9. Work with Students' Families	3.63	(175)
C10. Work with the Community	3.33	(172)

Written in Most Often: First Year Difficulties

- Classroom Management
for some, linked to efforts to motivate students.
- Time
not enough time to cover the material they must,
time to complete required paperwork,
time to generate lesson plans,
time to complete classes and programs while teaching.
- Teaching Related Concerns
having to learn new content and curriculum,
differentiated instruction,
getting to know the needs of their students.
- Administration
little support and guidance,
securing the materials they needed.
- Difficulties experienced due to starting in their school mid-year (post September).

Written in Most Often: Most Helpful - First Year

- Support they were afforded from their colleagues.
- Support of their mentor.
- Administration
- Also noted were training related assets,
alternate route training
traditional college training experiences.

In-service Suggestions

- Classroom/behavior management/discipline
- Subject specific (e.g., teaching algebra, ESL, guided reading)
- Supporting children with exceptionality
- Technology software workshops
- Assessment (informal, proximity)
- Informal grade/subject area meetings
- Motivating students
- Differentiated Instruction
- Objective writing/lesson plan
- Standards modification
- Structuring projects
- Effective homework
- Dealing with diverse classroom situations
- Multiple intelligences

Most Valued Aspects of T3

- Financial assistance
- Support offered them through clinical instructors
Appreciated was the constructive criticism given by the clinical instructors as well as the hints and suggestions they offered to help them deal with a wide variety of situations.
- Other T3 participants
The community formed by T3 participants.
Several indicated that their fellow T3 participants functioned, to some extent, as a support group. Participants were able to commiserate with each other and help each other through the bureaucracy of the teacher certification and university enrollment.

T3 Difficulties Reported

- Many described time pressures:
Having to complete course work while preparing lesson plans.
This was further aggravated by some districts requiring participation in a second alternative route program.
- Although the philosophy of T3 was hands on, differentiated approach to education, much of the instruction was lecture.
Much of the university classwork could not easily be applied to the everyday classrooms of participants.
- Appreciated aspects of other alternative programs (other than T3) were the hands on materials that participants could take from the alternative program and easily apply in their own classroom.

Summary

- We are finishing our 4th cohort of participants
- 106 teachers have been certified
- 73 have three years of teaching in a high needs district
- Each year, evaluation data, both formative and summative was used to modify grant operation.

Success

- We are proud of our successes which were born of many difficulties and lessons learned
- We are especially proud of one of our participants who was named the 2008 **Teacher of the Year** in her school district.
 - She is a mid career changer who holds a Ph.D. in Genetics and is currently in her third year of teaching science in middle school