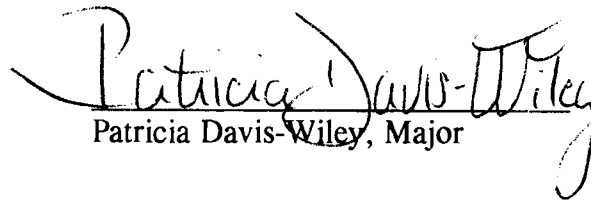


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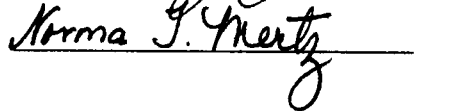
I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Marshall Anthony George entitled "The English Methods Course as Viewed by English Educators and Leaders in Secondary School English." I have examined the final copy of the dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education, with a major in Curriculum and Instruction.


Patricia Davis-Wiley, Major

Professor

We have read this dissertation
and recommend its acceptance:





Accepted for the Council:


Associate Vice Chancellor and
Dean of The Graduate School

THE ENGLISH METHODS COURSE
AS VIEWED BY
ENGLISH EDUCATORS AND LEADERS IN SECONDARY SCHOOL ENGLISH

A Dissertation
Presented for the
Doctor of Education
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Marshall Anthony George
May 1997

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents

Mr. Samuel Donald George
and
Mrs. Laura Wilkerson George

who may have spoiled me rotten, but who gave me the love, support, and encouragement to achieve my dreams.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. Patricia Davis-Wiley, who has been more than my committee chair and major professor. Dr. Wiley has served as a mentor, in the truest sense of the word, and has been my friend, my colleague, and my own personal cheerleader. Her work ethic and dedication to the teaching profession have been inspiring. I would also like to express my thanks to Dr. Ted Hipple, who has been my mentor and colleague in English education, and has served as a role model to me in so many ways. In addition, I wish to thank my two other doctoral committee members, Dr. Norma Mertz, who helped me develop my leadership skills and who challenged me to really think about my research, and Dr. Russel Hirst, who willingly served as the "non-College of Education" member of my doctoral committee.

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Finally, to my sisters Cindy and Sherron, my brother Don, and my dearest Mother, I wish to express a very special thanks for their encouragement, their love, their faith in me, and their unfailing support.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to describe and compare the beliefs of English educators and leaders in secondary school English about the English methods courses required of pre-service teachers of secondary school English. More specifically, the researcher sought answers to the following research questions: (a) What do English educators consider the purpose of the English methods course to be? (b) What do leaders in secondary school English consider the purpose of the English methods course to be? (c) What do English educators consider to be the most important topics for study in the English methods course? (d) What do leaders in secondary school English consider to be the most important topics for study in the English methods course? (e) What teaching strategies do English educators consider to be the most effective for the teaching of secondary school English. (f) What teaching strategies do leaders in secondary school English consider to be the most effective for the teaching of secondary school English? (g) What is the comparison between the responses of English educators and leaders in secondary school English concerning the emphasis that should be given to each of the given topics in the English methods course? (h) What is the comparison between the responses of English educators and leaders in secondary school English concerning the effectiveness of given teaching strategies in the secondary school English class?

In larger teacher education programs, which offer specialized training for pre-service teachers of the English language arts, the subject-specific methods course in

the teaching of English plays an integral part in preparing novice English teachers. While there have been occasional attempts by English educators to describe the status of this course, there have been few empirical studies specifically addressing the English methods course. In addition, it appears that few studies have examined the perceptions of in-service secondary English teachers concerning what should be taught in the English methods course.

Therefore, in an effort to examine the English methods course, a questionnaire was developed by the researcher and sent to all members of the 1996-97 Executive Committees and other selected committee chairs of the Conference on English Leadership (CEL) and the Conference on English Education (CEE) of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). The four-part questionnaire addressed the demographic backgrounds of the participants, as well as asked for their views regarding the purpose and course content of the English methods course and the effectiveness of selected teaching strategies in the secondary school English classroom.

The findings of the research indicated both differences and commonalties among the beliefs and perceptions of leaders in secondary school English and English educators regarding the English methods course required of pre-service teachers of secondary school English. English educators and leaders in secondary school English generally concurred regarding the emphasis that should be placed on given topics in the English methods course, as well as the effectiveness of selected teaching strategies. However, there were some semantic differences found in the statements of the purpose of the English methods course given by respondents from each group. The following

are some specific conclusions, which answer the eight research questions posed in this study:

1. English educators considered the purpose of the English methods course to be to provide students with the theoretical and philosophical background needed to prepare them for future classroom instruction. In addition, CEE respondents indicated that the English methods course should provide students with an overview of instructional strategies and teaching methods related to reading and writing, in order to enable them to begin teaching and reflecting on their practice.

2. Leaders in secondary school English considered the purpose of the English methods course to be to prepare pre-service teachers for the realities of the secondary school English classroom by providing them with the theoretical background they need to formulate their own theories of teaching and learning. CEL respondents felt that in an English methods course, students must also be given meaningful opportunities to transform the theories they learn about into practice, in order to develop a repertoire of teaching strategies that may be effectively used to teach the English language arts to real students, in real classrooms.

3. English educators indicated that as a whole, topics related to the content area "Composition" required the most emphasis in the English methods course. In addition, CEE respondents rated "Strategies for Teaching Literature," "Reflective Teaching," and "The Writing Process" as the three topics requiring the heaviest emphasis in the English methods course.

4. Leaders in secondary school English agreed that topics related to the content area "Composition" required the heaviest emphasis in the English methods course. CEL respondents also rated "Discussion Skills," "Relationship Between Language Skills and Writing," and "The Writing Process" as deserving heavy emphasis in the English methods course.

5. English educators considered "Class Discussion" and "Group / Individual Projects" to be the most effective teaching strategies for use in the secondary school English class. CEE respondents considered "Lecture" to be ineffective.

6. Leaders in secondary school English rated "Class Discussion" and "Group and Individual Projects" as being the most effective teaching strategies for use in the secondary school English class. CEL respondents considered "Lecture" to be an ineffective strategy for use in the teaching of the secondary school English class.

7. While there were some semantic and ideological differences found in the stated purposes of the English methods course, English educators and Leaders in Secondary English considered many of the same topics as requiring heavy emphasis in the English methods course. Both groups indicated that topics related to the content area "Composition" required the heaviest emphasis. Likewise, an examination of the 10 highest ranked topics revealed that English educators and leaders in secondary school English ranked seven of the same topics as being most important.

8. When rating nine given teaching strategies for their perceived effectiveness in the secondary school English class, English educators and leaders in secondary school English were largely in agreement. Respondents from both groups concurred

that "Group and Individual Projects" and "Class Discussion" were the most effective teaching strategies in secondary school English classes; moreover, English educators and leaders in secondary school English were in agreement as to the ineffectiveness of lecturing.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION	1
The Problem	3
The Purpose	7
Research Questions	7
Importance of the Study	8
Assumptions	10
Limitations	11
Definition of Terms	13
Organization of the Study	15
Chapter Summary	16
II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	17
Criticism and Reform in Teacher Education	17
Professional Teacher Education Courses	25
General and Subject-Specific Methods Course	29
Secondary School English Teacher Preparation	37
The English Methods Course	41
Summary	52
Chapter Summary	54
III. METHODS AND PROCEDURES	55
Introduction	55
Subjects	56
Procedures	57
Survey Instruments	59
Data Analysis	61
Chapter Summary	64
IV. ANALYSIS OF THE DATA	66
Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents	69
Purpose of the English Methods Course	74
English Methods Course Content	79
Teaching Strategies	90

Discussion of the Findings	96
Chapter Summary	100
V. SUMMARIES, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	102
Summary	102
Conclusions	114
Educational Implications	118
Recommendations	122
Chapter Summary	125
REFERENCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY	
APPENDICES	137
Appendix A. Letter to CEE Committee	138
Appendix B. Letter to CEL Committee	140
Appendix C. CEL English Methods Course Survey	142
Appendix D. CEE English Methods Course Survey	148
Appendix E. Data Analysis of Part IV of Surveys	154
VITA	158

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Table Title	Page
1	Demographic Characteristics of CEL Respondents	70
2	Demographic Characteristics of CEE Respondents	72
3	CEL Ranking of Content Area Clusters	81
4	CEE Ranking of Content Area Clusters	81
5	Topic from Each Content Area Cluster with the Highest Mean	84
6	Ten Highest Ranked Topics CEL Participants Rated for Inclusion in the English Methods Course	85
7	Ten Highest Ranked Topics CEE Participants Rated for Inclusion in the English Methods Course	85
8	Rank Order and Mean Score of CEL Respondents of Teaching Strategies Rated for Effectiveness for Use in the Secondary School English Class	91
9	Rank Order and Mean Score of CEE Respondents of Teaching Strategies Rated for Effectiveness for Use in the Secondary School English Class	93
10	Rank Order and Mean Score of CEE Respondents of Teaching Strategies that Should be Utilized or Modeled in the English Methods Course	95

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The preservice teacher education program should initiate and develop certain knowledge, pedagogical abilities, and attitudes which will be the foundation for the teacher's subsequent professional career--for the English language arts teacher as scholar, decision-maker, and agent of curriculum change. (NCTE, 1996, p. 4)

While public schools were established during the early American colonial period, the teachers in those schools did not begin to receive specialized training until the early 1800s, when the first public "normal school" was established in Massachusetts in 1839. The function of these normal schools was to provide professionally prepared teachers for the "common schools" in the New England states. These single-purposed schools varied greatly in terms of curriculum, approach, and rigor (Urban, 1990, p. 62).

As the number of public elementary and secondary schools grew in the latter half of the 19th century, teachers colleges were begun and departments of education appeared in liberal arts colleges and universities around the country. The scholars who helped develop these teacher training programs "devoted their attention to an attempt to organize and place [them] on a sound intellectual footing...and to provide a science of education and pedagogy" (Urban, 1990, p. 63). Today, more than 150 years later, there are over 500,000 pre-service teachers enrolled each year in teacher education programs at over 1,300 institutions of higher learning across the United States (Schwartz, 1996, p.5).

Historically, teacher education programs have been the subject of a great deal of criticism, with some of the most harsh claims being leveled during the past 15 years. These criticisms have lead to an increase in the amount of research focusing on teacher education. Yarger and Smith (1990) identify research focusing on "process" as being the most common type of educational research. They define *process*, in the teacher education research context, as,

... those activities associated with actual delivery of the teacher education program or, more generally, aspects of how teachers are educated or developed as teachers. As such, research on process is most often focused on particular aspects of a teacher education program and are very applied. Many efforts in this area would be considered evaluation research, necessary for the continuing development and improvement of a teacher education program. (p. 36)

While there has been much talk of "reform" in teacher education, and schools of education report a great deal of change in the past few years, there is little evidence of significant change in many aspects of these programs. Unfortunately, this lack of real change often carries over into the classrooms where the students of teacher education programs become teachers. In their work on teacher education, Clifford and Guthrie (1988) contend that,

...a 1937 teacher would not be shocked upon entering an American elementary or secondary school classroom in 1987 . . . Teachers still lecture and explain, students still listen (or pretend to), take notes, use workbooks and do written assignments and (perhaps) homework. (p. 327)

Indeed, because most of the changes that can be seen in teacher education attempt to increase teacher professionalism, they have often been at the general organizational level of the overall programs rather than at the classroom level of the individual courses offered in those programs. A criticism commonly made of teacher education course work is that the content of these courses is often not congruent with what is needed in the "real world" of the secondary classroom.

The Problem

Michael Fullen begins his important work focusing on change in education with the observation that "Everywhere there is change; yet, there is nothing new under the sun" (1982, p.2)! Many scholars contend that this is especially true of teacher education programs. Indeed, in the past 10 years, attempts at sweeping reforms at all levels of education have been underway. Yet, as Imig and Switzer (1996) point out,

There is a widespread belief that teacher education programs have changed little since their inception, have failed to keep pace with the profound sociopolitical changes in society, and have contributed little to the current efforts to dramatically restructure and reform American K-12 schools. (p. 213)

The need for change in teacher education programs has been the subject of debate for over 150 years. Critics from outside schools of education have called for a great deal of change, while many "insiders" have often seen less need for change. Nevertheless, attempts to reform our nation's teacher education programs have been widespread in recent years. These modifications have been referred to as "single purpose changes." (Imig & Switzer, 1996, p. 215) such as raising admissions standards, extending field and student teaching experiences, and even requiring more course work for students seeking degrees in teaching. The literature suggests, however, that there is little evidence of change in required teacher education courses. Perhaps the same people who have taught the courses which have been under criticism continue to teach these same courses in much the same way that they always have. A review of the literature suggests that little has been done to address the appropriateness of the content of education courses.

Methods courses, which may be general or subject-specific, are considered to play an important part in the preparation of novice teachers (Bennett, 1978; Ferguson & Womack, 1993; Grossman, 1990; Houston & Newman, 1982). Yet, it

has been said that there is "little knowledge of what teacher education courses are like" (Zeichner, 1988, cited in Grossman, 1990, p.22). Echoing this sentiment, Smagorinsky and Whiting (1995) suggest that, "the education profession itself has exacerbated the problem by treating the methods course so lightly that we have little formal knowledge about the ways in which it is taught" (p.111). Educators must begin to address these required education courses in terms of the appropriateness of their purposes, content, and the approaches used to teach them.

John Goodlad (1990) points out that "the most common lament of students in schools and colleges focuses on the irrelevance of much of what they study to what they perceive to be the real world...[this is] particularly descriptive of teacher education programs (p. 246-247)." While it may be true that students do not necessarily know what is best for them, in-service experienced teachers often echo the complaints of college students that their education course work is not sufficiently preparing them for success as classroom teachers.

In larger teacher education programs, which offer specialized training for pre-service teachers of the English language arts, the subject-specific methods course in the teaching of English plays an integral part in preparing novice English teachers. While there have been occasional attempts by English educators to describe the status of this course, there have been few empirical studies specifically addressing the English methods course.

Bushman (1989) points out that changes are needed in the English methods course to make it more relevant to the actual situations of student teaching. Bushman (1989) recommends that not only should professors of the methods course regularly spend time in the secondary school English classroom, but also that experienced in-service English teachers be included in the planning of the methods course so that the course content is more appropriate for the realities of the secondary school English classroom. This echoes the recommendation of the Commission on Excellence in Education, who, in A Nation at Risk (1983) insist that "Master teachers should be involved in designing teacher preparation programs..." (p. 31). Nevertheless, based on a review of the literature, it appears that few studies have examined the perceptions of in-service secondary English teachers concerning what should be taught in the methods course.

Therefore, there is a need to study the English methods course to examine its content as well as to determine if it is meeting the needs of pre-service English teachers. To do so thoroughly, it is necessary to examine the perceptions of both English educators and experienced teachers of secondary school English.

The Purpose

The purpose of this study was to describe and compare the beliefs of English educators and leaders in secondary school English concerning the English methods course required of pre-service teachers of secondary school English. The purpose and content of the English methods course, along with the instructional strategies that are considered effective for teaching secondary school English, were examined.

Research Questions

In an effort to examine the beliefs and perceptions of experts in the fields of English education and secondary school English teaching regarding the needs of pre-service English education programs, the following research questions were posed:

- 1) What do English educators consider the purpose of the English methods course to be?
- 2) What do leaders in secondary school English consider the purpose of the English methods course to be?

- 3) What do English educators consider to be the most important topics for study in the English methods course?
- 4) What do leaders in secondary school English consider to be the most important topics for study in the English methods course?
- 5) What teaching strategies do English educators consider to be the most effective for the teaching of secondary school English?
- 6) What teaching strategies do leaders in secondary school English consider to be the most effective for the teaching of secondary school English?
- 7) What is the comparison between the responses of English educators and leaders in secondary school English concerning the emphasis that should be given to each of the given topics in the English methods course?
- 8) What is the comparison between the responses of English educators and leaders in secondary school English concerning the effectiveness of given teaching strategies in the secondary school English class?

Importance of the Study

Often, the debate surrounding the importance and effectiveness of teacher education course work continues to be based on individual and ideological rather than empirical grounds. As Feiman-Nemser (1983) points out, it is extremely difficult to understand the impact of the pre-service preparation of teachers on

teacher development without knowing more about what this preparation is like.

Indeed, few studies have attempted to focus on methods courses and their content.

For this reason, Virginia Koehler (1985) calls for research that provides "careful descriptions of program, method and classroom process and their effects on students" (p. 28). Likewise, in the area of English teacher preparation, there have been repeated calls for further inquiry into the issue of how English teachers are and should be taught (Grossman, 1990; Oftedahl, 1985; Smagorinsky & Whiting, 1995). Oftedahl (1985) states,

The objectives of any further studies ... should be to discover more about English methods courses and [how to] subsequently alter the courses to result in better and more practical English teaching in the public schools, and to develop programs which will produce teachers more knowledgeable of the latest theories and practices in the teaching of English. (p. 78)

The cries against teacher education programs get louder and louder. While there is evidence that methods courses do have positive effects on student teachers, the literature suggests that these effects are limited. A common criticism is that the content and focus of methods courses are not congruent with the realities of teaching in the secondary school. If the purpose of teacher education programs is to prepare pre-service teachers to be successful educators in the secondary school, it seems logical that the voices of those experienced teachers who daily face the realities of teaching in the secondary school classroom be heard. It should prove

useful to compare the views of experienced secondary school English teachers concerning the content of the English methods course with those of English educators who teach this course.

It is hoped that this study will contribute significantly to the small body of literature which addresses specific courses in teacher preparation programs. It may even have the potential to positively impact the teaching of the English methods course. Improvement in this important course may, in turn, lead to improvement in the teaching of English at the secondary level. At a time when all levels of education are facing heavy criticism, research that can lead to improvement at both the secondary and higher education levels is invaluable.

Assumptions

It was a fundamental assumption of this study that the selected population, all members of the executive committees, and selected chairs of standing committees and commissions of the Conference on English Leadership (CEL) and Conference on English Education (CEE) of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) could be considered "experts" in the fields of English education and teaching of secondary English. With this in mind, it was also assumed that these experts could provide valuable insight into what is currently being taught in the English methods course as well as what should be taught.

Furthermore, it was assumed that the participants in the study adequately and honestly reflected on the questions asked in the survey and provided responses that reflected their beliefs about the teaching of English and the preparation of secondary school English teachers.

It was also an assumption of this study that the major purpose of teacher education programs in English is to prepare teachers to be successful and effective teachers of English in the reality of the secondary school English class. In addition, it was assumed that the English methods course plays an important part in this process of preparing pre-service teachers in terms of attitudes, beliefs, and approaches toward the teaching of English.

Limitations

1. The population for the study is limited to all members of the Executive Committee and selected chairs of related commissions and committees of the Conference on English Education (CEE) and Conference on English Leadership (CEL) of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE).
2. All of the members of the CEE Executive Committee had not been teachers of the English methods course, and some were not teaching the English methods course at the time of the study.

3. While all members of the CEL Executive Committee had been secondary school English teachers, some were not currently in-service teachers of English in secondary schools.

4. The questionnaire asked CEE members to complete survey questions based on English methods courses they teach or have taught; this self-report may have been biased in that the instructors might have indicated they used teaching strategies more or less frequently than they actually did. Likewise, the instructors may have indicated that they stressed certain topics more or less than they actually did.

5. The questionnaire asked CEL members to indicate their opinions concerning topics that should be addressed in an English methods course. They may have had difficulty in completing this section if they had not had recent exposure to such a course.

6. The questionnaires asked CEE members to respond to the questions as if there were only one English methods course taught to pre-service teachers. Some respondents may have overlooked this direction when rating the emphasis that should be given to listed topics.

/

Definition of Terms

Special terminologies are often used when discussing English teacher preparation and methods courses. In order to clarify their meaning, a list of operational definitions is provided below.

CEE (Conference on English Education)

The CEE is an organization within the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) open to all persons interested in discussing all aspects of the field of English education, both pre-service and in-service, and at all grade levels. The Executive Committee is the governing body of the organization, and the commissions are subcommittees comprised of leaders within the conference which focus on the various specific issues related to English education (NCTE Directory, 1995).

CEL (Conference on English Leadership)

The CEL is an organization within the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) comprised of English Department leaders and English educators who hold a common interest in English program development and teacher training. The Executive Committee is the governing body of the organization, and the

commissions are subcommittees made up of leaders within the conference which focus on the various specific issues related to secondary school English (NCTE Directory, 1995).

English Educators

English educators are professional educators whose task it is to prepare teachers of English and the language arts for secondary school classroom teaching. These professionals usually work in teacher preparation programs at colleges and universities.

Methods Courses

Methods courses are general courses of practical teaching or teaching methods or courses in methods of teaching specific school subjects in the classroom (Page, Thomas, & Marshall, 1977).

NCTE (National Council of Teachers of English)

The NCTE is a national organization for teachers of English that focuses on the concerns of English language arts teaching professionals (NCTE, 1996).

Pre-service English Teacher Education Programs

Pre-service English teacher education programs are intended to initiate and develop certain knowledge, pedagogical abilities, and attitudes which will be the foundation for the teacher's subsequent professional career--for the English language arts teacher as scholar, decision-maker, and agent of curriculum change (NCTE, 1996, p. 4).

Organization of the Study

The study is organized into five chapters, followed by a list of references and appendices.

Chapter One is an introduction to the study, including background, statement of the problem, list of research questions, and a discussion of the importance of the study. Assumptions and limitations of the study are stated, and definitions of relevant terms are provided. Finally, the organization of the study is explained.

Chapter Two reviews the literature of previous research related to this study. Included in this review is an examination of literature addressing reforms in teacher education, professional course work in teacher education, general and subject-specific methods courses, and English teacher preparation, including the English methods course.

Chapter Three discusses the methods and procedures used in selection of the subjects, creation of the instrument, administration of the survey questionnaire, and the data analysis.

Chapter Four presents the results of the study and the details of the process of data analysis.

Chapter Five provides a summary of the study, a discussion of its findings and conclusions, along with its implications for educational practice, and offers suggestions for further research.

Chapter Summary

This chapter introduced the research topic, problem, purpose, research questions, importance, assumptions, limitations, definitions of terms, and organization of the study, which aimed to examine the beliefs of English educators and leaders in secondary school English concerning the English methods course. The following chapter will provide a review of the literature related to the present study.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

An extensive search of the Educational Research Information Center (ERIC) and Dissertation Abstracts International (DAI) data bases covering research in teacher education and English education for the past 30 years, reveals that teacher education programs have been the subject of an enormous number of studies. This has been especially true during the past 10 years, when teacher education has faced a great deal of criticism. The following review of the literature highlights the research related to the present study. Of particular interest is literature and research focusing on (a) criticism and reform in teacher education, (b) professional teacher education courses, (c) subject-specific methods courses, (d) secondary school English teacher preparation, and (e) the English methods course.

Criticism and Reform in Teacher Education

As previously noted, there are nearly 500,000 pre-service teachers enrolled each year in teacher education programs in over 1,300 institutions of higher learning across the United States of America (Schwartz, 1996, p.5). Always subject to scrutiny and criticism, teacher education has been at the center of public discussion and debate for the past two decades. The purpose of teacher education, the content

and pedagogy of professional programs, and the quality of teacher education students and teacher educators have been, and continue to be, the subject of sharp criticism and debate among the public, the corporate sector, and the educational community itself. These criticisms have lead to widespread attempts at reform in most teacher education programs in this country.

This most recent wave of criticism of teacher education programs began with the publication of A Nation at Risk (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). This national report, the result of 18 months of study, sought to examine the quality of America's schools and colleges, and to generate reform of our entire educational system. The report included a strong criticism of teacher education, in particular the education courses required. The Commission pointed out that,

The teacher preparation curriculum is weighed heavily with courses in "educational methods" at the expense of courses in subjects to be taught. A survey of 1,350 institutions training teachers indicated that 41 percent of the time of elementary school candidates is spent in education courses, which reduces the amount of time for subject matter courses. (p. 22)

An important recommendation made in this report related directly to teacher education was that, "Master teachers should be involved in designing teacher preparation programs and in supervising teachers during their probationary

years" (p. 31). This notion of cooperation between teacher educators and classroom teachers is echoed in many other reports related to teacher education.

Throughout the 1980s, a host of subsequent reports emerged expressing a great deal of concern with the state of our nation's schools, and issuing challenges for improving them (Carnegie Forum on Education and Economy, 1986; National Commission for Excellence in Teacher Education, 1985; Southern Regional Educational Board, 1985). Each of these included criticisms of teacher preparation programs; however, few of the statements concerning the relative effects of subject matter and education course work contained in these reports were supported by empirical evidence. Tom (1987) criticized these reports, and warned people to be "skeptical and very selective about accepting the recommendations from the various teacher education reform reports" (p.37). Tom (1987) contends that ill-defined questions, incomplete rationales, unsubstantiated generalizations, questionable solutions, and unexamined assumptions flaw these reports.

Nevertheless, in response to the concerns and challenges raised in this wave of criticisms, several groups were formed to focus on improving the quality of teacher preparation. In 1986, The Holmes Group, made up of education deans of major research universities, issued a report entitled Tomorrow's Teachers. This report suggested many changes for the improvement of teacher preparation programs in our nation. The reforms suggested included changes in the ways in which prospective teachers are recruited and selected, as well as in the content,

organization, structure, and control of pre-service and in-service educational programs. Other recommendations of The Holmes Group (1986) involved the professionalization of teaching and improvements in both undergraduate liberal arts and subject-specific courses. Despite criticisms of education courses like that cited above from A Nation at Risk, changes in teacher education courses, including more study of pedagogical methods, were suggested by The Holmes Group.

Nine years later, The Holmes Group (1995) published a report entitled Tomorrow's Schools of Education, in which they continued to address the need for reform in teacher education programs in this country. The group identified five elements, which they suggested form the core around which teacher preparation programs should be built. These elements were concerned with the following:

- * Human development and young people's learning
- * Subject matter, technology and pedagogy for young people's learning
- * Instructional management for young people's learning
- * Inquiry, reflection, and R & D in the interest of young people's learning
- * Collaboration and support in young people's learning.

(The Holmes Group, 1995, p. 70)

The Holmes Group insisted that reforms in teacher education are urgent if we are to enter the 21st century with effective teachers in our nation's classrooms. This group encouraged collaboration between schools and teacher education programs in the struggle to improve pedagogy at all levels. Therefore, they have advocated

further research and evaluation of courses related to pedagogy, and suggest that this must be a cooperative effort of teacher educators and school teachers.

Echoing the recommendations of the Holmes Group, a similar organization, the Renaissance Group (1993), placed a great deal of emphasis on the necessity of connecting teacher education with the world of practice--the local schools.

Principle Three of the Renaissance Group's recommendations regarding criteria for effective teacher education states that:

Decisions concerning the education of teachers are the shared responsibility of the university faculty, practitioners, and other related professionals... All segments of the education community share responsibility for the preparation of high quality professionals for the nation's schools. Although the college or university plays a key role in this process, decision making is shared with those who make up the larger education community. Those who practice in the schools are partners in conceptualizing, planning, developing, and delivering teacher education programs. (The Renaissance Group, 1993, p. 3)

Indeed, there needs to be more cooperation and collaboration between the teachers in the schools and the professors in teacher education programs. As the Renaissance Group and others have repeatedly pointed out, there is not a strong enough connection between teacher education and the realities of the elementary and secondary school classroom.

Another group focusing on reform in teaching and teacher education, the National Commission on Teaching & America's Future, stated as its mission "...to provide an action agenda for meeting America's educational challenges, connecting the quest for higher student achievement with the need for teachers who are knowledgeable, skillful, and committed to meeting the needs of all students" (1996, p. a). This commission, comprised of political figures, teacher educators, university leaders, and public school personnel, issued a 1996 report entitled What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future.

Among a whole host of recommendations, the commission called for "the reinvention" of teacher preparation and professional development. Like their predecessors, this group suggested that, despite the vast ongoing changes in the world, many teacher education programs have remained unchanged over the years. A discussion of the major flaws in teacher preparation revealed the Commission's belief that fragmentation within these programs seems to be the major contributor to their ineffectiveness. They suggested that the disconnectedness between theory and practice, subject matter course work and professional education course work, even among professional education, courses causes novice teachers to be unable to put into practice what they have learned in their teacher education programs, thus forcing them to revert to the traditional ways in which they may have been taught.

Among their recommendations for correcting these flaws, the Commission insisted that teacher educators must serve as models in their teaching, and act as

"bridges between disciplinary and pedagogical course work so that a solid platform for content pedagogy can be built" (National Commission on Teaching & America's Future, 1996, p. 77). In addition, the Commission urged the creation of professional development schools, where teacher educators and in-service, experienced teachers can work together to integrate theory and practice and make the content of teacher education courses more relevant to the realities of teaching.

Not all of the criticism of teacher education has come from the national level. Teacher educators, themselves, have pointed an accusatory finger at their own programs. It has been suggested that one of the most pervasive problems in teacher education is the tendency to resist change and maintain the status quo, even if the tempo of social and technological change has been vastly accelerated (Goodall & Burke, 1980). Goodall and Burke (1980) contended that teacher education programs have seen little change since their conception, despite the knowledge explosion and breakthroughs in the learning process. As discussed above, this sentiment was echoed 16 years later by the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (1996). Another criticism cited by Goodall and Burke (1980) as being the most common complaint of experienced teachers, was that teacher preparation courses often do not appear to be relevant to classroom problems faced by teachers in the public school.

Two other teacher educators, Rogus and Schuttenburg (1979), examined the body of literature addressing criticisms of teacher education programs and identified

three characteristics found in most teacher education programs that appear to have a negative influence on pre-service teacher learning. First, according to the authors, the literature indicates that the practice of teaching has often been relegated to secondary importance, and teacher education is held in low regard by the overall academic community and even within colleges of education themselves. Second, within colleges of education, many teachers are isolated, and lack any adequate support system. This leads to frustration and burnout in teacher educators. Related to this idea of isolation of teacher educators is the finding that there is often little cooperation between teacher educators and practitioners in the public school. Rogus and Schuttenburg (1979) pointed out that this lack of a connection between teacher education and the world of practice is a source of weakness in the whole teacher preparation process. Finally, the authors claimed that colleges of education engage in little research of their own effectiveness or on new knowledge relative to teaching and learning (p. 40).

Thus, it is evident that a great deal of the literature in teacher education in the past decade has focused on the problems facing these programs, and numerous calls for reform have been issued. One of the most common criticisms has been the claim of a weak connection between teacher education programs and the schools in which they prepare novice teachers to teach. Complaints that course work in teacher education does not adequately prepare pre-service teachers for the realities of teaching pervade the literature. Calls for reform in teacher education come from

educators themselves as well as from other segments of our society, and must be addressed by teacher educators.

Professional Teacher Education Courses

In reviewing the literature addressing the course work offered in programs of teacher education, Katz and Rath (1982) pointed out that much of the literature suggests that "teacher education courses have little, if any, positive or enduring impact on graduates' teaching performances" (p.8). While they agreed that courses offered in teacher education programs have many proven weaknesses, Katz and Rath (1982) also suggested that there is a body of literature which indicates that education courses can and do impact the students who take them.

In an effort to account for the apparent weaknesses in education courses, these researchers surveyed teacher education professors to determine what course goals and objectives they established for their courses in pedagogy, what types of instructional strategies they employed in an effort to meet their class goals, and what attributes they believed were characteristic of effective teaching. Katz and Rath (1982) hoped to determine if there was a congruence between the goals teacher educators address in pedagogy classes and the attributes they believe to be characteristic of effective teachers.

The assumption of the study was that class goals and teaching strategies in pedagogy courses would be formulated in terms of the instructors' views of what constitutes the elements of effective teaching. The results of the study indicated that teachers of pedagogy courses often reported that they used a limited or narrow range of teaching strategies to teach their courses. Many of these professors did not model the very approaches to teaching they considered to be effective at the secondary school level. The authors considered there to be an incongruence in the goals the professors established for their courses and the teaching strategies they used to teach the courses. Likewise, there was an incongruence in what the professors identified as being characteristics of effective teaching (at the secondary school level) and their own teaching at the university level. This would support the body of literature reviewed by Katz and Rath (1982) claiming that teacher education course work is often ineffective.

On the other hand, in a review of 83 studies relating to teacher education and teaching performance, Veenman (1984) concluded that teacher education programs that emphasize subject matter training at the expense of professional education courses are less effective in preparing teachers to teach than those programs which provide both extensive subject matter training as well as professional educational courses. One such study, conducted by Denton and Lacina (1984), examined the differences between supervisors' ratings of instructional competencies of education majors and non-education majors participating in a competency-based teacher

preparation program. The data collected from 82 secondary student teachers in various curricular areas revealed that education majors were rated significantly higher by their site-based supervisors on instructional competencies than their non-education major colleagues, thus suggesting that course work in education and pedagogy can lead to more effective teaching.

Another review of related literature, conducted by Ashton and Crocker (1985), found that while only five of 14 empirical studies (36%) showed a positive relationship between the number of credits teachers earned in their academic (content area) fields and their teaching effectiveness; four of seven studies (57%) showed a positive correlation between amounts of professional course work and teacher effectiveness. This would suggest that education course work can prove more valuable in preparing teachers than courses in the subject matter in which they intend to teach.

To affirm this notion, Ferguson and Womack (1993) conducted a study in Arkansas to evaluate the effectiveness of the teacher education courses there. Instructional competence was measured according to 13 categories of teaching expertise. Evaluators, including mentor teachers, university supervisors, and principals, were asked to estimate the extent to which the student teacher had succeeded in mastering the competencies described in each category. The findings, which were based on consistent performance ratings done by a variety of

professional educators and supervisors, add to the body of research indicating that teacher education courses can make a positive difference in teaching performance.

In addition to pedagogical competencies, attitudes toward teaching and learning may play an important role in determining the effectiveness of novice teachers.

While there is some debate about whether a progressive or traditional approach to teaching is more effective, Skipper and Quantz (1987) argue that effective teaching research shows that teachers with more progressive attitudes toward teaching have better results in terms of student achievement. Thus, in an effort to determine if education courses influence pre-service teachers' attitudes toward teaching, the researchers conducted a longitudinal experimental study to trace the development of attitudes toward teaching.

Upon examining the attitudes toward teaching and education in general of college students in their first year, and again in their senior year (after completing either a liberal arts or education major), Skipper and Quantz (1987) discovered that students who completed teacher education programs developed more progressive views toward teaching and learning during their four years in college than did their more traditional arts and science colleagues. The study suggested that education majors became increasingly student-centered in their attitudes and more knowledgeable about teaching methods which are consistent with effective student development and critical thinking. Thus, the study affirmed that teacher education courses do influence students' attitudes, making them more progressive.

Thus, a review of literature focusing on course work in teacher education suggests that while there may be a number of problems with the content of these courses and the approaches used to teach these courses, teacher education courses can play an important role in effectively preparing pre-service teachers to become effective classroom teachers. The goal of further research, then, must be to determine how to increase the efficacy of these courses to better prepare pre-service teachers for the realities of teaching in the classroom.

General and Subject-Specific Methods Course

The idea of a "teaching methods" was mentioned as early as 1840, when Horace Mann stated,

Aptness to teach, in fine, embraces a knowledge of methods and processes . . . He who is apt to teach is acquainted, not only with common methods for common minds but with particular dispositions and temperaments, and he is acquainted with the principles of all methods, whereby he can vary his plan, according to any differences of circumstances. (cited in Cremin, 1957, pp. 47-48)

More than 100 years later, speaking of courses focusing on the "methods" mentioned by Horace Mann, James Conant (1963) spoke of "those terrible methods courses which waste students' time" (p. 137). The literature suggests that while

Conant may have had reason to complain about methods courses, they do play an important role in the preparation of new teachers. In addition, Proefriedt (1994) contends that, "nothing defines teacher education in the eyes of those outside of it so much as the methods course and the teaching practice that follows it" (p.79). Therefore, it is important to examine the literature related to both general and subject specific methods courses.

Houston and Newman (1982) provide a description and explanation of the two types of methods courses. In general methods courses, students learn the basics of planning, implementing, and evaluating instruction. Special methods courses, however, focus on the teaching of particular subjects, such as English, math, or science. These authors contended that methods courses have been the scene of the most noticeable changes in teacher education programs in the preceding 15 years, yet they provided no basis or proof of this belief. They suggested, again without citing the source of their information, that the courses which formerly consisted mostly of lectures, readings, and the writing of sample unit and lesson plans, subsequently included teaching practice through micro-teaching or simulation and often involve field experiences in public school classrooms.

An examination of the literature related to subject specific methods courses suggests that both sides in the debate regarding the value of methods courses may be valid. Methods courses do seem to influence teachers' attitudes, behaviors, and approach to teaching (Bennett, 1978; Bush, 1986; Lamme & Ross, 1981; Quinn,

1993); yet, the content of these courses may not be completely appropriate for the realities of teaching in today's schools (Killian, 1983; Mertz & Zidonis, 1982; Myers, 1983). For example, Bennett (1978) contended that methods courses play a very important role in forming attitudes and behaviors of pre-service teachers. Bennett's study focused very specifically on the effects the methods course had on novice teachers' attitudes and behaviors regarding multiethnic students.

Bennett's survey study, based on an experimental model, examined student teachers' attitudes and behavior toward students of diverse backgrounds before and after a unit in the methods class focusing on multiculturalism was taught. The results indicated that there was a significant difference in the attitudes and behaviors of those students who received training in their methods course in multiculturalism and those in the control group who did not. Bennett (1979) suggested that pre-service teachers need to be provided with skills and teaching strategies to teach within a pluralistic society. His study suggests that methods courses can be successful in accomplishing that goal.

The literature from several different subject areas suggests that methods courses also influence teachers' approaches to instruction. Perkes (1968) investigated the relationship between junior high school science teachers' preparation, teaching behavior, and student achievement. Through the use of questionnaires and teacher observations, Perkes found that teachers who had more credits in science education and science methods courses used a wider variety of effective teaching methods,

which in turn led to better student achievement on standardized science tests than their colleagues who had fewer science education courses. This study suggests, then, that subject-specific methods courses can positively effect teacher effectiveness.

In the field of mathematics education, two studies have confirmed that the methods course has value for the pre-service math teacher. Bush (1986), in an attempt to answer the question, "where do teachers learn to make teaching decisions?" conducted a qualitative study. Based on a series of extensive interviews with student teachers, Bush concluded that student teachers' decision-making regarding instructional approaches and classroom management was influenced more by the subject-specific methods course they had taken prior to student teaching than by any other source. Interestingly, the interviewees cited their methods instructors' performance in class as being more influential than the actual content of the course. This study suggests not only efficacy of methods courses, but indicates that methods instructors serve as important models for the beginning teachers they are preparing.

Also in the area of mathematics, Quinn (1993) examined the effects of methods courses on the mathematical attitudes, content knowledge, and pedagogical beliefs of pre-service secondary math teachers. Using an instrument to measure attitudes before and after students took the methods course, Quinn's quantitative data indicated that the teachers' attitudes toward mathematics did improve during the

course of the semester. Likewise, a qualitative analysis showed that teachers' pedagogical beliefs and practices changed significantly after taking the methods course. On the other hand, a quantitative examination of students' content knowledge before and after the methods course revealed no significant change in that area. Thus, Quinn (1993) concluded that the methods course can prove to be a valuable part of pre-service teacher training programs.

Other studies have focused on the extent to which methods courses influence the pre-service teacher's approach to instruction. At the University of Florida, Lamme and Ross (1981) conducted a study to determine to what degree students enrolled in a methods course in English understood, accepted, and applied the new theories they studied in that methods course. At the beginning and again at the end of the semester, student teachers completed a questionnaire to determine how frequently they used certain materials and teaching techniques in their classes.

The results indicated that the majority of the teachers in the study changed their teaching practices in ways which reflect the theories taught in the course. Thus, it appears that education courses can broaden teachers' repertoires of materials and teaching techniques. The researchers did not identify which theories and teaching strategies were advocated in the course. The research does suggest, however, that "it may be easier for teachers to adopt or appropriately adapt practices presented in a methods course when they have an initial propensity to change, and when their

personal philosophies are similar to those underlying the course assignments"

(Lamme & Ross, 1981, p.27).

While Lamme and Ross (1981) attempted to gather student perceptions of a particular course, Hoover (1985) set out to examine whether the content of her reading methods course was considered appropriate by reading supervisors in local schools. In an interview study, Hoover found that the course content taught in the reading methods course was congruent with the actual needs of the classroom reading teacher. She stated, "Pre-service teachers in methods courses are not always convinced that what they are learning will be of real value to them later on in the classroom"(p. 14). The results of this study indicated otherwise.

While most investigations into the effectiveness of teacher education course work tend to consider the perceptions and ideas of teacher educators and occasionally, of in-service professionals, some examine students' perceptions of these courses. In 1985, John Goodlad (1990) and his colleagues launched a massive inquiry into the many facets of teacher education. In one part of their study, which provides perhaps the most definitive analysis of teacher education to date, students in teacher education programs were surveyed to determine their perceptions of the values of each of the components of their programs. While courses in educational psychology and social foundations rated rather low in terms of usefulness in the "real world" of classroom teaching, general and subject specific methods courses were only outranked by the student teaching experience itself.

As Goodlad pointed out, "Once students start out to prepare for an occupation, they judge the curriculum marked off as preparatory on very practical grounds of perceived relevance" (p. 247). To follow up the written questionnaires, Goodlad (1990) conducted qualitative interviews as well. Likewise, the interviews indicated that students believed that completion of a teacher preparation program was necessary for later good teaching. Goodlad concurred with this belief, and urged teacher educators not to underestimate the influence their courses have on students and to examine the quality of the courses they teach, in order to provide the best and most relevant preparation possible for teachers enrolled in their programs. Goodlad indicated that the "best possible preparation" is one that prepares the pre-service teacher for the realities of teaching in the public school.

Bayless and Moody (1984) provided a critical analysis of methods courses in their study which examined the perceptions of in-service speech teachers about the speech methods courses they had previously taken at various colleges in Arkansas. Only about 50% of the subjects (all practicing speech teachers) in the study felt that the methods course had been worthwhile in preparing them for the realities of teaching speech in the public schools in that state. The subjects specifically indicated that units in course and lesson planning proved to be the most helpful part of the methods course, but were critical of the course content and teaching strategies utilized by their instructors. A common criticism was that the courses

had been too theoretical, lacking practical application. The study did not include the perceptions of the methods instructors concerning the efficacy of their courses.

The studies addressing the efficacy of general and subject specific methods courses support the belief that these courses can and often do prove to be effective in accomplishing at least some of the goals and objectives of the instructors. However, few of the studies reviewed establish that those goals and objectives are appropriate. Only Bennett (1979) used the recommendations and mandates of national organizations to determine the goals and objectives of the course he evaluated. The rest of the studies attempted to prove that the courses being examined were successful in meeting the goals and objectives of the instructors who taught them.

Likewise, only two studies (Bayless & Moody, 1984; Hoover, 1985) asked in-service teachers to evaluate the relevancy of the courses in question to the realities of teaching in the public schools. The results of one study (Bayless & Moody, 1984) suggested that there is a lack of congruence between the content of the speech methods course and the needs of public school speech teachers in Arkansas. The results of the Hoover(1985) study, on the other hand, confirmed that the content of her own methods course was appropriate for teaching reading in the public schools where her students completed their student teaching experience.

Thus, the literature suggests that methods courses do have the power to influence pre-service teachers in a variety of disciplines. However, the content of those

courses needs to be considered and evaluated not only by the instructors of those courses, but by students in the courses as well as by experienced and in-service teachers. In addition, the purposes, goals, objectives, and content of those courses need to be compared to the guidelines established by discipline-appropriate national organizations. Otherwise, there remains the risk that methods courses may indeed be influencing novice teachers--influencing them in a negative way.

Secondary School English Teacher Preparation

The previous review indicated a paucity in the literature addressing the preparation of teachers in a variety of disciplines. Likewise, the body of literature focusing on the preparation of English teachers is not very extensive. In recent years, the National Council of Teachers of English has urged educators to conduct research related to the effectiveness of English teacher education programs, resulting in an increase in research conducted in the field. A few studies have attempted to establish guidelines for English teacher education programs. Others have focused on the English methods course, required as a part of many English teacher preparation programs. Student perceptions of and satisfaction with teacher education programs has been the subject of a small body of literature. Few studies, however, have addressed in-service English teachers' perceptions of English teacher preparation.

The English Teacher Preparation Study (Viall, 1967) was one of the first reports focused on identifying critical issues in English teacher preparation. The study, sponsored by a grant from the United States Office of Education, was conducted jointly by the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC), the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), and the Modern Language Association (MLA). The purpose of the study was to produce a set of guidelines which described desirable competencies for teachers of English. This, the researchers hoped, would allow the establishment of "a context within which programs for the preparation of teachers of English can be evaluated with discretion and imagination" (Vial, 1967, p. 885).

The outcome was a set of guidelines established through a series of regional and national conferences and meetings, along with consultations involving practicing classroom teachers and professors of English and English education. These guidelines included not only a list of qualities and beliefs that teachers of English at all levels should have, but also recommendations on how English teacher education programs could effectively help pre-service teachers of English to develop these qualities and beliefs. Included in the recommendations was cooperation between universities and schools. However, the majority of the recommendations dealt with subject-matter knowledge of the English language arts.

During every decade in its 75-year history, the National Council of Teachers of English has published a set of recommendations or guidelines for the preparation of

teachers of English language arts. A Statement on the Preparation of Teachers of English and the Language Arts (NCTE, 1976) focused on the changes that had occurred since the Viall study (1967)--changes in teacher education in general, in English education, in the teaching environment, and in the world as a whole.

Likewise, the more recent Guidelines for the Preparation of Teachers of English Language Arts (NCTE, 1986) reflected the changes that occurred in educational theory, research, and practice in the preceding decade. Among these factors were,

... increased use of standardized testing for both students and teachers; the growing influence of psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics on the teaching of English as a second language; pedagogy for exceptional students; developments in technology; a variety of learning theories in composition; and the language-for-learning movement. (p. 1)

Very recently, the 1996 Guidelines for the Preparation of Teachers of English Language Arts was published, reflecting even more updates which mirror changes in the social, philosophical, theoretical, and political arenas of the 1990s. The authors stated that in the decade since the previous Guidelines were written, "the movement into an electronic age has increased exponentially . . . and the criticism of American schools has become even more frequent and more strident..." (p. 2). The 1996 Guidelines were an attempt to represent what "... teachers of English language arts should believe, know, and be able to do in classrooms" (p.4). Like those who participated in the writing of the previous Guidelines, the committee

who authored the 1996 Guidelines was comprised of both English educators and leaders in secondary school English.

An examination of the 1996 Guidelines for the Preparation of Teachers of English Language Arts reveals that the most notable changes from previous editions address the increasing focus on multiculturalism and the respect for diversity. In addition, the use of computers and instructional technology in the classroom receives heavy emphasis in the new Guidelines. Indeed, three decades of Guidelines for the Preparation of Teachers of English Language Arts reveal a great deal of changes in attitudes, beliefs, content, and approaches to the teaching of English.

In an effort to assess reaction to the NCTE Statement on the Preparation of Teachers of English and Language Arts (1976), Quisenberry (1981) conducted a study in which he surveyed English educators around the country. The questionnaire presented 29 modified items from the NCTE Statement, with 10 items grouped under the heading "Knowledge English teachers need," 13 items concerning abilities needed by English teachers, and six items regarding the desirable attitudes of English teachers. Respondents were asked to identify the importance or usefulness of each of the items.

Results indicated that knowledge related to writing and language usage were considered to be most important. Regarding abilities needed by English teachers, the ability "to identify, assess, and interpret student progress in listening, reading, speaking, and writing" (Quisenberry, 1981, p.75) ranked as the most important.

The attitude of "a recognition that, whatever their rate of growth and progress, all children are worthy of a teacher's sympathetic attention" (p. 75) ranked highest. In general, Quisenberry (1981) determined that the objectives of English teacher preparation programs were in line with the recommendations appearing in the 1976 Statement on the Preparation of Teachers of English Language Arts. His assessment of the programs included in the study was that while not perfect, they were indeed "making genuine attempts to meet perceived needs in the profession" (p. 77). However, Quisenberry(1981) examined only the perceptions of English educators, and did not include those of in-service teachers of English.

The English Methods Course

In the early 1960s, in an effort to find ways to improve the teaching of English methods courses, the National Council of Teachers of English encouraged study of the course work included in programs for the preparation of secondary English teachers. In response to the call for more research in this area, Evans and Cardone (1963) conducted an extensive descriptive study of the English methods courses taught at colleges and universities around the country.

A one-page questionnaire was sent to 1,276 institutions in order to compile a list of instructors who were solely or primarily responsible for teaching English methods courses. Approximately 570 instructors were identified, and further

questionnaires were later sent to these methods instructors. Nearly 200 of the surveys were returned, representing private and public colleges and universities of all sizes all over the United States. Of primary interest were the academic and professional backgrounds of the methods instructors, and the content of the methods courses they taught.

Findings indicated that a large majority of the instructors held doctoral degrees. In addition, most held teaching certificates, having at least some experience teaching in the secondary English class earlier in their careers. Almost 80% were members of the National Council of Teacher of English, and most were active in other professional organizations.

The English methods course was found to be most commonly taught to undergraduates, during their senior year. While 36 different texts were reported to be used, two were used by 41% of the instructors. The titles of these popular texts were not provided. The five topics most commonly considered to be the most important were teaching literature, teaching composition, teaching grammar, constructing unit and lesson plans, and teaching reading. Methods most commonly employed in the teaching of the methods course were reported to be informal group discussion, source readings, current materials study, lecture, and demonstrations. This study helped to provide a thorough description of what the methods course was like in 1963. However, it made no attempt to evaluate the effectiveness or appropriateness of the methods course.

A decade later, in order to determine what English methods instructors were focusing on in their courses at that time, Hipple (1974) randomly surveyed instructors from a variety of colleges and universities. Of the 158 questionnaires mailed, 102 were returned. The major portion of Hipple's survey instrument consisted of a list of 50 items; respondents were asked to rate each item as to the extent to which it was stressed in the English methods course. His findings, similar to those of Evans and Cardone (1963), indicated that the topics receiving the most emphasis included strategies for teaching literature, discussion skills, unit planning and preparation, affective domain, and evaluation of compositions. Another topic, adolescent literature, was shown as being a very important one in another part of the survey.

Similar to the findings of Evans and Cardone (1963), Hipple found that teachers used a wide variety of texts in their methods courses, but three were the clear favorites among the instructors. In the final portion of the survey, Hipple asked respondents to list aspects of teaching the methods course with which they were pleased as well as those with which they were displeased. While many respondents were pleased with the progress their students made in acquiring various skills and techniques, there was a great deal of dissatisfaction with the necessity of grading students in the course, the lack of time to spend in the public schools, the lack of coordination with other education courses, and the short amount of time allowed for the methods course. Again, this study provided a thorough description

of the English methods course in 1974. In addition, Hipple gave professors of the methods course the opportunity to reflect on the perceived strengths and weaknesses of their course. However, Hipple did not attempt to evaluate the effectiveness or appropriateness of the course as a preparation for teaching English in the secondary school, nor was it his purpose to examine the perceptions of experienced teachers as to the appropriateness of the course content.

Eleven years after the Hipple study, Oftedahl (1985) conducted a similar study examining methods courses in the Midwest. Her questions addressed the demographic information of instructors of the English methods course, the topics they felt most important for inclusion in the methods course, and the teaching strategies they felt beginning teachers should possess. However, unlike previous studies of English methods courses, Oftedahl also surveyed in-service public secondary English teachers to ascertain their feelings about the same questions addressed to the methods professors. She then compared the responses of the professors with those of the secondary English teachers.

Her instrument was developed using the questionnaires of similar previously done studies (Hipple, 1974; Katz & Raths, 1982). Using statistical procedures to compare the responses of the two groups, Oftedahl was able to draw several conclusions and generalizations from the data.

The content of secondary English methods courses in the Midwest, as reported by Oftedahl (1985), was viewed differently by methods professors and secondary

English teachers. Teachers felt that the methods courses often did not include what they perceived as necessary for successful teaching of English in the secondary school. Overwhelmingly, in contrast to the perceptions of the methods instructors, classroom teachers felt more emphasis should be placed on teaching strategies than on theory and philosophical issues. Likewise, according to Oftedahl (1985), the in-service English teachers felt discipline and classroom management was of primary concern, whereas method professors did not feel these topics important or relevant to the English methods course.

Overall, the study indicated that professors of methods courses are pleased with the content and teaching strategies covered in their courses, while secondary English teachers were largely dissatisfied with the courses. The study suggests that methods professors need to reevaluate the content of the courses they teach, and should perhaps find ways to become more aware of the current realities of the public school English class. The content deemed important for inclusion in the methods course by instructors of those courses (Oftedahl, 1985) differed little from that of the earlier descriptive studies done by Evans & Cardone (1963) and Hipple (1974).

Possibly the most thorough examination of the English methods course was completed by Smagorinsky and Whiting (1995). The findings of this study were published in the full-length book, How English Teachers Get Taught: Methods of Teaching the Methods Class. As the title suggests, the focus of this book was a bit

different than that of the studies of Evans and Cardone (1963), Hipple (1974), and Oftedahl (1985). Rather than looking at *what* is taught in the methods course, Smagorinsky and Whiting looked at *how* it is taught.

This qualitative study was based on an analysis of syllabi of English methods courses submitted by instructors from colleges and universities from around the country. Extensive examination of the syllabi indicated that there are five general approaches to teaching the English methods class. The first of these, the survey approach, covers a great many issues and topics during a single semester. The second, the workshop approach, moves from theory to practice in a "hands on" manner, with an emphasis on collaboration, continuity, feedback, and revision (Smagorinsky & Whiting, 1995, p. 12). Another approach, the experienced-based course, typically alternates between field experience and regular class sessions. The fourth approach, the theoretical course, emphasizes the theories behind teaching practice, rather than practice itself. Finally, the reflective approach involves students in "consistent, formal reflection about course readings, their own experiences as learners, and their own experiences in the course itself" (pp. 18-19).

The most common approach to teaching the methods course was the survey approach. However, many of the syllabi submitted for the study contained elements of two or more of the approaches to teaching the English methods course. After identifying and discussing these five approaches, Smagorinsky and Whiting (1995) examined activities and assessments commonly used in methods courses,

and discussed the theories and issues represented in the syllabi. Their discussion of the English methods course was very subjective; they admitted that the reaction to and analysis of these syllabi represented their own beliefs about the teaching of the English methods course. Thus, this important work was based upon the analysis and beliefs of two English educators, and the literature surrounding effective teaching and learning. However, the "realities" of the secondary school English class were not addressed, and the reactions of teachers of secondary school English were not included.

In contrast, other researchers in the field of English education have attempted to examine teacher satisfaction with their own English teacher preparation course as well as views of experienced secondary school English teachers. Fagan and Laine (1980) conducted a study of Pennsylvania English teachers in order to ascertain how satisfied they were with the effectiveness of their undergraduate teacher education program at Pennsylvania State University.

Ninety-one recent graduates were sent surveys that asked them to indicate the adequacy of their preparation in various topics covered in the English methods course. Results suggested that 34% of the teachers felt that their undergraduate preparation could have been improved to make it more beneficial. They expressed the concern that they had not been adequately prepared for the teaching of composition and grammar. Likewise, respondents indicated a weakness in their preparation for teaching adolescent literature.

In a similar study in Montana, Folsom (1983) reported the results of several survey studies he had conducted to determine how satisfied alumni from two universities in that state were with their undergraduate English teacher preparation programs. Very similar to the findings of Fagan and Laine, the results of this study indicated that the programs needed strengthening in the following areas: (a) teaching of grammar, (b) evaluation of student writing, (c) learning how to manage the paper load, (d) teaching of critical reading and vocabulary, and (e) motivating students (Folsom, 1983). Teachers were especially concerned that they had not been adequately prepared to teach composition and grammar.

Mertz and Zidonis (1982) conducted an extensive survey study in Ohio in order to establish an information base from which better preparation and development of programs in English education might be designed. They included in their study secondary school English teachers, supervisors of secondary school language arts, and professors of English education. Mertz and Zidonis (1982) attempted to identify the parts of the secondary English teacher preparation program each of these groups rated as most important, and gave each of the groups the opportunity to evaluate their own preparation or programs.

All three groups agreed that the three basic areas of the English curriculum that were most important to address in English teacher preparation were literature, language writing, and reading. However, there was a large difference between professors and the supervisors/teachers in terms of the importance of grammar,

usage, and mechanics. Teachers and supervisors believed grammar, usage, and mechanics to be very important, while professors rated these areas as low priority in English teacher preparation. Another incongruence was in the importance of mass media in the curriculum. Professors rated it as being very important, while teachers and supervisors gave it minimum importance.

Similarly, when asked to rate the effectiveness of teacher education programs, supervisors and teachers indicated more emphasis was needed on the teaching of grammar, usage, and mechanics and less on mass media, while professors felt these topics were given adequate attention in their programs. This shows that while English educators and secondary school English teachers and supervisors agreed on the general aspects to be addressed in teacher education, there was some dissonance regarding some of the specific content areas that they felt need to be stressed.

Two additional studies, both completed in 1983, attempted to examine the views of student teachers and cooperating teachers about the English methods course. Over a five-year period, Myers (1983) gave student teachers at Tennessee Technological University the opportunity to share their viewpoints regarding their English education program. A six open-ended question survey solicited student viewpoints regarding the English content course offerings, the professional education course offerings, the methods course, and the departmental cooperation of the English Department and the College of Education. With regard to the methods course, students overwhelmingly rated it as a valuable experience;

however, most recommended more need to stress the practical over the theoretical.

Myers (1983) reported that students commonly referred to the need to emphasize the "realities" of the English teaching environment (Myers, 1983. p.111).

The work of Killian (1983), focusing on the views of the cooperating teachers toward English teacher preparation, echoed the sentiments of the students surveyed in earlier studies (Fagan & Laine, 1980; Folsom, 1983; Myers, 1983). Killian (1983) attempted to ascertain the strengths and weakness of English preparation programs and the methods course as viewed by cooperating teachers who had recently worked with student teachers. She explained the need to consult cooperating and in-service experienced teachers by suggesting that "novice teachers are still loyal and idealistic about their own [preparation] programs and do not know enough about the real world of teaching to be sensitive to their own inadequacies" (p. 136).

An analysis of her questionnaire revealed that there was indeed a consensus in the perceptions of the cooperating teachers and the students previously surveyed by Fagan and Laine (1980). Cooperating teachers overwhelmingly felt that English teacher preparation programs were doing an inadequate job of preparing novice teachers to teach grammar, usage, and mechanics. The teaching of written composition was another area where cooperating teachers felt student teachers were ill-prepared to teach. In addition, teachers at the middle school / junior-high level felt that preparation to teach adolescent literature was weak. Finally, cooperating

teachers echoed the sentiments of the students in the Myers (1983) study that more attention needed to be given to effective discipline and classroom management.

In the discussion of these findings, Killian (1983) stated that, "teacher educators should take concerns of practitioners seriously in planning for the improvement of teacher education curriculum" (p. 141). In addition, she urged English educators to re-examine the content of the methods course, making sure that those who complete the methods course are well-prepared for the "realities" of the secondary school English classroom.

Because of the paucity in the research focusing on the preparation of secondary English teachers, there has been a repeated call for further study. With the exception of the study done by Smagorinsky and Whiting (1995), little has been published during the decade of the 1990s regarding the English methods course. Not only should the changing needs in the field be examined, the course content, method of presentation, and requirements must also be studied. The literature indicates that when asked for their opinions, in-service teachers, both novice and experienced, suggest that the preparation being given to pre-service teachers of secondary school English is not always adequate (Fagan & Laine, 1980; Folsom, 1983; Myers, 1983). Yet, studies focusing on the perceptions of instructors of the English methods course indicate that they are generally satisfied with the content and efficacy of their course (Hipple, 1974; Mertz & Zidonis, 1982; Oftedahl, 1985). Therefore, further study of the English methods course is needed. Future studies

should attempt to examine not only the perceptions and beliefs of English educators towards the English methods course, but also those of secondary school English teachers.

As Stephen J. Thompson (1977) pointed out, both university professors and secondary school teachers need to be involved in joint planning of objectives and experiences for pre-service teachers. " Both groups share a common desire to improve the preparation program and each generally recognizes the importance of the other in the overall educational experience" (Thompson, 1977, p. 196). Thus, both English educators and teachers of secondary school English must be involved in the attempt to evaluate and improve the English methods course, making it more relevant for today's pre-service teacher of English language arts.

Summary

Based on the results of this review examining the literature related to criticism and reform in teacher education, professional teacher education courses, subject-specific methods courses, and secondary English teacher preparation and the English methods course, the following statements can be made:

1. Teacher preparation programs have been harshly criticized in the past 15 years. A number of recommendations for reforming teacher education have been made by various groups and individuals. The majority of these

reforms have been at the program level rather than at the individual course level.

2. While teacher education programs have been criticized, a sizable body of literature indicates that they can be successful in influencing the attitudes, beliefs, and teaching approaches of pre-service teachers.

3. Efforts have been made to make changes in the preparation of teachers. English educators have attempted to provide updated guidelines in an effort to reflect the changes in the world at large, as well as in the field of education.

4. Despite these changes in the field of education and recommendations for changes in English teacher preparation, according to descriptions of the course content provided by their instructors, it appears that many courses in education, including the English methods course have not changed significantly over the past 30 years. Nevertheless, English methods professors indicate that they are generally satisfied with the content of their courses.

5. Studies of the perceptions and evaluations of student teachers, cooperating teachers, and supervisors regarding the English methods course indicate that while helpful in many ways, these courses could be improved by better reflecting the needs caused by the realities of the public school classroom.

Chapter Summary

In an effort to provide a theoretical framework for the present study, this chapter has provided a review of the literature related to the present study. The waves of criticism leveled at education, and the resulting reform efforts in teacher education were examined. Literature related to professional teacher education courses, as well as general and subject-specific methods courses was reviewed. In addition, studies focusing on the preparation of secondary school English teachers, including the English methods course, were examined. A summary of the general findings of the literature review was provided. Chapter III will detail the methods and procedures employed to complete this research study.

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Introduction

The methods and procedures employed in this study were inspired by a research study completed by Oftedahl (1984), in which she examined English methods courses in terms of their course content and teaching strategies utilized in teaching them in English teacher preparation programs in the Midwest. Oftedahl (1984) surveyed secondary school English teachers and English methods professors regarding the English methods course. She conducted analyses to discover if any relationship existed between and within the two groups by describing and comparing the responses given by the participants in her study.

Based, then, upon a conceptual framework inspired by the Oftedahl (1984) study, the purpose of this study was to describe and compare the beliefs of English educators and leaders in secondary school English about the English methods courses required of pre-service teachers of secondary school English. More specifically, the researcher sought answers to the following research questions: (a) What do English educators consider the purpose of the English methods course to be? (b) What do leaders in secondary school English consider the purpose of the English methods course to be? (c) What do English educators consider to be the

most important topics for study in the English methods course? (d) What do leaders in secondary school English consider to be the most important topics for study in the English methods course? (e) What teaching strategies do English educators consider to be the most effective for the teaching of secondary school English. (f) What teaching strategies do leaders in secondary school English consider to be the most effective for the teaching of secondary school English? (g) What is the comparison between the responses of English educators and leaders in secondary school English concerning the emphasis that should be given to each of the given topics in the English methods course? (h) What is the comparison between the responses of English educators and leaders in secondary school English concerning the effectiveness of given teaching strategies in the secondary school English class?

Subjects

The subjects in this study consisted of all of the 1996-97 members of the Executive Committee of the Conference on English Leadership (CEL) of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), chairs of the CEL nominating committee, conference program chairs, and chair of the Commission on Developing English / Language Arts Leadership. These 16 people represented in-service experienced teachers of English at the secondary school level. The list of these

people, along with their mailing addresses, was obtained from the 1996 NCTE Membership Roster.

In addition, all of the members of the 1996-97 Executive Committee of the Conference on English Education (CEE) of the NCTE, the CEE representatives to the NCTE Secondary Section and CEL, and the members of the CEE Commission on the Preparation and Professional Development of English Language Arts Teachers were included in the population. These 22 college professors represented English educators, all but one of them had taught in English education programs at their institutions. The list of these people, along with their mailing addresses, was obtained from the 1996 NCTE Membership Roster.

Among the 16 leaders in secondary school English, 13 (81%) responded. Of the 22 English educators, 15 (68%) responded. Twenty-seven responses from the grand population of 38 subjects made the overall response rate 71%.

Procedures

In order to describe and compare the judgments of leaders in secondary school English and those of English educators about the English methods course that is required of pre-service English teachers, the following procedures were used. The researcher developed two survey questionnaires--one for members of the CEE, another for members of the CEL. These questionnaires were based on surveys used

in previous studies by Hipple (1974) and Oftedahl (1984). A preliminary form of the questionnaire was presented to the doctoral committee members, who suggested a few minor changes. Subsequently, the researcher filed Form A with the Human Subjects Committee at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville. That committee granted permission for research in early November of 1996. In order to pilot test the questionnaires, as recommended by Babbie (1990), the survey instruments were then duplicated and distributed to University of Tennessee students and professors who matched the profiles of intended participants in the study. Two professors of English education completed the survey for CEE members, and 10 in-service English teachers completed the CEL questionnaire. Suggestions and feedback regarding the instrument were solicited. The participants in the pilot test indicated that the instruments were clear and comprehensive.

In mid-November, 1996, the questionnaires (Appendices C & D) were mailed to all members of Executive Committees and other selected committee chairs of the Conference on English Leadership (CEL) and the Conference on English Education (CEE) of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), along with cover letters (Appendices A & B) explaining the purpose of the study and asking for participation. A consent form was embedded in the cover letter. Respondents were asked to return the completed surveys within 14 days, resulting in 10 CEE responses, and 6 CEL responses, for a total of 16 initial responses (42%). A second mailing effort was taken in mid-December, 1996 to those who failed to respond to

the first questionnaires. This resulted in the return of 2 additional CEE surveys, and 8 more CEL surveys, yielding a return rate of 68%. Using internet electronic mail addresses provided in the 1996 NCTE Membership Directory, a third attempt to contact participants who still had not returned the questionnaire was attempted. This resulted in the return of one additional CEE survey, bringing the total to 27 responses, yielding a final return rate of 71%. Among the 16 leaders in secondary school English, 13 (81%) responded, while 15 of the 22 English educators responded for a 68% response rate for that group. The data were then prepared for analysis.

Survey Instruments

The survey instruments used in this study (Appendices C & D) were developed by the researcher specifically for this study. Ideas for the structure of the instruments came from questionnaires used in previous studies by Hipple (1974) and Oftedahl (1984). With permission from Hipple, the instrument used in his study was modified somewhat and used for the present study. Two versions of the questionnaire, one for CEE members, the other for CEL members, were developed. The two instruments were similar, differing only in questions dealing with demographic information and teaching strategies modeled by professors in English methods courses.

Part I of the questionnaires asked participants for basic demographic information, such as job title, degrees held, and teaching experience. In Part II, participants were given an open-ended question, asking what they believe the primary purpose of the English methods course to be. Part III contained a list of ten common teaching strategies, drawn from popular English education textbooks (Atwell, 1987; Christenbury, 1994; Kirby & Liner, 1988; Milner & Milner, 1993). CEE members were asked to indicate both the extent to which they believed each teaching strategy should be modeled or used in teaching the English methods course, as well as to what extent each should be used in the secondary school English classroom. CEL members were given the same list of teaching strategies and asked which they considered to be effective in teaching secondary school English. A Likert scale was provided for participants to answer these questions. The scale ranged from 0 (should never be used in class, as it may be ineffective) to 3 (should frequently be used in class, as it may be very effective).

Part IV of both instruments consisted of identical lists of topics that could be taught in the English methods course. Respondents were asked to rank these topics on a Likert scale indicating how much emphasis they felt should be given to these topics in the English methods course. The scale ranged from 0 (no emphasis in the course) to 3 (heavy emphasis in the course). These items were grouped into the following content area clusters: (a) General Topics, (b) Literature, (c) Language, (d) Composition, and (e) Related Areas. With the exception of "Related Areas,"

these clusters were identical to those on the Hipple (1974) instrument. Some items listed in each of the clusters came from the Hipple (1974) and Oftedahl (1985) studies, and were used to gather information for a previous study conducted by George (1995). Additional items were selected for inclusion from current textbooks commonly used in English methods courses. (Atwell, 1985; Christenbury, 1996; Kirby & Liner, 1988; Milner & Milner, 1989). Furthermore, respondents were provided the opportunity to list topics which they felt should be addressed in an English methods course, but were not included on the questionnaire.

In an effort to achieve the best return rate, the questionnaires were formatted with My Brochure (1996) software, a program designed to create pamphlets and brochures. Research conducted by Salant and Dillman (1994) indicated that in addition to the content of the questionnaire, the format, fonts, color, and size and orientation of the paper appear to have a direct correlation with the return rate. Using My Brochure program, the researcher formatted the survey questionnaire into a booklet format, with graphic designs on the cover.

Data Analysis

The data analysis began with the screening and reading of the returned questionnaires. Data collected from the completed surveys were coded and

analyzed with the StatStar (1994) statistical analysis program on a personal computer. Other data were calculated using a hand-held calculator. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics, with the reporting of frequency distributions, means, and percentages. Items in Parts III and IV were rank ordered for comparison. The demographic information provided in Part I of the questionnaire was reported in a summary describing the professional roles (job titles), educational background (degrees held), and teaching experience at the secondary and/or post-secondary levels.

In an effort to address the research questions concerning the perceived purpose of the English methods course (research questions 1 and 2), a single open-ended question in Part II asked participants to state the primary purpose of the English methods course. This portion was analyzed using qualitative methodology. The answers to this question were transcribed, and the resulting data were analyzed for common phrasing and terminology. An qualitative analysis of the semantics of the answers was completed as well. A composite answer was developed for the CEL group as well as the CEE group. These statements of purpose were then compared and discussed.

Attempting to answer research questions 5 and 6, Part III of both instruments focused on teaching strategies. CEE members were asked to indicate both the extent to which they believed each teaching strategy should be modeled or used in teaching the English methods course as well as to what extent they were effective in

the secondary school English classroom. CEL members were given the same list of teaching strategies and asked which they felt are effective in teaching secondary school English. Data in Part III were analyzed and reported as percentages and means; items were then rank ordered from the most frequently selected topics to the least frequently selected ones for comparison purposes. Means were reported for the CEE members' use of the teaching strategies in the methods class and their perceptions of how often these teaching strategies should be used in the secondary school English classroom.

To best answer the research questions related to the course content of the English methods course (research questions 3 and 4), Part IV of the survey questionnaire was analyzed using descriptive statistics. Percentages and means for each item within each of the two groups were reported. For comparison purposes items were then rank-ordered from the most frequently selected topics to the least frequently selected ones. Participants were asked to list any topics they felt should be addressed in the English methods course, but were not included on the questionnaire. These responses were recorded and reported in a list using a frequency distribution.

Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the methods and procedures used in this study. It described the subjects, procedures, survey instruments and data analysis used to complete the study.

In an effort to describe and compare the beliefs of English educators and leaders in secondary school English about the English methods courses required of pre-service teachers of secondary school English, seven research questions were developed for this study.

Representing experienced teachers of secondary school English, members of the 1996-97 Executive Committee of the Conference on English Leadership (CEL) of the National Council of Teachers of English, along with other selected leaders in that organization, were asked to participate in the study. English educators were represented by members of the 1996-97 Executive Committee of the Conference on English Education (CEE) of the National Council of Teachers of English, along with leaders of the CEE Commission on the Preparation and Professional Development of English Language Arts Teachers.

A survey instrument was designed and mailed to the selected participants. The survey instrument consisted of four parts. Part I solicited demographic information about the participants. Part II, an open-ended question, asked respondents to state the purpose of the English methods course. Part III attempted to determine the

teaching strategies that were considered effective for use in the secondary school English class and to what extent these teaching strategies were used or modeled in English methods courses. Part IV included a list of topics that could be covered in an English methods course, and participants were asked to rate their importance. From the 38 questionnaires sent out, a total of 27 surveys were returned, for a 71% response rate.

Descriptive data were collected and analyzed. The data analysis was conducted using the StatStar (1994) program on a personal computer, and a hand-held calculator. Frequency distributions, percentages, and means of the close-ended data were calculated in an effort to address the research questions. Qualitative thematic and semantic analysis was used to examine the data provided by the open-ended questions. Results of the data analysis will appear in Chapter IV of this research study.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

This chapter presents the results of the analysis of the data collected from 13 leaders in secondary school English from the Conference on English Leadership (CEL) and 15 English educators from the Conference on English Education (CEE) of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). The purpose of this study was to describe and compare the beliefs of English educators and leaders in secondary school English about the English methods course required of pre-service teachers of secondary school English. More specifically, the researcher sought answers to the following research questions:

- 1) What do English educators consider the purpose of the English methods course to be?
- 2) What do leaders in secondary school English consider the purpose of the English methods course to be?
- 3) What do English educators consider to be the most important topics for study in the English methods course?
- 4) What do leaders in secondary school English consider to be the most important topics for study in the English methods course?
- 5) What teaching strategies do English Educators consider to be the most effective for the teaching of secondary school English?

- 6) What teaching strategies do leaders in secondary school English consider to be the most effective for the teaching of secondary school English?
- 7) What is the comparison between the responses of English educators and leaders in secondary school English concerning the emphasis that should be given to each of the given topics in the English methods course?
- 8) What is the comparison between the responses of English educators and leaders in secondary school English concerning the effectiveness of given teaching strategies in the secondary school English class?

In order to answer these questions, surveys were mailed to all of the members of the 1996-97 Executive Committee of the Conference on English Leadership (CEL) of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), chairs of the CEL nominating committee, conference program chairs, and chair of the Commission on Developing English / Language Arts Leadership. As each of these 16 people have had considerable experience teaching English at the secondary school level, they may represent experienced teachers of English at the secondary school level. In addition, all of the members of the 1996-97 Executive Committee of the Conference on English Education (CEE) of the NCTE, the CEE representatives to the NCTE Secondary Section and CEL, and the members of the CEE Commission on the Preparation and Professional Development of English Language Arts Teachers were sent survey questionnaires. These 22 professionals represent English educators, as most of them (with one exception) have taught in English

education programs at their institutions. Among the 16 leaders in secondary school English asked to participate in the study, 13 (81%) responded. Of the 22 English educators asked to participate in this study, 15 (68%) responded. Twenty-seven responses from the grand population of 38 subjects made the overall response rate 71%. The surveys sought information dealing with demographic characteristics of the participants, the purpose and course content of the English methods course, and teaching strategies considered effective for use in the secondary school English classroom.

The examination of the data, along with the statistical analysis of the data presented in this chapter, realized the purpose of the study and provided answers to each of the research questions. Descriptive statistical analysis was used to examine the quantitative data in the close-ended questions on the questionnaire, and qualitative methodology was used to analyze the open-ended questions thematically and semantically. Since most of the questions on the survey used a Likert scale to allow for multiple choices, and participants occasionally omitted answers to certain questions, the total number of frequency counts for many individual variables did not add up to the total number of respondents. Likewise, the percentages did not always total 100% either.

To respond directly to the purpose of the study and also to answer the eight research questions, the presentation of the analysis of the data in this chapter is organized into the following sections: Demographic Characteristics of the

Respondents, Purpose of the English Methods Course, Content of the English Methods Course, and Teaching Strategies. A Discussion of the Findings then precedes a Chapter Summary.

Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Before introducing the specific results of the data analysis of the survey related to the English methods course, it is important to understand the demographic information provided by the respondents. Information concerning the educational background, current career positions, and teaching experience of the respondents confirmed that the population selected to participate in this study may be considered experts in the fields of English education and secondary school English teaching.

Thirteen participants representing the Conference on English Leadership (CEL) responded to the questionnaire. Table 1 presents the demographics for CEL respondents. When asked to name the highest degree they held, seven of the CEL respondents (54%) indicated a masters degree, two, an Educational Specialist degree (15%), while four held a doctorate (31%). One respondent indicated her job title as being "English teacher." Seven of the respondents reported being English Department chairs, and an additional one called himself an English Supervisor. The remaining four CEL participants indicated that they served as assistant

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of CEL Respondents (N=13)

	Number	Percent
Highest Degree Held		
Masters	7	54
Education Specialist	2	15
Doctorate	4	31
Current Job Title		
English Teacher	1	7.5
English Supervisor	1	7.5
English Department Chair	7	54
Other	4	31
Years of Secondary School English Teaching		
18-25	6	46
26-33	4	31
33 or more	3	23
Current Secondary School English Teaching Status		
Currently Teaching	10	77
Not Currently Teaching	3	23

supervisors or chairs of curriculum and instruction for their school systems. Thus, as a whole, the CEL respondents were indeed leaders in secondary school English.

When asked about their experience in teaching English at the secondary school level, respondents' answers ranged from 18-37 years, with an average of 27.38 years of teaching experience. Ten of the CEL respondents (77%) indicated that they taught secondary school English at the time of their participation in the study. The other three (28%), while having considerable experience in teaching secondary school English, had been out of the classroom for 3, 7, and 17 years, respectively. This data confirmed the assumption of the study that the CEL members selected to participate in the study represented experienced teachers of secondary school English.

Of the 22 Conference on English Education (CEE) members asked to participate in the study, 15 responded to the questionnaire. Table 2 presents the demographic information provided by respondents to the CEE questionnaire.

Eleven of these English educators were affiliated with the College or School of Education at their institutions, while three taught in the English Departments at their schools. One identified herself as a "free-lance non-affiliated English educator," who had published a popular text used in English education courses. With one exception, all of the participants held a doctoral degree. Likewise, all of

Table 2

Demographic Characteristics of CEE Respondents (N=15)

	Number	Percent
Departmental Affiliation		
Education	11	73
English	3	20
Other (Free Lance Writer)	1	7
Highest Degree Held		
Masters	1	7
Ph.D.	5	33
Ed.D.	9	60
Teaching the English Methods Course in 1996-97		
Yes	12	80
No	3	20
Years of Experience Teaching the English Methods Course		
0-8	5	33
9-17	6	40
18-26	2	13.5
27 or more	2	13.5
Years of Experience Teaching Secondary School English		
none	1	7
1-6	3	20
7-9	2	13
10 or more	9	60

the participants, except for one, reported having taught the English methods course at some time; twelve of the participants indicated that they had taught the English methods course during the 1996-97 academic year. The range of experience in teaching the English methods course was 6-26 years, with the mean being 13 years. Thus, the assumption that most participants from the CEE population would represent practicing or experienced English educators was validated.

With one exception, (who stated that she taught at the elementary school level for a "number of years"), each of the CEE participants indicated that they also had experience teaching English at the secondary school level. Sixty-four percent of the respondents having teaching experience at the secondary school level indicated that they had 10 or more years of experience, while 37 % indicated 4-9 years of secondary school teaching experience. Only one English educator indicated that she continues to teach occasionally at the secondary school level. The others suggested that they had last taught at the secondary level before becoming an English educator.

Thus, the demographic information provided in Part I of the questionnaire suggested that the participants from the Conference on English Leadership (CEL) were indeed leaders in secondary school English, serving as teachers, department heads, and supervisors of English teachers, and each having extensive experience in teaching English at the secondary school level. Likewise, as all but one of the

participants from the Conference on English Education (CEE) were professors of English education at the time of the study, each having substantial experience teaching the English methods course, the respondents in this group may indeed be called English educators. In addition, the members of the CEE population also reported experience teaching English at the secondary school level, making it appropriate for them to address questions dealing with the effectiveness of teaching strategies at the secondary school level.

Purpose of the English Methods Course

In an effort to answer research questions 1 and 2, addressing the purpose of the English methods course, Part II on both the CEL and CEE questionnaires asked the following open-ended question: "Please state what you believe the primary purpose of the English methods course to be." The responses to this question were analyzed using qualitative methodology. Answers were transcribed, and the data were analyzed for common terminology, phrasing, and themes. While the wording and semantics of each of the responses varied greatly, several commonalities were discovered. Following is a synthesis of those findings.

Responding members of the Conference on English Leadership (CEL) used a variety of verbs to state the purpose of the English methods course. Infinitives such as "to train," "to develop," "to acquaint," and "to teach" were sometimes used;

however, the verb which was utilized most often was "to prepare," appearing in 46% of the responses. In 6 of the 13 answers to this question, CEL respondents included the students of the English methods course in their statement of purpose, with five of them suggesting that the students should be active learners. For instance, one stated that, "students will develop a theory..." Another suggested that, "students will reflect on and develop skills..."

A phrase which appeared repeatedly in CEL members' answers to Part II of the questionnaire was "theory into practice." In fact, the word "practice" emerged in 38% of the responses. Each of the uses of the word "practice," or the phrase "theory into practice," referred to the responsibility of the English methods course instructor to not only provide grounding in theories related to the teaching of English, but also to allow opportunities for students to see how these theories might best be put into practice in the secondary school English class. One response which expressed this idea particularly well stated, "...methods students should develop a theory of teaching / learning the English language arts and be able to design the curriculum and instruction and put the theory into practice in a real English class..."

Variations of this phrase, "real English class," were echoed in a number of CEL responses. Respondents referred to the need of English education students to be prepared for the realities of teaching in the secondary school. Among these "realities" were references to the diversity found in the typical English class.

Leaders in secondary school English used a variety of expressions to qualify this diversity, including "various backgrounds," "multiple levels of ability and interests," "differential learning styles and multiple intelligences," and "a sundry of student behaviors and responses." One respondent stated,

Most student teachers I've known recently are amazed by the lack of social maturity shown by the students they must face every day. Teacher educators must do a better job of preparing these student teachers for the reality that is today's high school!

Three other CEL responses to Part II acknowledged that the English method course was very important. One statement began with "The English methods course has the enormous task of..." Another ended with the observation "A HUGE, BUT VERY IMPORTANT, JOB!"

While it was difficult to design a composite response to Part II of the CEL survey, the researcher has attempted to do so, drawing from the words and phrases most commonly used in the 13 answers given by the leaders in secondary school English. That composite answer, comprised exclusively of words and phrases found in participants' responses, follows and serves as a synthesized answer to research question #1:

The purpose of the English methods course is to prepare pre-service teachers for the realities of the secondary school English classroom by providing students with the theoretical background they need to formulate their own theories of teaching and learning. Students must then be given meaningful opportunities to transform these theories into practice, so that they may develop a repertoire of teaching strategies that may be effectively used to teach the English language arts to real students, in real classrooms.

In many ways the responses of CEE members to Part II of their questionnaire were similar to those of the CEL respondents. For example, the most frequently used verb in CEE responses was also "to prepare." Other infinitives used included "to help," "to integrate," "to develop," and "to provide." While the phrase "theory into practice" appeared in only one answer, the words "theory" or "theoretical" appeared in four additional responses. Likewise, the word "research" was found in three of the CEE statements of purpose, and "philosophy" in two others. Two respondents referred to "frames of reference," and "current thinking about pedagogy" in their answer. The frequent use of and reference to words such as "theory," "research," and "philosophy" may indicate that English educators felt theory, philosophy, and research should play an important role in the English methods course. Another related word used in several CEE responses was "reflect" or "reflective," indicating that some English educators emphasize the currently popular idea of reflective teaching. However, the word "practice," frequently used

in the statements of purpose of the CEL members, was found in only one CEE respondent's answer.

The semantics in the statements of nine CEE members' answers suggested that the methods course professor was active, while the students were seen as recipients of information. For example, "The methods course is meant to provide students with information..." or "...to provide students with an overview" or "... to develop the student teacher's ability." This is a real contrast to the CEL responses, which often used phrasing placing the responsibility on the student as an active learner.

CEE members often referred to "skills," "strategies," and "methods" that should be taught to students in the English methods course. The term "skill" appeared in three of the statements, while "strategy" and "methods" were each used in four responses. Respondents in each of these cases, as well as in one other, linked these things with the word "classroom." However, the term "real" or "reality," frequently used or alluded to by CEL members in conjunction with "classroom," was not found in any of the CEE statements.

However, several response of CEE members used phrasing indicating a progressive approach to teaching. For example, one respondent indicated that the methods course should not only develop skills, but also "develop confidence and imagination." Another suggested that the course should help students apply what they learn about content and pedagogy to "the creation of stimulating, relevant, and effective lesson plans and curricular units." Finally, one CEE respondent indicated

that the purpose of the methods course is to "prepare pre-student teachers to enact progressive reading and writing instructional strategies in the classroom."

Again, while it was difficult to design a composite response to Part II of the CEE survey, the researcher attempted to do so, in an effort to answer research question #2. That composite answer, synthesized exclusively from words and phrases found in the 15 CEE participants' responses, follows:

The purpose of the English methods course is to provide students with the theoretical and philosophical background needed to prepare them for future classroom instruction. The course should provide students with an overview of instructional strategies and teaching methods related to reading and writing, in order to enable them to begin teaching and reflecting on their practice.

Thus, the qualitative analysis of the responses given to the open-ended question in Part II of the surveys provided an answer to research questions 1 and 2, in the form of the composite answers shown above.

English Methods Course Content

In order to answer research questions 3, 4, and 7, addressing the content of the English methods course, Part IV of both the CEL and CEE questionnaires provided identical lists of topics that might be stressed in the pre-certification English

methods course. Participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they believed each of these topics should be emphasized in the English methods course. Respondents ranked these topics on a Likert scale, indicating how much emphasis they felt should be given to each of these topics in the English methods course. The scale ranged from 0 (no emphasis in the course) to 3 (heavy emphasis in the course). These items were grouped into the following content area clusters: (a) General Topics, (b) Literature, (c) Language, (d) Composition, and (e) Related Areas.

Table 3 shows the rank and mean score of each of the five content area clusters, indicating the importance placed on each by members of the CEL. Among these five content area clusters, the section labeled "Composition" had the highest mean score ($M=2.57$), indicating that leaders in secondary school English felt that composition should receive the heaviest emphasis in the English methods course, in comparison with other areas. Closely following was the content area cluster labeled "General Topics" ($M=2.48$), indicating that respondents felt that the given topics related to teaching and learning in general should be given heavy to moderate emphasis in the English methods course. The data suggest that the content area clusters "Literature," "Language," and "Related Areas" should be given moderate emphasis in the English methods course.

The rank order and mean scores of the five content area clusters, as rated by the English educators, are shown in Table 4. Like their CEL counterparts, CEE

Table 3

CEL Ranking of Content Area Clusters

Ranking	Content Area Cluster	Mean Score
1	Composition	2.57
2	General Topics	2.48
3	Literature	2.20
4	Related Areas	2.11
5	Language	2.02

Table 4

CEE Ranking of Content Area Clusters

Ranking	Content Area Cluster	Mean Score
1	Composition	2.37
2	Literature	2.31
3	General Topics	2.17
4	Language	1.71
5	Related Areas	1.52

respondents ranked the content area cluster "Composition" as being most important in the English methods course, requiring a moderate to heavy emphasis ($M=2.37$) in comparison with other topics. Closely following "Composition" in order of perceived importance was the content cluster area "Literature." with a mean score of 2.31. CEE members rated the "General Topics" cluster as deserving moderate coverage in the English methods course. The emphasis placed on the two content area clusters "Language" and "Related Areas" were rated by English educators as requiring "little to moderate" emphasis in the English methods course.

While both groups rated the "Composition" content area as being most important, a comparison of the responses of the CEE and CEL respondents with regard to the emphasis each group felt should be given to each of the other content area clusters revealed several differences. English educators felt more emphasis should be placed on literature than did leaders in secondary school English. Conversely, CEL members felt that more emphasis should be given to general topics related to teaching and learning than the CEE members did. Likewise, there was a difference in the ranking of the "Language" and "Related Areas" content area clusters, with CEE members ranking these two areas fourth and fifth, respectively, and CEL respondents reversing the rank order of the two content area clusters.

Also of interest, the mean scores of the CEL respondents in four of the five content area clusters were higher than those of the CEE respondents. Only in the area of "Literature" did CEE respondents indicate that more emphasis should be

given to the topics in that content area cluster than their counterparts in the CEL. Thus, leaders in secondary school English reported that they felt that more topics should be given a high level of emphasis in the English methods course than the English educators did, suggesting that perhaps English educators felt it may be difficult to give heavy emphasis to so many topics in the English methods course they teach, or have taught.

A comparison of the specific topic the respondents from the two groups rated as requiring the most emphasis in each of the five content area clusters, as shown in Table 5, indicates that in only one area, "General Topics," was there any disparity. While the English educators indicated that "Reflective Teaching" as the topic in that category requiring the most emphasis ($M=2.73$), the leaders in secondary school English suggested that "Discussion Skills" deserved heavier emphasis ($M=2.92$). In the other four content area clusters the two groups concurred as to which specific topics the heaviest emphasis should be given in the English methods course.

After rank ordering the specific topics from the entire list provided in Part IV of the survey, which the respondents from the two groups rated as requiring the most emphasis in the English methods course (Appendix E), both similarities and differences were found. Table 6 reveals the 10 topics with the highest means, as ranked by the leaders in secondary school English, while Table 7 shows the 10 topics, in rank order, as rated by the English educators. Although the actual

Table 5

Topic from Each Content Area Cluster with the Highest Mean

CEL Highest Ranked Topic and Mean	Content Area Cluster	CEE Highest Ranked Topic and Mean
Discussion Skills M= 2.92	General Topics	Reflective Teaching M= 2.73
Strategies for Teaching Literature M= 2.78	Literature	Strategies for Teaching Literature M= 2.87
Relationship Between "Language Skills" and Writing M= 2.92	Language	Relationship Between "Language Skills" and Writing M= 2.60
Writing Process M= 2.92	Composition	Writing Process M= 2.73
Drama / Creative Dramatics M = 2.46	Related Areas	Drama / Creative Dramatics M = 2.06

Table 6

Ten Highest Ranked Topics CEL Participants Rated for Inclusion in the English Methods Course

Rank Order	Topic	Mean Rating
2	Discussion Skills	2.92
2	Relationship Between "Language Skills" and Writing	2.92
2	Writing Process	2.92
4	Questioning Techniques	2.85
5	Strategies for Teaching Literature	2.78
7	Assessing Student Writing	2.77
7	Discipline / Classroom Management	2.77
7	Writing Workshop	2.77
9.5	Reader Response	2.70
9.5	Reflective Teaching	2.70

Table 7

Ten Highest Ranked Topics CEE Participants Rated for Inclusion in the English Methods Course

Rank Order	Topic	Mean Rating
1	Strategies for Teaching Literature	2.87
2.5	Reflective Teaching	2.73
2.5	Writing Process	2.73
7	Assessing Student Writing	2.60
7	Materials and Resources for English Teachers	2.60
7	Multicultural Literature	2.60
7	Reader Response	2.60
7	Relationship Between "Language Skills" and Writing	2.60
7	Unit and Lesson Planning	2.60
7	Whole Language	2.60

rankings differed, seven of the 10 highest ranked topics appear on both the CEL and CEE lists. However, three topics appear on the English educators' highest-ranked topic list which do not appear on that of the CEL respondents' list. The topics "Materials and Resources for English Teachers," "Multicultural Literature," and "Unit and Lesson Planning" are all tied with a ranking of 4 ($M=2.60$).

Likewise, three other topics, "Discussion Skills" (ranked 1; $M=2.92$), "Questioning Techniques" (ranked 4; $M=2.85$), and "Discipline/Classroom Management" (ranked 6; $M=2.77$) appear on the CEL list of topics requiring heaviest emphasis in the English methods course, but do not appear on the CEE top-ten list at all.

Each of these three topics which leaders in secondary school English indicated were of great importance, yet were not given heavy emphasis in the English educators' English methods courses, were listed in the "General Topics" content area cluster on the survey. As discussed above, the "General Topics" content area cluster was considered to be more important by the respondents from the CEL than by those of the CEE. It is possible that English educators consider these topics important as well, but believe that these topics are adequately covered in other teacher education courses. In fact, four English educators indicated on their surveys that "Discipline/ Classroom Management" was covered in another course at their universities. However, no CEE members indicated that the topics "Discussion Skills" or "Questioning Techniques" were covered in other courses.

There was a significant difference in the CEL and CEE rankings of several other topics that did not fall into the top-ten category. CEE respondents ranked "Cooperative Learning" fairly high ($R=13.5$), while the CEL ranking of the same topic was fairly low ($R=35.5$). Conversely, CEL respondents ranked several topics quite a bit higher than did CEE respondents. For example, the CEL respondents ranked learning styles ($R=21$) 14 places higher than did the CEE participants ($R=35$). Leaders in secondary school English also gave more importance to the general topic of "Adolescent Development" ($R=16$) than did English educators ($R=30.5$). Finally, CEL members ranked "Instructional Technology" 28.5, while the same topic placed at $R=43$ in the CEE rankings.

At the end of Part IV of both questionnaires, respondents were given the opportunity, with an open-ended question, to suggest any additional topics that they felt should be addressed in the English methods course, but were not included on the list provided in the survey. More than 30 additional topics were suggested, however, six were included on two or more surveys. Two respondents indicated that pre-service teachers should be given strategies for working effectively with parents, administrators, and other school personnel. Five respondents, all English educators, referred to team teaching, interdisciplinary teaching, and thematic unit development as being very important for inclusion in the list of topics addressed in the English methods course. Three other English educators suggested that teacher research and its relationship to decision-making be addressed. Finally, two English

educators and one leader in secondary school English urged including information about language acquisition and development in the content of the English methods course.

The data provided by English educators and leaders in secondary school English suggest that both groups felt that a wide range of topics need to be included in the English methods course. Likewise, both groups recognized that many of these topics needed to be given moderate to heavy emphasis in the course. Several respondents included unsolicited comments addressing the major task facing teachers of the English methods course. One leader in secondary school English made the following comment, which may be important for teachers of the English methods course to consider when looking at the large number of topics that "need" to be addressed in the English methods course. The CEL member stated that,

I believe all of the topics are important; however, no way can they all be addressed in a pre-cert[ification] English methods course!! Many of these topics would have to be approached through a teachers' commitment to professional development after spending some time in the classroom. I shudder to think of some of the mistakes I made in my early years of teaching. EXPERIENCE is so important, and you just don't get that in a methods course.

Teaching Strategies

In an effort to answer research questions 5, 6, and 8, concerning teaching strategies which may prove effective for use in secondary school English classes, Part III of both the CEE and CEL questionnaires contained a list of nine common teaching strategies. Respondents were asked to indicate to what extent they felt each teaching strategy was effective for use in the secondary school English classroom. A Likert scale was provided for participants to answer these questions. The scale ranged from 0 (should never be used in class, as it may be ineffective) to 3 (should frequently be used in class, as it may be very effective).

Table 8 shows the rank order and mean score (M) of the responses to Part II of the CEL questionnaire. Nine teaching strategies were given for leaders in secondary school English to rate concerning their potential effectiveness in the secondary school English classroom. The purpose of this section was to determine which, if any, of these nine teaching strategies should be introduced to pre-service teachers in the English methods course. CEL respondents indicated that class discussion was the most effective teaching strategy included in the list. This echoes that group's rating of "Discussion Skills" as being one of the most important topics in the English methods course. Leaders in secondary school English also indicated that group or individual projects and writing workshops should be used fairly frequently in secondary school English classes, as they may prove to be quite effective. In

Table 8

Rank Order and Mean Score of CEL Respondents of Teaching Strategies Rated for Effectiveness for Use in the Secondary School English Class

Rank	Teaching Strategy	Mean Score
1	Class Discussion	2.85
2	Group / Individual Projects	2.70
3	Writing Workshop	2.62
4	Audiovisuals / Instructional Technology	2.54
5	Reading Workshop	2.46
6	Individualized Instruction	2.31
7	Simulation / Role Playing	2.23
8	Computer-Assisted Instruction	2.08
9	Lecture	1.54

fact, each of the topics on the list fell into the "somewhat to very effective" category, with the exception of "Lecture," which, with a mean score of 1.54, fell into the "ineffective" category. The data in Table 9, which provides the rank order and mean score of the CEE respondents' beliefs about the effectiveness of the given teaching strategies in the secondary school English class, show that the responses of the English educators differed very little from those of the leaders in secondary school English. While CEE members ranked "Group / Individual Projects" highest ($M = 3.00$), "Class Discussion," the second-place teaching strategy, was also very highly ranked ($M = 2.87$), suggesting that English educators felt these two teaching strategies should frequently be used in the secondary school English class, as they may be very effective. Despite their unanimous superior ranking ($R=3$) of "Class Discussion," English educators, as discussed above, did not highly rank "Discussion Skills" as a topic for heavy emphasis in the English methods course.

Other teaching strategies which CEE respondents suggested should be used in class frequently were writing and reading workshops. Four instructional strategies, "Individualized Instruction," "Audiovisuals / Instructional Technology," "Simulation / Role Playing," and "Computer-Assisted Instruction" were rated by English educators as being somewhat effective in the secondary school classroom. Like the CEL members, CEE respondents indicated that lecture was ineffective and should never be used in secondary school English classes.

Table 9

Rank Order and Mean Score of CEE Respondents of Teaching Strategies Rated for Effectiveness for Use in the Secondary School English Class

Rank	Teaching Strategy	Mean Score
1	Group / Individual Projects	3.00
2	Class Discussion	2.87
3.5	Writing Workshop	2.73
3.5	Reading Workshop	2.73
5	Individualized Instruction	2.40
6	Audiovisuals / Instructional Technology	2.27
7	Simulation / Role Playing	2.20
8	Computer-Assisted Instruction	1.87
9	Lecture	1.40

As mentioned above, English educators and leaders in secondary school English were in basic agreement concerning the effectiveness of the given teaching strategies. The only strategy which differed by more than one place in the rank order was the use of audiovisuals and instructional technology. CEE respondents ranked that strategy sixth, while the CEL members ranked it fourth.

Nevertheless, the mean scores of these two strategies were very similar: M of CEE= 2.27; M of CEL= 2.54. Thus, respondents from the two groups were basically in agreement as to the effectiveness of the various teaching strategies.

In addition to rating the given teaching strategies as to their effectiveness in the secondary school English classroom, English educators were asked to indicate to what extent they believed these same teaching strategies should be used or modeled when teaching the English methods course. Table 10 shows the results of this portion of the CEE questionnaire.

The rank order of the teaching strategies English educators felt should be utilized or modeled in the English methods course was almost identical to the same groups' rank order of teaching strategies they considered effective for use in the secondary school English class. However, the mean scores of eight of the nine strategies were rated lower for effectiveness in the English methods course than for the secondary school English class. Only "Lecturing" was rated slightly more effective for the college level class ($M=1.47$) than for the classes at the secondary school level ($M=1.40$). This indicates that the English educators appeared to recognize the

Table 10

Rank Order and Mean Score of CEE Respondents of Teaching Strategies that Should be Utilized or Modeled in the English Methods Course

Rank	Teaching Strategy	Mean Score
1	Group / Individual Projects	2.87
2	Class Discussion	2.80
3	Individualized Instruction	2.57
4	Writing Workshop	2.27
5.5	Reading Workshop	2.00
5.5	Audiovisuals / Instructional Technology	2.00
7	Simulation / Role Playing	1.93
8	Lecture	1.47
9	Computer-Assisted Instruction	1.20

importance of modeling these teaching strategies for their students in the English methods course; however, they did not feel that these methods are quite as effective in the college classroom as they may be in English classes in the secondary school.

Discussion of the Findings

Examination of the demographic characteristics provided by respondents from both the Conference on English Leadership (CEL) and the Conference on English Education (CEE) indicated that the participants in this study were appropriate populations from whom to seek information about the English methods course and the teaching of English in the secondary school. Each of the 13 leaders in secondary school English who provided data for this study by responding to the questionnaire were experienced teachers of secondary school English. Twelve of these experienced English teachers served in a supervisory role, and 10 of them were teaching secondary school English at the time of the study. Thus, it appears that all 13 of the CEL participants were qualified to provide information on the teaching of secondary school English.

Likewise, with one exception, all of the English educators were experienced teachers of the English methods course, with 80% of them teaching that course

during the academic year in which the study was conducted. In addition to their experience as English educators, all but one of the CEE respondents had experience teaching English at the secondary school level as well. The one participant with no experience teaching the English methods course was the author of a popular text used in English education courses. Likewise, the one respondent with no experience at the secondary school level had significant experience teaching at the elementary school level, served as an English educator at her institution. Therefore, it appears that the CEE participants were qualified to provide information on both the English methods course and the teaching of secondary school English.

An examination of the purposes of the English methods course provided by participants from each of the two groups indicated that both English educators and leaders in secondary school English believed the purpose of that course to be multifaceted. A qualitative analysis of the semantics of the words and phrases used by the respondents in each of the two groups indicated that perhaps there was a difference in how each viewed the purpose of the English methods course. Leaders in secondary school English seemed to place a great deal of importance on the application of the content of the English method course to the realities of the secondary school English classroom. In addition, CEL responses to the question regarding the purpose of the English methods course often seemed to place responsibility on the student as an active learner, responsible for the knowledge gained from taking the course.

It appeared that English educators, on the other hand, placed more importance on the theoretical and philosophical background to the teaching of English than on the realities of the secondary school English class. An interpretation of the semantics of many of the words and phrases utilized in CEE respondents' written purposes of the English methods course may suggest that they often placed the active role on the teacher of the course, rather than on the students. Both groups, however, indicated that the English methods course should be a mixture of theory and practice, and that the overall purpose of the course is the preparation of teachers of English language arts.

Analysis of the data related to the content of the English methods course indicated that English educators and leaders in secondary school English were generally in agreement about the degree to which the given topics needed to be emphasized in the course. However, leaders in secondary school English placed considerably more importance on general topics than did English educators. In particular, CEL respondents rated "Discussion Skills," "Classroom Management / Discipline," "Learning Styles," "Adolescent Development," and "Instructional Technology" as more important topics than did CEE respondents. This may be related to the fact that in their stated purposes of the English methods course, leaders in secondary school English often emphasized the importance of general and practical knowledge, which should serve to prepare pre-service teachers for the realities of the secondary school classroom, over specific and theoretical knowledge.

Conversely, although both groups agreed that the topic "Strategies for Teaching Literature" was of great importance in the English methods course, English educators indicated that "Reader Response" and "Multicultural Literature," both related to the teaching of literature, required heavy emphasis in the course, while leaders in secondary school English did not rate these topics as being so important. This, too, may be related to the difference in perceptions of the two groups of the purpose of the English methods course. Because reader response is considered to be both a teaching strategy and a theoretical concept, and the inclusion of multicultural literature in English curriculum is linked to philosophical thought, it stands to reason that English educators, who appear to emphasize theory and philosophy more heavily than leaders of secondary school English, would place heavier emphasis on these topics.

Despite this occasional conflict of theory and practice, as evidenced in the rating of general topics and those related to the teaching of literature, the two populations in the study generally agreed on the emphasis that should be placed on topics related to language, composition, and other related areas. Contrasting to the findings of previous studies (Killian, 1983; Mertz & Zidonis, 1982; Oftedahl, 1985), the data in the present study indicated that English educators and leaders in secondary school English both felt that the English methods course should place little emphasis on grammar, usage, and mechanics. The data from both groups, however, suggest that the relationship between these language skills and written

composition should be heavily emphasized in the English methods course. Both groups placed far more emphasis on topics related to the teaching of composition than to those related to language, including grammar, usage, and mechanics.

Finally, the data related to teaching strategies indicated that English educators and leaders in secondary school English were in general agreement concerning the effectiveness of the given teaching strategies. Both groups indicated that class discussion and group / individual projects were the most effective instructional strategies at the secondary school level. However, as discussed above, English educators did not consider the topic "Discussion Skills" as requiring nearly as much emphasis as did the leaders in secondary school English. The respondents from both groups concurred that lecture was not an effective teaching strategy at the secondary school level. Likewise, English educators ranked lecture as the least effective approach to teaching the English methods course.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the results of the analysis of the data collected from 13 leaders in secondary school English (CEL respondents) and 15 English educators (CEE respondents). The purpose of this study was to describe and compare the beliefs of English educators and leaders in secondary school English about the

English methods courses required of pre-service teachers of secondary school English.

Chapter IV first gave an overview of this study, providing the eight research questions, a synopsis of the methodology used to collect data, and the procedures used for the data analysis. Then, the demographic characteristics of the respondents to the survey questionnaire used to collect the data for this study were presented. Next, the qualitative analysis of the open-ended question related to the purpose of the English methods course was presented. The subsequent section summarized the quantitative data related to the course content of the English methods course. The analysis of the data concluded with the presentation of the data related to the effectiveness of certain teaching strategies at the secondary school level. Finally, the researcher synthesized and discussed the data from the entire study.

The following chapter will be the final chapter of this study. Chapter V will present a summary of the study, including its purpose, the literature review, research design, findings, and conclusions of the study. It will also discuss the educational implications of the research, as well as provide recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARIES, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This is the concluding chapter of this research study. It presents a summary of the study, including its purpose, the review of related literature, methods and procedures, findings, and conclusions. In addition, this chapter discusses the educational implications of the research, and provides recommendations for further study.

Summary

Purpose of the Study

American education has been at the center of public scrutiny and criticism, practically since its beginnings. Programs that prepare pre-service teachers for their careers in the American classroom have certainly not escaped these wide-spread criticisms of the American educational system. In fact, the past two decades have seen an avalanche of studies and reports addressing a myriad of weaknesses in

teacher education. Recently, the Report of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, entitled What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future (1996), cited several major flaws in teacher preparation. Among these flaws, one is echoed in much of the literature addressing the effectiveness of teacher education. The Commission suggested that many teacher preparation programs have a "superficial curriculum," in which "candidates do not learn deeply about how to understand and handle real problems of practice" (1996, p. 32). Another flaw addressed by the Commission was the fragmentation which exists within teacher education, and between teacher educators and practicing teachers. The Commission joined others (the Holmes Group, 1995; the Renaissance Group, 1993) in a call to end this fragmentation, with a reexamination of the content of the courses taught to pre-service teachers, as well as increased cooperation between teacher educators and practitioners in the public schools.

The purpose of this study was to describe and compare the beliefs of English educators and leaders in secondary school English about the English methods courses required of pre-service teachers of secondary school English. More specifically, with the analysis of data collected using a survey given to English educators and leaders in secondary school English, the researcher sought answers to the following research questions:

- 1) What do English educators consider the purpose of the English methods course to be?
- 2) What do leaders in secondary school English consider the purpose of the English methods course to be?
- 3) What do English educators consider to be the most important topics for study in the English methods course?
- 4) What do leaders in secondary school English consider to be the most important topics for study in the English methods course?
- 5) What teaching strategies do English Educators consider to be the most effective for the teaching of secondary school English?
- 6) What teaching strategies do leaders in secondary school English consider to be the most effective for the teaching of secondary school English?
- 7) What is the comparison between the responses of English educators and leaders in secondary school English concerning the emphasis that should be given to each of the given topics in the English methods course?
- 8) What is the comparison between the responses of English educators and leaders in secondary school English concerning the effectiveness of given teaching strategies in the secondary school English class?

Review of the Literature

The review of the literature related to the study was limited to five major areas: (a) criticism and reform in teacher education, (b) professional teacher education courses, (c) subject-specific methods courses, (d) secondary English teacher preparation, and (e) the English methods course.

During their more than 150 years of existence, teacher education programs have faced much criticism. Indeed, there has been a great deal of attention focused on flaws in teacher education during the 1980s and 1990s. A number of reports and studies have addressed the alleged problems in teacher education, and have provided numerous recommendations for change. Three groups focusing on teacher education, the Holmes Group (1986; 1995), the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (1996), and the Renaissance Group (1993) insist that the evaluation of teacher education programs, as well as the efforts to reform them, be a collaborative process, including both teacher educators and experienced, in-service teachers.

These harsh criticisms and efforts at wide-spread reform have lead teacher educators to conduct numerous studies addressing professional teacher education courses. An examination of the literature suggests that teacher education course work can indeed have a positive impact on teaching performance (Ashton & Crocker, 1985; Ferguson & Womack, 1993; Skipper & Quantz, 1987; Veenman,

1984). One of the most familiar education courses is the subject-specific methods course. Many educators contend that these courses are among the most important in pre-teacher preparation, while others, such as James Conant (1963), consider them to be a waste of students' time. An examination of the literature related to subject specific methods courses suggests that both sides in the debate regarding the value of methods courses may be valid. Methods courses do seem to influence teachers' attitudes, behaviors, and approach to teaching (Bennett, 1978; Bush, 1986; Lamme & Ross, 1981; Quinn, 1993); yet, the content of these courses may not be completely appropriate for the realities of teaching in today's schools (Killian, 1983; Mertz & Zidonis, 1982; Myers, 1983).

English educators have lamented the paucity in literature addressing the preparation of pre-service English teachers (Ofstedahl, 1985; Smagorinsky & Whiting, 1995). A few of the studies that have been conducted have attempted to establish guidelines for English teacher education programs (NCTE 1976, 1986, 1996; Viall, 1967). Others have focused on the content of the English methods course, required as part of many English teacher preparation programs (Evans & Cardone, 1963; Hipple, 1974; Ofstedahl, 1985; Smagorinsky & Whiting, 1995). Student and alumni perceptions of and satisfaction with English teacher education programs have been the subject of a small body of literature (Fagan & Laine, 1980; Folsom, 1983; Mertz & Zidonis, 1982; Myers, 1983). Few studies, however, have addressed in-service English teachers' perceptions of English teacher preparation.

The most common criticism from the body of literature regarding the English methods course is that the course often does not adequately prepare teachers for the realities of the secondary school English class. Two topics, in particular, were repeatedly mentioned in the literature as not having adequate coverage in the English methods course. Student teachers, cooperating teachers, and English supervisors in each of these studies indicated that student teachers were not sufficiently prepared in the areas of classroom management and the teaching of grammar, usage, and mechanics. Overall, the body of literature addressing the English methods course suggests that the course is an important one, but the content of the course needs to be reexamined, and must better prepare pre-service teachers for the realities of teaching English in the secondary school.

Methods and Procedures

This research was a descriptive study. The methods and procedures employed in this study were inspired by a research study completed by Oftedahl (1985), in which she examined English methods courses in terms of their course content and the teaching strategies utilized in teaching them in English teacher preparation programs in the Midwest. The samples on the Oftedahl study (1985) were professors of the English methods course at colleges and universities in seven

midwestern states, and in-service teachers of secondary school English from those same seven states.

The subjects in the present study were all of the members of the 1996-97 Executive Committee of the Conference on English Leadership (CEL) of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), chairs of the CEL nominating committee, conference program chairs, and chair of the Commission on Developing English / Language Arts Leadership. As each of these 16 people had considerable experience teaching English at the secondary school level, they may have been representative of experienced teachers of English at the secondary school level. In addition, all of the members of the 1996-97 Executive Committee of the Conference on English Education (CEE) of the NCTE, the CEE representatives to the NCTE Secondary Section and CEL, and the members of the CEE Commission on the Preparation and Professional Development of English Language Arts Teachers comprised the second population for the study. These 22 people represented English educators, as most of them taught in English education programs at their institutions. Among the 16 leaders in secondary school English asked to participate in the study, 13 (81%) responded. Of the 22 English educators asked to participate in this study, 15 (68%) responded. Twenty-seven responses from the grand population of 38 subjects made the overall response rate 71%.

In order to describe and compare the judgments of leaders in secondary school English and those of English educators about the English methods course that is

required of pre-service English teachers, the researcher developed two survey questionnaires--one for members of the CEE, another for members of the CEL. The survey instruments used were developed by the researcher specifically for this study. Ideas for the structure of the instrument came from questionnaires used in previous studies by Hipple (1974) and Oftedahl (1984). With permission from Hipple, the instrument used in his study was modified somewhat and used to gather data. The two instruments were similar, differing only in questions dealing with demographic information and teaching strategies modeled by professors in English methods courses.

Part I of the questionnaires asked participants for basic demographic information, such as job title, degrees held, and teaching experience. In Part II, participants were given an open-ended question, asking what they believed the primary purpose of the English methods course to be. Part III contained a list of nine common teaching strategies, drawn from popular English education textbooks (Atwell, 1987; Christenbury, 1994; Kirby & Liner, 1988; Milner & Milner, 1993). CEE members were asked to indicate both the extent to which they believed each teaching strategy should be modeled or used in teaching the English methods course as well as to what extent each might be effective for use in the secondary school English classroom. CEL members were given the same list of teaching strategies and asked which they considered to be effective in teaching secondary school English. A Likert scale was provided for participants to answer these questions. The scale

ranged from 0 (should never be used in class, as it may be ineffective) to 3 (should frequently be used in class, as it may be very effective).

Part IV of both instruments consisted of identical lists of topics that could be taught in the English methods course. Respondents were asked to rank these topics on a Likert scale indicating how much emphasis they feel should be given to these topics in the methods course. The scale ranged from 0 (no emphasis in the course) to 3 (heavy emphasis in the course). These items were grouped into the following content area clusters: (a) General Topics, (b) Literature, (c) Language, (d) Composition, and (e) Related Areas. Furthermore, respondents were provided the opportunity to list topics which they feel should be addressed in an English methods course, but were not included on the questionnaire.

A preliminary form of the questionnaire was presented to the doctoral committee members, who suggested a few minor changes. Following the approval of the study by the Human Subjects Committee at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, the instrument was pilot tested. Following the pilot test, the questionnaires were mailed to all members of the selected population along with cover letters explaining the purpose of the study and asking for participation. A consent form was embedded in the cover letter. A second mailing effort was later made, followed by an attempt using electronic mail to contact persons who had not yet responded. A total of 27 responses were returned, yielding a final return rate of 71%.

Data were drawn from the 28 returned questionnaires. Descriptive statistics, such as frequency distributions, percentages, and means were used to analyze the data of the close-ended questions. Results were rank-ordered to compare the responses of the English educators with those of the leaders in secondary school English. Qualitative methods were used to analyze the open-ended questions thematically.

Findings

The data and findings of the study may be categorized using the following scheme: (a) demographic characteristics of the respondents; (b) purpose of the English methods course; (c) content of the English methods course; and (d) teaching strategies.

The data confirmed that the 13 CEL respondents were indeed leaders in secondary school English, as they each had significant experience teaching English at the secondary school level, and all but one served in a supervisory capacity at the time of the study. Likewise, the 15 CEE respondents were appropriately considered to be English educators, as all but one held positions as professors in English education programs at the time of the study. Not only did the demographic data reveal that these English educators had significant experience teaching the English methods course, but they all had experience as teachers of English and language arts (14 at the secondary level, 1 at the elementary level).

With regard to the purpose of the English methods course, the data provided in the open-ended questions revealed that both English educators and leaders in secondary school English considered the overall purpose of the English methods course to be the preparation of teachers of English language arts. However, while many of the same words and phrases were found in the responses of both groups, the semantics of their answers indicated some key differences in their perceptions of the purpose of the English methods course. English educators tended to use syntax stressing the theoretical and philosophical framework of teaching English. Leaders in secondary school English, on the other hand, often referred to the practical aspects of learning to teach English, stressing the importance of preparing pre-service teachers of English for the realities of the classroom.

Another notable difference in the semantics of the statements of purposes given by respondents from the two groups was the party which they indicated as having the active role in the English methods course. Leaders in secondary school English often referred to the student in the active role of learning, whereas English educators used wording to suggest that the teacher of the English methods course had the active role. These differences were sometimes mirrored in the data concerning the content of the English methods course.

However, in general, the beliefs of the two groups regarding the emphasis that should be placed on given topics in the English methods course were very similar. English educators and leaders in secondary school English were in agreement that

the area of teaching composition required heavy emphasis in the English methods course. Similarly, both groups indicated that the methods course should heavily emphasize the teaching of strategies for teaching literature. Moreover, contrary to previous studies examining in-service English teachers' perceptions of the English methods course (Killian, 1983; Mertz & Zidonis, 1982; Oftedahl, 1985), the data in this study indicated that the leaders in secondary school English concurred with English educators that the teaching of grammar, usage, and mechanics required little emphasis in the English methods course.

On the other hand, the data in this study indicated that English educators and leaders in secondary school English differed in the emphasis they felt should be placed on topics related to general teaching and pedagogy, such as classroom management, learning styles, adolescent development, instructional technology, and discussions skills. Leaders in secondary school English considered each of these topics far more important for inclusion in the English methods course than did the English educators who teach that course. This incongruence may be related to the difference in beliefs revealed in the two groups' statements of purpose of the English methods course. The statements of purpose of the CEL respondents indicated that they viewed the purpose of the methods course to be to prepare pre-service teachers for the realities of teaching. CEE respondents indicated that theory and philosophy should be the focus of the English methods course. Therefore, it stands to reason that CEL respondents would consider practical topics, such as

classroom management and discussion skills, more important than would CEE respondents.

Finally, the findings related to teaching strategies which may be effective for use in the secondary school English class indicated that English educators and leaders in secondary school English were generally in agreement concerning the nine teaching strategies they were given to rate. Both groups indicated that class discussion and individual or group projects were the most effective methods for teaching secondary school English classes. Likewise, both groups agreed that lecture was the least effective method of those given. When asked which of these methods they considered effective for use in the English methods courses, English educators indicated that they utilized or modeled the same methods they considered effective for teaching secondary school English.

Conclusions

The findings of the research indicated both differences and commonalties among the beliefs and perceptions of leaders in secondary school English and English educators regarding the English methods course required of pre-service teachers of secondary school English. English educators and leaders in secondary school English generally concurred regarding the emphasis that should be placed on given topics in the English methods course, as well as the effectiveness of selected

teaching strategies. However, there were some semantic differences found in the statements of the purpose of the English methods course given by respondents from each group. The following are some specific conclusions, which answer the eight research questions posed in this study:

1. English educators considered the purpose of the English methods course to be to provide students with the theoretical and philosophical background needed to prepare them for future classroom instruction. In addition, CEE respondents indicated that the English methods course should provide students with an overview of instructional strategies and teaching methods related to reading and writing, in order to enable them to begin teaching and reflecting on their practice.
2. Leaders in secondary school English considered the purpose of the English methods course to be to prepare pre-service teachers for the realities of the secondary school English classroom by providing them with the theoretical background they need to formulate their own theories of teaching and learning. CEL respondents felt that in an English methods course, students must also be given meaningful opportunities to transform the theories they learn about into practice, in order to develop a repertoire of teaching strategies that may be effectively used to teach the English language arts to real students, in real classrooms.

3. English educators indicated that as a whole, topics related to the content area "Composition" required the most emphasis in the English methods course. In addition, CEE respondents rated "Strategies for Teaching Literature," "Reflective Teaching," and "The Writing Process" as the three topics requiring the heaviest emphasis in the English methods course.

4. Leaders in secondary school English agreed that topics related to the content area "Composition" required the heaviest emphasis in the English methods course. CEL respondents also rated "Discussion Skills," "Relationship Between Language Skills and Writing," and "The Writing Process" as deserving heavy emphasis in the English methods course.

5. English educators considered "Class Discussion" and "Group / Individual Projects" to be the most effective teaching strategies for use in the secondary school English class. Likewise, English educators reported using two teaching strategies, "Class Discussion" and "Group / Individual Projects," most often when teaching the English methods course. CEE respondents indicated that "Lecture" was the least effective teaching strategy, both in the English methods course and in the secondary school English class.

6. Leaders in secondary school English rated "Class Discussion" and "Group and Individual Projects" as being the most effective teaching strategies for use in the secondary school English class. CEL respondents considered "Lecture" to be an ineffective strategy for use in the teaching of the secondary school English class.

7. While there were some semantic and ideological differences found in the stated purposes of the English methods course, English educators and Leaders in Secondary English considered many of the same topics as requiring heavy emphasis in the English methods course. Both groups indicated that topics related to the content area "Composition" required the heaviest emphasis. Likewise, an examination of the 10 highest ranked topics revealed that English educators and leaders in secondary school English ranked seven of the same topics as being most important. However, English educators included "Materials and Resources for English Teachers," "Multicultural Literature," and "Unit and Lesson Planning" in their 10 most important topics. None of these topics appeared on the top-ten list of the CEL respondents. Conversely, leaders in secondary school English considered three topics, "Discussion Skills," "Questioning Techniques," and "Classroom Management / Discipline" all general topics related to teaching, but requiring heavy emphasis in the English methods course.

8. When rating nine given teaching strategies for their perceived effectiveness in the secondary school English class, English educators and leaders in secondary school English were largely in agreement. Only one teaching strategy, "Audiovisuals/ Instructional Technology," was considered as being more effective by CEL respondents than by CEE respondents. Otherwise, respondents from both groups concurred that "Group and Individual Projects" and "Class Discussion" were the most effective teaching strategies in secondary school English classes;

moreover, English educators and leaders in secondary school English were in agreement as to the ineffectiveness of lecturing.

Educational Implications

This researcher examined the beliefs and perceptions of English educators and leaders in secondary school English regarding the purpose and course content of the English methods course. The implications of this research for educational practice were as follows:

1. This study contributed to the body of literature related to teacher education course work, in particular that in English teacher preparation programs. Prior to this study, there was a paucity in the literature addressing specific teacher education courses. As Oftedahl (1985) stated at the conclusion of her study more than 10 years prior to this one, "The objectives of any further studies ... should be to discover more about English methods courses and [how to] subsequently alter the courses to result in better and more practical English teaching in the public schools..." (p. 78). Oftedahl's call for further studies addressing the English methods course has gone largely unanswered until the completion of the present study. Therefore, this study, which described not only the perceptions of English educators about the English methods course, but also examined the beliefs of

leaders in secondary school English regarding the English methods course, could serve as a reference for further research on the English methods course.

2. Previous studies indicated a great deal of disagreement between in-service English teachers and English educators regarding the question of what should be taught in the English methods course (Fagan & Laine; Killian; Mertz & Zidonis; Oftedahl, 1985). One such topic, which English educators consistently rated as deserving less emphasis in the English methods course than in-service English teachers did, was methods for teaching grammar, usage, and mechanics. The data in the present study indicated a shift in this pattern, as there was agreement between English educators and leaders in secondary school English that grammar, usage, and mechanics should not be heavily emphasized in the English methods course. Perhaps this suggests that leaders in secondary school English, represented in this study by leaders in the Conference on English Leadership, are becoming more familiar with the body of literature which indicates that, contrary to traditional thinking and practice, the teaching of grammar, usage, and mechanics may not be beneficial for students of secondary school English. (See Braddock, 1963; Hillocks, 1986; Noguchi, 1991.) Therefore, this study may suggest that as in-service teachers of English become more familiar with the literature addressing this controversial topic, attitudes toward the teaching of grammar, usage, and mechanics may be changed.

3. Similar to the findings in previous studies (Fagan & Laine; Killian; Mertz & Zidonis), the data from this study indicated that English educators feel that the purpose of the English methods course requires that more emphasis be placed on the theoretical and philosophical frameworks around which approaches to teaching are built, while leaders in secondary school English urge that more emphasis be placed on the practicalities of everyday issues surrounding the reality of teaching in the secondary school classroom. While some may feel these differing views are problematic, teacher educators could use this information to bolster the call for more cooperation between teacher educators and in-service teachers in the preparation of pre-service teachers. As suggested by the Holmes Group (1996), the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (1996), and the Renaissance Group (1993), the preparation of pre-service teachers should be a cooperative effort, including both teacher educators and in-service teachers. Perhaps the English methods course could be the joint responsibility of English educators and leaders in secondary school English. The former could be responsible for teaching the theoretical and philosophical aspects of the course, and the latter could focus on the practical aspects of teaching in the reality of today's secondary school, thus addressing the purposes suggested by both English educators and leaders in secondary school English. Whatever the solution, the data from the present study suggested that there continues to be disagreement as to which should receive heavier emphasis in the English methods course--theory, or

practice? Those responsible for the English methods course need to address this issue.

4. Subject-specific methods courses have been the focus of a great deal of criticism over the years (Conant, 1963; Katz & Raths, 1982). Nevertheless, leaders in secondary school English confirmed that many of the topics which are addressed in the English methods course required a great deal of emphasis for the effective preparation of pre-service teachers of secondary school English. Therefore, the present study adds to the body of literature which suggests that method courses can play an important role in the programs which prepare pre-service teachers.

5. While there was general agreement between English educators and leaders in secondary school English regarding which topics should be most heavily emphasized in the English methods course, there were several conflicting views. The present study may provide teachers of the English methods course with information regarding topics that leaders in secondary school English feel need to be stressed in the English methods course, thus allowing them to reassess the content of their own English methods course, in an effort to improve their English education programs, better preparing pre-service teachers for the realities of the secondary school English classroom. Indeed, teacher education programs might be more successful in making improvements if they paid more attention to the insights offered by leaders in the secondary school.

6. The findings of the present study indicated that English educators and leaders in secondary school English were generally in agreement as to which teaching strategies were most effective for the teaching of secondary school English. Professors of the English methods course could use this data when choosing teaching strategies to utilize and model in their teaching of the English methods course, and to provide pre-service teachers of secondary school English with opportunities to develop and practice using these teaching strategies in their own teaching.

Recommendations

The research in this study examined the English methods course in terms of purpose and content. In this descriptive study, the eight specific questions regarding the purpose and content of the English methods course and teaching strategies considered effective for teaching English at the secondary school level were answered. Nevertheless, the following studies and recommendations are recommended:

1. A replication of the present study is recommended to be taken with larger and more diverse populations. Since the populations for this study were limited to leaders in the Conference on English Leadership and the Conference on English Education of the National Council of Teachers of English, the results of the study

were also confined to that population, and may not be generalizable to all English educators and leaders in secondary school English. Therefore, this study could be replicated with a larger population, such as a random sample from the entire Conference on English Education and Conference on English Leadership, or even a random sample of English methods course professors and secondary school English teachers from around the country. The results then could be compared with this study for similarities and differences.

2. For additional information regarding the purpose and content of the English methods course, a study replicating the present study, but including a qualitative examination of course syllabi could be undertaken. This might possibly provide more specific data regarding what is actually taught in the English methods course.

3. Since this study examined the beliefs of English educators and leaders in secondary school English regarding the English methods course, a survey study of students involved in their student teaching experience or internship is recommended. Opinions, perceptions, and evaluations of students who have recently taken or are currently enrolled in the English methods course could perhaps provide information regarding the efficacy of the course in preparing pre-service teachers of English for student teaching experiences and/or internships.

4. As this study utilized a mail-in questionnaire to gather data, a follow-up interview study with leaders of the Conference on English Education and the

Conference on English Leadership is recommended. While face-to-face interviews take a great deal of time, they can provide rich data for the researcher to analyze.

5. A case study of a particular English methods course could be investigated. Such a study could provide a single and more detailed description of what is actually taught in the English methods course, and what teaching strategies are actually modeled.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented a summary of the study, including its purpose, the review of related literature, methods and procedures, findings, and conclusions. In addition, the educational implications of the research were discussed, and recommendations for further study were provided. This is the concluding chapter of the study. Following are a List of References and Appendices, including the cover letters mailed to participants in the study, the questionnaires used in the study, and the descriptive data analysis of all items in Part IV of the questionnaire.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Letter to CEE Committee Members

November 14, 1997

Dear CEE Executive Committee Member:

Teacher education programs have been under a great deal of criticism in recent years. A very important part of these programs for the preparation of secondary English teachers is the English methods course. In an effort to examine the purpose and content of these courses, I am conducting a study of English methods courses.

Your position on the Executive Council of CEE suggests that you are considered an expert in the field of English Education. Likewise, your participation in this prestigious, yet time-consuming group indicates your dedication to the profession. It is for these reasons that I am requesting your participation in this study. Your input will provide valuable information for colleagues in the field. Your voluntary contribution to this study, as well as the hard work you do for the CEE is deeply appreciated.

Your response to the questionnaire is confidential. No individual or institution will be identified in reporting the results. Results will be published in my doctoral dissertation, and may also be submitted for publication in an educational journal. The study should contribute to the literature in the field of English Education, and certainly has the potential to positively impact the teaching of the English methods course.

For the purpose of this study, *English methods course* is defined as a single course intended to prepare pre-service teachers for their careers as teachers of secondary school English. Even if your institution has more than one required methods course, please answer the questionnaire as if only one course were offered in methods of teaching secondary school English.

Please allow about 15-20 minutes to complete the questionnaire. A postage-paid return envelope is provided for your convenience. I would appreciate your response as soon as possible, but by November 29, 1996 at the latest. Completed and returned surveys will indicate your willingness to participate in the study. If you have any questions about the study, or would like information on the results, please contact me at 423-974-8591. I will also be at the NCTE Convention in Chicago November 22-25, participating in a panel discussion on adolescent literature with my major English education professor, Dr. Ted Hipple.

Thank you in advance for contributing your time and expertise to this project.

Sincerely,

Marshall George
Doctoral Candidate

Appendix B: Letter to CEL Committee Members

November 14, 1997

Dear CEL Executive Committee Member:

Teachers at all levels, including secondary and post-secondary, have faced a great deal of criticism in recent years. It has been suggested that teacher education programs are not doing a good job of preparing teachers for the realities of today's classroom. A very important part of programs for the preparation of secondary English teachers is the English methods course. As a doctoral candidate about to become a professional teacher educator, I feel it is important to examine these methods courses to determine what they *should* focus on. It seems to me that experienced teachers of secondary English could provide a great deal of insight into what these programs should be teaching pre-service teachers. Therefore, I am conducting a study to do just that.

Your position on the Executive Council of CEL suggests that not only are you an experienced secondary English teacher, but that you are considered to be an expert in the teaching of English. Likewise, your participation in this prestigious, yet time-consuming group indicates your dedication to the profession. It is for these reasons that I am requesting your participation in this study. Your input will provide valuable information for me and colleagues in the field of English Education. Your voluntary contribution to this study, as well as the hard work you do for the CEL is deeply appreciated.

Your response to the questionnaire is confidential. No individual or institution will be identified in reporting the results. Results will be published in my doctoral dissertation, and may also be submitted for publication in an educational journal. The study should contribute to the literature in the field of English Education, and certainly has the potential to positively impact the teaching of the English methods course. This, in turn, could help us to provide novice teachers with more valuable preparation.

Please allow about 15-20 minutes to complete the questionnaire. A postage-paid return envelope is provided for your convenience. I would appreciate your response as soon as possible, but by November 29 at the latest. Completed surveys will indicate your willingness to participate in the study. If you have any questions about the study, or would like information on the results, please contact me at 423-974-8591. I will also be at the NCTE Convention in Chicago November 22-25, participating in a panel discussion on adolescent literature with my major English education professor, Dr. Ted Hipple.

Thank you in advance for contributing your time and expertise to this project.

Sincerely

Marshall George
Doctoral Candidate

Appendix C: English Methods Course Survey for CEL Members

English Methods Course Survey

CEL Members

Part I: Background Information

Please Place a check mark in front of the appropriate answer(s).

1. What is the highest degree you hold?

_____ bachelors _____ masters _____ education specialist _____ doctorate

2. What is your current job title?

_____ English Teacher _____ English Department Chair _____ English supervisor

_____ Other (please specify) _____

3. How many years of experience do you have teaching at the secondary level (include current year). _____

4.

If you are *not* currently teaching at the secondary level, what was the last year in which you did so? _____

Part II: Purpose of the English Methods Course

Please state what you believe the primary purpose of the English methods course to be.

Part III: Teaching Strategies

Following is a list of teaching strategies. Please indicate the extent to which you feel these methods are effective for use in the secondary English class.

3 - Should **frequently** be used in secondary English classes, as it may be very effective.

2 - Should **sometimes** be used in secondary English classes, as it may be somewhat effective

1 - Should **rarely** be used in secondary English classes, as it may not be very effective.

0 - Should **never** be used in secondary English classes, as it may be ineffective.

Lecture	3	2	1	0
Class Discussion	3	2	1	0
Simulation/Role Playing	3	2	1	0
Individualized Instruction	3	2	1	0
Computer-Assisted Instruction	3	2	1	0
Audiovisuals	3	2	1	0
Group/Individual Projects	3	2	1	0
Writing Workshop	3	2	1	0
Reading Workshop	3	2	1	0

Are there other instructional approaches that you feel may be effective for use in the secondary English class? Please indicate these below.

Part IV: English Methods Course Content

On the following pages is a list of topics that might be stressed in a pre-certification English methods course. Please indicate the extent to which you feel these **should** be covered in the English methods course.

Please use the Following Scale:

- 3 - Heavy** emphasis in the course in comparison with that of other topics.
- 2 - Moderate** emphasis in the course in comparison with that of other topics.
- 1- Little** emphasis in the course in comparison with that of other topics.
- 0 - No** emphasis in the course

	3	2	1	0
A. General Topics	Heavy	Moderate	Little	No
Affective / Cognitive Domains as applied to English	3	2	1	0
Unit and Lesson Planning	3	2	1	0
Developing Goals and Objectives	3	2	1	0
Overview of English Curriculum	3	2	1	0
Materials and Resources for English Teachers	3	2	1	0
Learning Styles	3	2	1	0
Multiple Intelligence	3	2	1	0
Grading and Evaluation	3	2	1	0
Computers in Classroom	3	2	1	0
Discipline/Classroom Management	3	2	1	0
Cooperative Learning	3	2	1	0
Adolescent Development	3	2	1	0
Professional Ethics	3	2	1	0
Motivation	3	2	1	0
Reflective Teaching	3	2	1	0
Discussion Skills	3	2	1	0
Questioning Techniques	3	2	1	0
Instructional Technology	3	2	1	0

B. Literature

Whole Language	3	2	1	0
Multicultural Literature	3	2	1	0
Adolescent Literature	3	2	1	0
Reader Response	3	2	1	0
Reading Workshop	3	2	1	0
Teaching Poetry	3	2	1	0
Literary Canon (The "Classics")	3	2	1	0
Censorship	3	2	1	0
Strategies for Teaching Literature	3	2	1	0
Reading Skills	3	2	1	0
Vocabulary Enrichment	3	2	1	0

III. Language

Dialect Study	3	2	1	0
Grammar	3	2	1	0
Language History	3	2	1	0
Usage	3	2	1	0
Mechanics	3	2	1	0
Strategies for Teaching Grammar, Usage and Mechanics	3	2	1	0
Relationship Between "Language Skills" and Writing	3	2	1	0
English as a Second Language	3	2	1	0

C. Composition

	Heavy	Moderate	Little	No
Portfolios	3	2	1	0
Personal Writing	3	2	1	0
Writing Process	3	2	1	0
Writing Workshop	3	2	1	0
Publishing Student Writing	3	2	1	0
Assessing Student Writing	3	2	1	0
Holistic Evaluation	3	2	1	0
Journals	3	2	1	0
Conferencing	3	2	1	0
Types of Writing Assignments	3	2	1	0

D. Related Areas

Drama / Creative Dramatics	3	2	1	0
Journalism / Publications	3	2	1	0
Public Speaking	3	2	1	0
Media Appreciation	3	2	1	0
Media Production	3	2	1	0

11. Are there any topics not listed above which you feel should be addressed in an English methods course for pre-service teachers? If so, please list them below.

Appendix D: English Methods Course Survey CEE Members

English Methods Course Survey

CEE Members

Part I: Background Information

Please Place a check mark in front of the appropriate answer(s).

1. Which department are you affiliated with at your institution?

_____ Education _____ English _____ Other (Specify)

2. What is your academic rank?

_____ assistant professor _____ associate professor _____ full professor

3. What is the highest degree you hold?

_____ bachelors _____ masters _____ Ph.D. _____ Ed.D.

4. Will you teach an English method course during the 1996-97 school year? _____

5. How many years have you taught English methods (include current year) _____

6. How many years of teaching experience have you had at the secondary level (7-12)?

_____ none _____ 1-3 _____ 4-6 _____ 7-9 _____ 10 or more

7.

If you have taught at the secondary level, what was the last year in which you did so?

Part II: Purpose of the English Methods Course

Please state what you believe the primary purpose of the English methods course to be.

Part III: Teaching Strategies

Below is a list of teaching strategies. In the column at the left (Column A), please indicate the extent to which believe each should be modeled or use each in the teaching of the English methods course. In the column at the right (Column B) please indicate to what extent you believe each to be effective for use in the secondary school English classroom.

COLUMN A: Methods Course

- 4 - **Frequently** used in Methods course
 3 - **Sometimes** used in Methods course
 2 - **Rarely** used in Methods course
 1 - **Never** used in Methods course

COLUMN B: Secondary English Class

- 4 - Should **frequently** be used in class
 3 - Should **sometimes** be used in class
 2 - Should **rarely** be used in class
 1 - Should **never** be used in class

A		B
	1. Lecture	
	2. Class Discussion	
	3. Simulation / Role Playing	
	4. Individualized Instruction	
	5. Computer-Assisted Instruction	
	6. Audiovisuals	
	7. Writing Workshops	
	8. Reading Workshops	
	9. Group/Individual Projects	

Part IV: English Methods Course Content

On the following pages is a list of topics that might be stressed in a pre-certification English methods course. Please indicate the extent to which you feel these **should** be covered in the English methods course.

Please use the Following Scale:

- 3 - Heavy** emphasis in the course in comparison with that of other topics.
- 2 - Moderate** emphasis in the course in comparison with that of other topics.
- 1- Little** emphasis in the course in comparison with that of other topics.
- 0 - No** emphasis in the course

	3	2	1	0
	Heavy	Moderate	Little	No
A. General Topics				
Affective / Cognitive Domains as applied to English	3	2	1	0
Unit and Lesson Planning	3	2	1	0
Developing Goals and Objectives	3	2	1	0
Overview of English Curriculum	3	2	1	0
Materials and Resources for English Teachers	3	2	1	0
Learning Styles	3	2	1	0
Multiple Intelligence	3	2	1	0
Grading and Evaluation	3	2	1	0
Computers in Classroom	3	2	1	0
Discipline/Classroom Management	3	2	1	0
Cooperative Learning	3	2	1	0
Adolescent Development	3	2	1	0
Professional Ethics	3	2	1	0
Motivation	3	2	1	0
Reflective Teaching	3	2	1	0
Discussion Skills	3	2	1	0
Questioning Techniques	3	2	1	0
Instructional Technology	3	2	1	0

B. Literature

Whole Language	3	2	1	0
Multicultural Literature	3	2	1	0
Adolescent Literature	3	2	1	0
Reader Response	3	2	1	0
Reading Workshop	3	2	1	0
Teaching Poetry	3	2	1	0
Literary Canon (The "Classics")	3	2	1	0
Censorship	3	2	1	0
Strategies for Teaching Literature	3	2	1	0
Reading Skills	3	2	1	0
Vocabulary Enrichment	3	2	1	0

III. Language

Dialect Study	3	2	1	0
Grammar	3	2	1	0
Language History	3	2	1	0
Usage	3	2	1	0
Mechanics	3	2	1	0
Strategies for Teaching Grammar, Usage and Mechanics	3	2	1	0
Relationship Between "Language Skills" and Writing	3	2	1	0
English as a Second Language	3	2	1	0

C. Composition

	Heavy	Moderate	Little	No
Portfolios	3	2	1	0
Personal Writing	3	2	1	0
Writing Process	3	2	1	0
Writing Workshop	3	2	1	0
Publishing Student Writing	3	2	1	0
Assessing Student Writing	3	2	1	0
Holistic Evaluation	3	2	1	0
Journals	3	2	1	0
Conferencing	3	2	1	0
Types of Writing Assignments	3	2	1	0

D. Related Areas

Drama / Creative Dramatics	3	2	1	0
Journalism / Publications	3	2	1	0
Public Speaking	3	2	1	0
Media Appreciation	3	2	1	0
Media Production	3	2	1	0

11. Are there any topics not listed above which you feel should be addressed in an English methods course for pre-service teachers? If so, please list them below.

Appendix E: Data Analysis of Part IV of Surveys

Appendix E

Rank and Mean Score of All Items in Part IV of the Surveys

General Topics	CEE Rank	CEE Mean	CEL Rank	CEL Mean
Affective/Cognitive Domains as Applied to English	30.5	2.00	40	2.08
Unit & Lesson Planning	7	2.60	16	2.54
Developing Goals & Objectives	20	2.40	16	2.54
Overview of English Curriculum	13.5	2.53	21	2.46
Materials & Resources for English Teachers	7	2.60	28.5	2.31
Learning Styles	35	1.73	21	2.46
Multiple Intelligence	38.5	1.67	28.5	2.31
Grading & Evaluation	28	2.20	21	2.46
Computers in the Classroom	32.5	1.80	35.5	2.23
Discipline / Classroom Management	40.5	1.60	7	2.77
Cooperative Learning	13.5	2.53	35.5	2.23
Adolescent Developmen	30.5	2.00	16	2.54
Professional Ethics	40.5	1.60	28.5	2.31
Motivation	13	2.53	16	2.54
Reflective Teaching	2.5	2.73	9.5	2.70
Discussion Skills	13.5	2.53	2	2.92
Questioning Techniques	18	2.47	4	2.85
Instructional Technology	43	1.53	28.5	2.31

Literature and Language	CEE Rank	CEE Mean	CEL Rank	CEL Mean
Whole Language	7	2.60	48.5	1.69
Multicultural Literature	7	2.60	42	2.00
Adolescent Literature	13.5	2.53	44	1.92
Reader Response	7	2.60	9.5	2.70
Reading Workshop	18	2.47	24.5	2.39
Teaching Poetry	22	2.33	24.5	2.39
Literary Canon	43	1.53	46.5	1.85
Censorship	35	1.73	40	2.08
Strategies for Teaching Literature	1	2.87	5	2.78
Vocabulary Enrichment	31	1.93	35.5	2.23
Dialect Study	43	1.53	48.5	1.69
Grammar	32.5	1.80	44	1.92
Language History	49.5	1.20	50.5	1.38
Usage	47	1.33	38	2.15
Mechanics	46	1.47	35.5	2.23
Strategies for Teaching Grammar, Usage, Mechanics	18	2.47	21	2.46
Relationship Between "Language Skills" & Writing	7	2.60	2	2.92
English as a Second Language	48	1.27	50.5	1.38

Composition and Related Areas	CEE Rank	CEE Mean	CEL Rank	CEL Mean
Portfolios	25.5	2.27	12	2.62
Personal Writing	25.5	2.27	12	2.62
Writing Process	2.5	2.73	2	2.92
Writing Workshop	13.5	2.53	7	2.77
Publishing Student Writing	28	2.13	35.5	2.23
Assessing Student Writing	7	2.60	7	2.77
Holistic Evaluation	25.5	2.27	28.5	2.31
Journals	22	2.33	16	2.54
Conferencing	25.5	2.27	12	2.62
Types of Writing Assignments	22	2.33	28.5	2.31
Drama / Creative Dramatics	29	2.06	21	2.46
Journalism / Publications	49.5	1.20	46.5	1.85
Public Speaking	38.5	1.67	35.5	2.23
Media Appreciation	35	1.73	40	2.08
Media Production	51	0.93	44	1.92

VITA

Marshall Anthony George was born in Mebane, North Carolina on November 8, 1964, to Samuel Donald George and Laura Wilkerson George. He graduated in 1983 from Eastern Alamance High School in Mebane, North Carolina. In 1986, he received a Bachelor of Arts in English Education from The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. In 1990, he graduated with a Master of Education degree in Curriculum and Instruction from The University of Southern Mississippi, in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. The Doctor of Education degree was granted to Marshall Anthony George by The University of Tennessee, Knoxville in 1997.

After teaching upper school English at The Greenfield School from 1987-91, and serving as the Upper School Coordinator for two of those years, Marshall taught middle and high school English and language arts and served as Middle School Coordinator at the Escola Americana de Campinas, an international school in Campinas, São Paulo, Brazil, for three years. While he pursued his doctorate, he served as a graduate teaching assistant at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville.